

Saunders, Richard L. - PDR

From: David Herring <chdh2306@gmail.com>
Sent: Friday, March 5, 2021 1:55 PM
To: Saunders, Richard L. - PDR
Cc: Jones, Carey L. - PDR; Robert Steele; Thomas Grillo
Subject: Re: 2320 E. Marshall St -- updates

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All,

This is good to hear given all that's been done to get a very good project off the ground, not to mention getting a mid-1800's house renovated and on the tax roles that has been vacant for at least 25 years.

The CHA's Historic Preservation & Land Use Committee supported the variance for this project previously, so now we will shift the conversation to supporting this SUP so the infill house at 2318 can begin.

Ultimately, the CHA membership needs to approve all SUP requests. There is a meeting coming up on March 16th where this could be introduced and voted on. Rich, would you have a draft of the SUP available by then? If not, we could bring it forward to our April meeting, which seems like it would still be well within the 4 month expedited SUP approval process being discussed here.

Let me know so I can react in the right time frame from the CHA's perspective.

Thanks-
David Herring, Co-chair
CHA's HPLUC

On Fri, Mar 5, 2021 at 9:10 AM Saunders, Richard L. - PDR <Richard.Saunders@richmondgov.com> wrote:

I would be very confident with CAR's approval and with a letter of support from the association.

From: Thomas Grillo [mailto:tom@porchlightrva.com]
Sent: Thursday, March 4, 2021 9:52 AM
To: Saunders, Richard L. - PDR <Richard.Saunders@richmondgov.com>
Cc: Jones, Carey L. - PDR <Carey.Jones@richmondgov.com>; David Herring <chdh2306@gmail.com>; Robert Steele <bobsteele@bobarchitecture.net>
Subject: Re: [2320 E. Marshall St](#) -- updates

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Thanks for confirming that, Rich.

For the SUP, is there any level of assurance or confidence you can give us that it will be approved? I understand it's a challenging question to answer with many unknowns, but I think we all felt confident with the administrative variance and were surprised at the response. I'm hoping to mitigate risk as much as possible.

On a related note, if there are any conversations that you would suggest having ahead of time to help surface any potential issues (and resolve before applying for the SUP), we are more than willing to do that.

Thanks again,

Tom

On Wed, Mar 3, 2021, 2:11 PM Saunders, Richard L. - PDR <Richard.Saunders@richmondgov.com> wrote:

Yes, you could do that.

From: Thomas Grillo [mailto:tgrillo@gmail.com]

Sent: Wednesday, March 3, 2021 1:26 PM

To: Jones, Carey L. - PDR <Carey.Jones@richmondgov.com>

Cc: Saunders, Richard L. - PDR <Richard.Saunders@richmondgov.com>; David Herring <chdh2306@gmail.com>;

Robert Steele <bobsteele@bobarchitecture.net>

Subject: Re: [2320 E. Marshall St](#) -- updates

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Thanks Carey and Rich. I appreciate your thoughts on this, and the optimistic timeline for the SUP.

Rich, perhaps this is a question you could answer: Is there a scenario where we would be able to obtain our building permit just for 2320 (existing structure) while we go through the SUP process for 2318 and the subdivision? We could revise our rear deck to be 3' off the property line if necessary.

Thanks,

Tom

On Wed, Mar 3, 2021 at 12:36 PM Jones, Carey L. - PDR <Carey.Jones@richmondgov.com> wrote:

Tom and Bob –

I understand your frustrations and concerns with how this will impact the project schedule. I am happy to assist as you determine your path forward with this project. Please let me know if you would like to discuss design alternatives to address the Zoning Administrators comments or if you have other questions on next steps.

Best,

Carey

Carey L. Jones

Secretary to the Commission of Architectural Review

Planning and Preservation | Department of Planning and Development Review

City of Richmond | [900 E Broad Street, Room 510 | Richmond, VA 23219](#)

Carey.Jones@Richmondgov.com

804-646-7550

Commission of Architectural Review meeting and application due dates for 2021 are available here: <https://rva.gov/planning-development-review/commission-architectural-review> under meeting information.

