

# Pennsylvania Avenue Bethlehem Manor expansion denied at Zoning

The Bethlehem Gadfly Bethlehem Manor, Neighborhoods August 16, 2019

*(Latest in a series of posts on Bethlehem Manor and Neighborhoods)*



After being approved by the Planning Commission a month ago, a major expansion of the Bethlehem Manor assisted-living facility in the old Rosemont school on Pennsylvania Avenue was denied by the Zoning Board Wednesday night.

It's an understatement to call the proposal a "major expansion" — it's a 70% increase in the number of beds in this residential area setting.

The substantial size of the expansion, coupled with memory of resident agitation over the original approval of the Manor in the school building, jumped out at Gadfly when he stumbled across the notice on the Planning Commission agenda. The proposal had not received any public notice or press as far as Gadfly could tell.

In his last post on this proposal, Gadfly expressed surprise "that such a large increase in this residential area is going down so far so smoothly."

Several Bethlehem residents with negative views spoke forcefully against the project Wednesday, however, and now Gadfly expresses surprise at the denial by Zoning, which in his experience (admittedly, on the short side) does not seem all that common.

Always anxious to profile citizen participation, Gadfly will provide a more detailed report of this interesting meeting shortly.

In the meantime, please note these two previous posts on the subject to come up to speed.

["Neighborhood Watch: Rosemont Area Alert!"](#)

["Large Bethlehem Manor addition approved by Planning Commission"](#)

*Charles Malinchak, "City denies Bethlehem Manor's plan for expansion." Morning Call, August 15, 2019.*

A plan to build a 54-unit addition to a Bethlehem elder care facility was shot down Wednesday night by the city zoning hearing board. The

board's 3-2 vote denied variances that would have allowed developer Abe Atiyeh's Bethlehem Manor to build a 2½-story addition to the facility on Pennsylvania Avenue.

Bethlehem Manor was created by converting what was once Rosemont Elementary School after obtaining a variance from the zoning board in 2016 to operate a personal care facility in a residential zone.

Nimita Kapoor Atiyeh, who manages the Bethlehem, Whitehall and Saucon Valley Manors, said after the hearing that the company would appeal the decision. "I am gung ho to keep moving ahead," she said. "I am passionate about the elderly and I want what's right for them."

Kapoor Atiyeh, who is the wife of Abe Atiyeh, testified that there has been increased demand for private rooms, which is why it was decided to move ahead with an expansion.

Fifty-four residents in their rooms will not change the neighborhood," she said. "I want to give these people the honor and privilege of living out their last years in dignity."

Several residents spoke out against the project, citing issues of noise from ambulances, its unsuitability to the neighborhood, traffic and the possibility that an expansion would lead to further expansion.

Brian Nicas, who resides in the neighborhood on Tioga Street, presented the board a petition signed by more than 25 residents, all opposed to the addition. "I'm not against health care facilities, I just don't think it is appropriate for this site," he said.

Anne Lendzinski, who lives near the facility on Kenmore Avenue, said, "Your facilities work well in Hellertown and Whitehall because they are

in mixed-use areas. In our neighborhood it does not work well. Don't build another building."