

# DEVELOPMENT REVIEW COMMITTEE

*Minutes of the Meeting of September 18, 2018*

## Members Present

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Larry McEwen, Co-chair	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Amanda Yoder, Business Assn.
<input type="checkbox"/> John Landis, Co-Chair	<input type="checkbox"/> TT&P
<input type="checkbox"/> Andrew Moroz, LUPZC	
<input type="checkbox"/> Brad Flamm, LUPZC	<input type="checkbox"/> Streetscape Committee
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Patricia Cove, HDAC	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Joyce Lenhardt, VP Physical
	<input type="checkbox"/> Laura Lucas, CHCA President

## Others Attending

John Brooks VFW  
Steve Kurtz, VFW  
Representative for Bowman Properties, 8335 Germantown Avenue  
Celeste Hardester, Development Review Facilitator  
Melissa Nash, recorder

The meeting was opened by Larry McEwen, co-chair, at 7:35pm.

### **8335 Germantown Avenue**

•Presentation and Discussion: A representative of Bowman Properties presented a brief overview of the project. The variance is needed as this building had square footage that exceeds the amount allowed and there will be office space on the upper floor. Patricia Cove noted that the HDAC appreciates the work to uncover the original façade and that it voted to support the project. It was noted that parking for the Business association and PAFA will be rented in the lot across the street.

•Committee Action: A motion was made to recommend support for the variances for this project as presented. The motion was seconded. There was no discussion and the motion was passed. This project will proceed to the ZBA as the hearing date, September 26, is prior to the next Board meeting.

### **Escape Room and VFW Meeting Space 8217-19 Germantown Avenue**

•Presentation and Discussion: A summary presentation was provided. The second floor is proposed to be used as an escape room entertainment space and the basement as the VFW meeting space. Both uses require special exceptions, as entertainment and assembly and fraternal, respectively. P Cove asked about special insurance. It is not required. The VFW lease requires the escape room to insure for \$1 million. It was noted that there has been an objection to the new sign. The black X has negative connotations to some people. The VFW reported that the new sign has been installed. It was asked if the sign, which is the company logo, could be modified. Another concern expressed by J Lenhardt was the permanence of the special exception. Ralph Pinkus asked L&I about this. The Planning Commission has also been asked. The general opinion is that the exception runs with the property rather than the business. J Lenhardt stated it would be preferable for a new user to return to the committees. A discussion of the uses covered by this special exception followed.

•Committee Action: J Lenhardt read a draft motion she had prepared: The DRC recommends the request for the special exception for the fraternal meeting place for the VFW in the basement and

for the special exception for assembly and entertainment, specifically for the Escape Room on the second floor, with the proviso that the latter be limited to the specific use as an escape room. No other use is approved. It was noted that the ZBA could include this proviso or that the Community Association could do it. The VFW would agree in either case. The Business Association Executive Director, Phil Dawson, and Business Development Director, Kathy Meadows can contact the Escape Room owners regarding the sign. J Lenhardt noted that the Streetscape Committee includes Phil Dawson. It was also suggested that people go by and look at the sign. It was suggested that the hanging sign also be included in the motion. It was asked if the hanging sign needed a permit. It is unclear if a new sign needs a permit or if a new sign that follows the size of the original permit does not. It was recommended that the motion include that the clients for the escape room work with Streetscape toward mutually agreed upon signage. The motion with the signage proviso was seconded. It was reiterated that if the ZBA will include the proviso that approval is limited to the escape room use, this is good. If not, there should be an agreement with the community. The motion was passed. The hearing is scheduled for October 2. The motion will go to the Board on September 27; the letter will go to the ZBA and Cindy Bass's office. Letters of notifications to neighbors have been done. The escape room anticipates opening on October 30.

### **Committee Business**

- Street Trees: The Germantown Avenue street trees at 2 East Chestnut Hill Ave are gone. It is not known if they were heritage trees. It was also noted that a large tree was removed behind the tutoring company on West Evergreen. An arborist said it was dead. It was suggested that this type of tree removal should prompt calls to 311.
- Expanded Germantown Avenue Overlay: J Lenhardt said that there will be a meeting with Cindy Bass regarding support for the proposed overlay expansion. This should be discussed at the next LUPZC. A general meeting may be needed for discussion.
- Adjournment: The meeting was adjourned at 9:30.