From: Saunders, Richard L. - PDR
Sent: Tuesday, March 2, 2021 12:23 PM
To: Thomas Grillo <tom@porchlightrva.com>; Jones, Carey L. - PDR <Carey.Jones@richmondgov.com>; David Herring <chdh2306@gmail.com>
Cc: Robert Steele <bobsteele@bobarchitecture.net>
Subject: RE: [2320 E. Marshall St](#) -- updates

Tom,

I apologize for not involving the Zoning Administrator sooner, as he does not feel comfortable processes this variance request administratively based on the criteria specified in the memo. He has the ultimate authority in approving administrative variances, whereas the BZA has the ultimate authority should you still decide to move forward with the BZA request.

While I can't guarantee how long the SUP process will take, I think that I could get it through in more like 4 months, so long as we don't receive any major feedback from agencies. This would also allow you to go ahead and create a separate lot for 2318, which sounds like what you prefer in the long term.

From: Thomas Grillo [<mailto:tom@porchlightrva.com>]
Sent: Tuesday, March 2, 2021 11:56 AM
To: Jones, Carey L. - PDR <Carey.Jones@richmondgov.com>; Saunders, Richard L. - PDR <Richard.Saunders@richmondgov.com>; David Herring <chdh2306@gmail.com>
Cc: Robert Steele <bobsteele@bobarchitecture.net>
Subject: [2320 E. Marshall St](#) -- updates

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Hello Carey, Rich, and David,

I'm reaching out to update you on the project at [2320 E. Marshall St](#), and get your thoughts on the current situation. Last week, Zoning informed me that our application for the Administrative Variance has been denied, citing several reasons that seem to be outside the scope of the zoning review. You can read their response in the attached PDF.

We're very surprised by this, not only because zoning is commenting on design, windows, etc (more on that below), but because we received unanimous approvals from both CAR and the Church Hill neighborhood association, we have the full support of abutting neighbors, and we have refined our plans based on all feedback we've heard up to this point.

We're coming back to you three because, frankly, we're out of answers. We feel we have done everything that was asked of us, and have only received positive and supportive responses. Our intent is to do what's best for the property, the block, the neighborhood, and the city.

If this response from zoning stands, and we're pushed into the 6-month SUP process to obtain our building permits, it will put an end to this project. If you remember, we started our process with CAR during the September 2020 meeting. Starting work in September 2021 is not feasible.

We're looking to you for a little guidance. We're not sure where else to turn and would be very interested to hear your perspective on this.

Without getting too far in the weeds, below are specific high-level responses to the feedback:

1. Item 1: (Blocking light to 2316). The eastern wall of 2316 has no existing windows, and the neighbor at 2316 is in full support of our plan.
2. Item 2: (31.67' tall blank wall 1.5' from property line). The proposed wall/structure is the same height as surrounding buildings. A "blank wall" is for fire-prevention purposes, as well as characteristic of surrounding buildings (i.e., the blank wall of 2316). The wall would be 2' from the wall at 2316.
3. Item 3: (Closing of windows of 2320). While there are a handful of windows being closed off, there is additional light being brought in from nearly 8' sliding glass rear doors, skylight in the stairwell, and additional glass doors on the garden and main levels.
4. Item 4: (Deck too close to neighbor). We are willing to change this, however note that we were trying to replicate the original deck that has fallen off the property.
5. Item 5: (There's room in back to build the addition instead): While this is true, the intent for this new dwelling, given the urban zone, is to build to the street. It is characteristic of the block, neighborhood, and zone. We are aiming to fill in the missing tooth of the block that matches the block.

Again, we'd love to hear your thoughts on this, and I thank you, sincerely, for your attention and support.

Best,

Tom

--

Thomas Grillo

Porchlight Homes

(804) 362-7272