

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

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Gary Jastrzab
Executive Director
Philadelphia City Planning Commission
1515 Arch St
13th Floor
Phila, PA 19102

March 17 2014

Re: Property Bill No. 140133 Authorizing conveyance of 147 Gay Street

Dear Mr. Jastrzab,

Manayunk is losing parking space at an alarming rate. 147 Gay Street has been a de facto public parking lot for Manayunk since the 70's. The loss of this important resource will be a hardship on the neighborhood and reduce the quality of life for surrounding residents, and in general the desirability of Manayunk as a place to live.

We believe, before making any decisions about 147 Gay Street, the city should undertake a comprehensive parking survey and develop a comprehensive parking plan for Manayunk.

- A privately held lot on the 100 block of Levering was recently sold for development resulting in the upcoming loss of 25 spaces.
- 147 Gay has been a de facto parking lot since 1976. It's development will result in the loss of 25-30 parking spaces. It is on a street with only single side of the street parking but housing on both sides.
- The SEPTA lot, on Green Lane, near Main Street, was leased to Parkway Corp. who has run a pay lot there for several years. Their lease is up and they have announced that they are terminating the monthly parking agreements with approximately 50 local residents. The lot could remain parking under a new lease or maybe not. It's up to SEPTA and we and they are not sure of the final outcome.
- Two local churches have closed and their lots have been used, with and without permission, by residents, for years. Those lots are going to be or likely will be developed.
- The former St Lucy's church lot on Green Lane is currently being redeveloped into housing, resulting in the loss of about 20 spaces.
- The former St Mary's church lot on Carson (through to Connaroe) is a likely target for development, resulting in the loss of 20-30 spaces (it's a much bigger lot, most of it unused now that the church has closed). It would make a great public lot!
- These small lots have been critical overflow for the several streets, like Gay and Carson, that are double sided row houses but only single sided parking. Even more so for the tiny streets providing no parking, like Maiden, St. Davids, and Mansion.

Every new development proposal in Manayunk eats away at available parking. Either in large bites, like Levering, Gay and Green or in small bites like a proposed five-unit development further up Levering. Every house built compresses the neighborhood a little more. Either by taking away on-street spaces to allow for garages or driveways or by adding addition cars to the press.

In 1997 the City undertook an opinion survey in Manayunk (<http://www.manayunkcouncil.org/survey.html>). From the executive summary:

Manayunk has an acknowledged problem with automobile parking on residential blocks. The attitude of Manayunk residents with regard to traffic and parking problems is indisputable. Many written-in comments on returned survey forms mentioned parking difficulties, and many cited parking as a primary reason for planning to move out of Manayunk. Traffic and parking problems were the "most disliked" characteristic of both residential Manayunk and the Main Street Commercial District.

While the automobile traffic generated by Main Street commercial development is a major annoyance to residents, also contributing to the problem is a high percentage of car ownership among survey respondents. Ninety percent of the respondent households had automobiles (versus 62% citywide).

Fifty-one percent of respondent households reported owning more than one car (versus 34% citywide), and 13% of these households had 3 or more cars (versus 6% citywide). Among survey respondents, 60% of the multiple-car households were either very long-term (35 years or more) or newer (less than five years) residents.

While 62% of respondent households usually parked their cars on their block of residence or used off-street spaces, 28% parked a block or more distant, and 6% admitted to usually parking on the sidewalk.

As far back as 1976, when the 147 Gay lot was created, there was concern for too many houses and not enough parking. It has been the common wisdom, of people who were involved in the 70's, that the 147 Gay lot was donated to the city as neighborhood parking. Unfortunately there appears to be no hard evidence for that belief. However, in September of 1976, Manayunk Neighborhood Council held a public meeting to plan for the future use of the lot (minutes attached). The conclusion of that meeting was 1) No More Housing and 2) Possibly a parking lot, if it can be worked out.

We respectfully ask that the Planning Commission

- Recommend that bill 140133 be put on hold or be withdrawn.
- Undertake a comprehensive planning study of parking in Manayunk
- Create a comprehensive parking and development plan for Manayunk, including identifying additional parking resources that could be acquired or preserved.

Thank You,



Kevin Smith
President

Cc: Councilman Curtis Jones Jr