

BELLA VISTA NEIGHBORS ASSOCIATION

P.O. Box 63955
Philadelphia, PA 19147
(215) 627-0057

www.bellavistaneighbors.org

Bella Vista Neighbors Association, formerly known as Bella Vista Town Watch, is an independent non-profit neighborhood organization. Our goal is to improve the quality of life for all residents of Bella Vista.

Dr. James E. Moylan, DC
Chair, Philadelphia Zoning Board of Adjustment
1401 JFK Blvd. – 11th Floor
Philadelphia, PA 19102-1687

June 16, 2016

Re: RCO Meeting Summary Form

ZBA Calendar No. 27724/ Zoning Application No. 680153
711 Fulton St ZBA hearing date: June 21 2016, 9:30 pm

Applicant: Christopher S & Natalie N Soltis

Dear Dr. Moylan:

Below is a summary of our public community meeting held regarding the above referenced zoning application.

Position: **Opposed**
Date of Meeting: June 7, 2016
Location of Meeting: Palumbo Recreation Center, 10th & Fitzwater Streets.
Participating RCO: Bella Vista Neighbors Association (BVNA) Zoning Committee
Number of Attendees: Approximately 8 signed-in, excluding zoning committee members.

Reason for Position:

The applicants seek zoning relief to construct a mansard roofed third story addition on top of an existing two story home with a proposed front setback of only 2'-7" instead of the 8' required. The location of the setback line was established to maximize living space while maintaining the minimum 30% required open space. Upon questioning, the applicants indicated that there was no consideration given to expanding the addition further rearward instead, or to make interior design changes that could offer better use of the existing spaces in order to maintain the required 8' front setback. The applicants offered no hardship other than a desire to maximize their living space. They insisted that their 15' x 50' sized rectangular lot was substandard, but BVNA notes that there are hundreds of comparably sized and even smaller sized lots in our community.

In a neighborhood of primarily 3-story structures, the 700 block of Fulton Street is unique in Bella Vista for being nearly entirely composed of two story homes with the exception of several preexisting 3-story corner buildings and a few other mid-block homes that recently received zoning relief for 3rd floor additions. However, we believe that those recent additions were held to a minimum of 6 to 8 feet from the front façade line.

Though BVNA appreciates the intention of a mansard roofed design to mitigate the bulky appearance of the addition, we are most concerned about the possibility of setting a new precedent of further reduced 3rd story front setbacks for this block and for future similar applications (see related 709 Fulton Street calendar no. 27710). BVNA feels that granting this relief could produce a substantially negative effect upon the light, air, and sense of openness on this unique block of 2-story homes in our community. Nine (9) neighbors offered non-opposition. There were no neighbors in attendance opposed.

While acknowledging that there was significant support from immediate neighbors, BVNA would prefer that the project meet the eight foot setback required in the code. Without a consistently applied standard, contextual setbacks are rendered meaningless and do not provide the purpose for which they were created. **Therefore the BVNA Zoning Committee opposes the application.** As always, we thank you for considering our report of the meeting discussion, and of our opinion in the matter. Respectfully submitted,

Bella Vista Neighbors Association, Inc.



By: _____

Lawrence Weintraub AIA
Co-Chair, BVNA Zoning Committee

cc: The Hon. Mark Squilla, BVNA Zoning Committee, PCPC-rco@phila.gov, RCOZBA@phila.gov,
wardleader@philadelphia2ndwardgop.com, christophersoltis@hotmail.com
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