

# BELLA VISTA NEIGHBORS ASSOCIATION

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

[www.bellavistaneighbors.org](http://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.*

Ms. Julia Chapman  
Chair, Philadelphia Zoning Board of Adjustment  
1401 JFK Blvd. – 11<sup>th</sup> Floor  
Philadelphia, PA 19102-1687

January 4, 2016

**Re: RCO Meeting Summary Form**

ZBA Calendar No. 26197/ Zoning Application No. 641143

917 E Passyunk St/ ZBA hearing date: January 6, 2016, 4:00 pm

Applicant: Jan C. Almquist

Dear Ms. Chapman:

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

<b>Position:</b>	<b>Opposition</b>
<b>Date of Meeting:</b>	December 1, 2015
<b>Location of Meeting:</b>	Palumbo Recreation Center, 10 <sup>th</sup> & Fitzwater Streets.
<b>Participating RCO:</b>	Bella Vista Neighbors Association (BVNA) Zoning Committee
<b>Number of Attendees:</b>	Approximately 80 excluding zoning committee members

**Reason for Position:**

The applicant seeks to legalize a pre-existing off-street front loaded non-accessory parking space, of long term discontinued use, that is intended to access a vacant lot that has been used for many years as a private garden, and which is located within a CMX-1 District where such parking is currently prohibited. The applicant also seeks to reconstruct the current code compliant front fence and gate and replace them with a more substantial 10' tall assembly. The applicant expressed a hardship that he obtained a legal curb cut in 1994 but soon thereafter discontinued the parking use without realizing that a future interest to reuse the parking space might require legalization and a variance.

The applicant indicated that the parking space would be accessory to his adjacent owned duplex building (919 E. Passyunk Avenue). However, BVNA notes that the lots of 917 and 919 E. Passyunk Avenue are not legally consolidated. Thus, the space cannot be considered accessory, and would instead constitute the creation of a private parking lot. Furthermore, though the vacant lot (917) currently provides pedestrian access to the rear apartment of 919 E. Passyunk Avenue, the vacant lot (917) could be sold off in the future and access to the apartment reconfigured to the front of 919. BVNA has concerns about the possibility of this lot someday becoming a dwelling with a front loaded garage. BVNA notes that for both faces of this significantly intact block, there currently exist only 2 front loaded garages.

Though the applicant indicated that a current fence masonry pier needed repair, he did not express any hardship that would necessitate that the piers and fence be raised to 10 feet other than that he preferred a roll down gate instead of swinging gates, as inward swinging gates would reduce the depth of the already extensive garden area.

For these reasons, BVNA **opposes** both requests. Two close-by neighbors appeared, one in favor of the request, one opposed. Four other neighbors were not opposed. BVNA received one letter of support from an immediate neighbor who did not attend our meeting. 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, [rco.notification@phila.gov](mailto:rco.notification@phila.gov), [wardleader@philadelphia2ndwardgop.com](mailto:wardleader@philadelphia2ndwardgop.com), [RCOZBA@phila.gov](mailto:RCOZBA@phila.gov), Jan C. Almquist. *encl: Zoning Meeting Poster, Zoning Meeting Sign-in Sheets*