

Manayunk Neighborhood Council, PO Box 4667, Philadelphia, PA 19127

www.ManayunkCouncil.org 215-487-2125



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The Honorable Curtis Jones, Jr.
City Council
Room 404, City Hall
Philadelphia, PA 19107

April 21, 2017

Dear Councilman Jones,

Thank you for holding the meeting last Monday. As requested, we set out below our proposal for delivering this project in an expeditious and harmonious collaboration.

We remain confident that RSA-5 zoning classification and home ownership represents the best and most appropriate development for this project. At the same time we acknowledge that there are existing buildings, some historically protected, that will require special attention.

We firmly believe that the parking lot, with its debris, can be redeveloped with single family homes and parking. There are ample examples of nearby developments that faced similar or even more difficult conditions. There were other bids for this project that included single family homes and community parking.

We therefore propose the following:

- 1) That the development should promote and encourage home ownership and resident investment in the community to the greatest extent possible. New construction should be focused on single family homes. The overall density should be evaluated with respect to RSA-5 development and with respect to the benefits specific variances may provide to the community.
- 2) That the current RSA-5 zoning should remain in place and all exceptions handled through the zoning variance process as exemplified by the very successful, recent, Saint Lucy's conversion. Saint Lucy's is a nearby former catholic church where the school, rectory, parking lot and church were successfully re-purposed following the variance process; the rectory and parking lot were developed as single family homes, with appropriate variances, the school was converted to apartments and the church is currently under construction as apartments.
- 3) We acknowledge that the church and rectory are historically certified and will require special consideration and that the school building, although not historic, may be expensive and difficult to remove and could, therefore merit evaluation for adaptive re-use.
- 4) The community as a whole, and North Light Community Center in particular, will be harmed by the total loss of parking on this site. Any proposal should provide a minimum of 20 permanent, dedicated and conveniently located parking spaces for North Light. A target of an additional 20 spaces, available by paid permit or some other mechanism, should be pursued for general community parking within the project.

Unfortunately the introduction of the ordinance, and lack of public discussion, has led to a singular discordant project and entrenched positions that will inevitably lead to a protracted dispute.

Community input and consideration is a critical component of civic acceptance of such a major change in the neighborhood. We stand with North Light and the community in looking forward to negotiating for a development that embodies the principles outlined in this letter and unanimously voiced at the two public meetings held recently. A development that works to make Manayunk better place for everyone to live.

We have discussed, and fully endorse, North Light Community Center's letter to you.

This letter is provided with best intentions for good faith negotiations and is without prejudice or admission.

Thank You,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Kevin Smith', with a large, stylized flourish above the name.

Kevin Smith, President