

From:

Sent: Saturday, October 5, 2024 2:50 PM

To: Mary Christesen <Mary.Christesen@alexandriava.gov>

Subject: Board of Zoning Appeals on 10/7/2024 Re: BZA 2024-00004

Hi,

This email is in regard to BZA 2024-00004 at 415 N Patrick St. I am unable to attend the meeting on 10/7/2024 but wanted to express my concern about this request for a variance. I give consent for this content to be read during the meeting, though I would be grateful for anonymity. These comments are made with genuine respect for the applicant's rights, though I worry about what kind of reaction they may elicit.

The applicant created the building identified as the "existing accessory structure" without permission, as I understand things. The applicant was turned down for a variance but proceeded to build a modified structure anyway. A "Stop Work" order was issued, but I'm guessing the applicant applied for another permit after the structure was underway. That seemed incredibly disingenuous, yet the city allowed construction to continue.

The applicant is quite skilled and built the structure themselves, and I imagine they will do the same should this application be approved. However, the applicant was not considerate of their neighbors and did a poor job cleaning up both during and after construction of the accessory structure. Neighbors complained multiple times of nails in tires. Construction debris tended to hang around for stretches of time. The photos I have attached are typical of what the site looked like during construction, but these photos were taken months and months after final inspection of the structure. The paint cans did go away, but the red gasoline container remains

and now sits directly in front of a children's playground that is owned by the neighboring church.

Does the applicant's property extend to the area in front of the playground on church property? If so, then I suppose the gas container is rightfully there, though I still find it concerning given its proximity to children, despite the fence. If not, then please reference the photo (taken 10/4/2024) that shows trash cans on church property sticking out a bit, along with a car (not the applicant's) parked on the property across the alley. This makes maneuvering a vehicle through the alley difficult. Since neighbors must travel along the alley to park their cars on their respective properties, should not the alley always be clear? During the construction, the applicant at times would temporarily block the alley's south exit outright. Some neighbors had a very difficult time turning their cars around so they could exit on the north side.

I feel as if the applicant is going to find a way to add to the existing structure, whether with initial approval or after-the-fact approval (once construction has begun). The city must understand that some neighbors oppose the current application as the accessory structure is not a pleasant sight and because building the addition will likely be, once again, extremely disruptive. I'd also be interested to know who is responsible for approving the aesthetic of the structure. What is there now, something visible from a public right of way, does not seem in keeping with what is expected of structures in Old Town.

Should the application be approved, please consider that the addition should not in any way be close to the alley that is accessible to all. And given the history detailed above, during the construction process, is there a way to ensure that construction items are not left in the alley or on what may in fact be church property? The applicant has very little free room on their property between the accessory structure and the public alley.

Obviously, I hope the addition to the accessory building will not be approved, but if it is, I do wish the applicant well and respectfully request that the construction debris be contained and removed in a timely manner. Also, please do not create barriers that impede free travel, whether by foot or in a vehicle, along the alley.

I am grateful for consideration of my comments.

Regards,

