



Zoning Board of Adjustment  
Concourse, Municipal Services Building  
15<sup>th</sup> and JFK Boulevard  
Philadelphia, PA 19102

October 1, 2017

Re: Non-opposition to Appeal #31282, Application #754915  
*(Proposed division of lot into two parcels, 1714 Jackson St., Philadelphia, PA 19145  
Council District 2)*

Dear Zoning Board Members,

The applicant in this appeal appeared before a meeting of the coordinating RCO, Newbold Civic Association, on Monday, September 25, 2017, at which the GENA zoning committee participated. The applicant is requesting a variance to create (2) lots (parcel # A & B) from one deeded lot at 1714 Jackson Street.

The permit was refused by the Department of Licenses & Inspections (L&I) on the basis of insufficient minimum of lot area, open area and rear yard area for the proposed division.

GENA Does not oppose this application for the following reasons which are summarized below:

**Situation and Proposal:** The property is now a residence and office combined, owing to a decades-old change that eliminated the back yard in order to build a tiny two story office. The residence is currently a rental property; the office space houses a business run by the property owners. The owners want to divide into two lots, so they can raise some money from the sale of the residence while retaining the office for their business use for the near future. Eventually they plan to sell the office space as well.

This seems advantageous to them in that it keeps their business in the same place at a small cost, rather than moving the business and having to rent new office space at a presumably higher cost. The assumption is that down the road, somebody will want to have the office space, and that a potential residential buyer will not mind the absence of a yard or the proximity of an office.

Owners will agree to a proviso that the office space always be kept as a professional office.

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**Girard Estate Neighbors Association**  
*Providing a voice for the community.*

**Alternatives:** One possible alternative to dividing would be to keep both properties as one, and try to sell the residence with the buyer agreeing to lease the office to the current owners for as long as they want it. Another would be to tear down the existing office to restore the original rear yard. The first of these seems implausible; the second would certainly entail a hardship to the owner.

**Considerations:**

- Our non-opposition is in no way is an endorsement of the original change that eliminated the rear yard.
- It is usual to assume that the owner's wishes for a property are to be given serious weight, as long as they are reasonable.
- The public meeting on Sept 25<sup>th</sup> was sparsely attended, with little or no expressed opposition to the owner's proposal, indicating that the neighbors do not feel strongly about the owner's plan.
- Since the office space has already replaced the back yard space for a long time now, there does not seem to be a good outcome or solution for the property, whether divided or kept as is. The tiny office space is at risk of becoming a blight, whether retained as part of the property or not.

**Conclusion:** Given the above, and not being able to predict definitively that dividing the property would make it any worse than it is now, our position is one of non-opposition.

Sincerely,

Paul Rossi, Chair, Girard Estate Neighbors Association.

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