

**IN RE: APPEAL OF FALLS MILL, LLC, : BEFORE THE ZONING HEARING
RELATIVE TO A PROPERTY LOCATED : BOARD OF THE CITY OF READING,
AT 531 COURT STREET, CITY OF : PENNSYLVANIA
READING, BERKS COUNTY, :
PENNSYLVANIA :
: APPEAL NO. 2603-0006
: VARIANCE, INTERPRETATION
: AND/OR SPECIAL EXCEPTION**

DECISION OF THE ZONING HEARING BOARD OF THE CITY OF READING

AND NOW, this 13th day of May, 2026, a hearing having been held on April 8, 2026, upon the application of Falls Mill, LLC, notice of such hearing having been first sent and advertised in accordance with the provisions of the Pennsylvania Municipalities Planning Code and the City of Reading Zoning Ordinance, as amended, the Zoning Hearing Board of the City of Reading (hereinafter referred to as the “Zoning Board”) renders the following decision:

FINDINGS OF FACT

The Zoning Board finds the following facts:

1. Applicant is Falls Mill, LLC, a Pennsylvania Limited Liability Company, with a mailing address of 117 West Miner Street, West Chester, Pennsylvania 19382 (hereinafter referred to as the “Applicant”).
2. Applicant is the fee simple owner of the property located at 531 Court Street, City of Reading, Berks County, Pennsylvania 19601 (hereinafter referred to as the “Subject Property”).
3. The Subject Property is located in the Commercial Core (CC) Zoning District as that term and district is defined by the Zoning Ordinance of the City of Reading, as amended (hereinafter referred to as the “Zoning Ordinance”).
4. Applicant was represented by Joan E. London, Esquire, of Kozloff Stoudt, 2640 Westview Drive, Wyomissing, Pennsylvania 19610.
5. Applicant is seeking variances from Sections 600-1203.D.(3) and 600-1603.I(1) of the Zoning Ordinance to allow off-street parking at the Reading Parking Authority Reed and Court Streets Parking Garage, which is 536 feet from the Subject Property.

6. The Subject Property is bounded on the north by parcels 522 and 524 Washington Street, on the east by 535 Court Street, on the south by Court Street, and on the west by 527 Court Street.

7. Applicant purchased the Subject Property on August 7, 2020, as a three-story commercial building with three offices and one residential unit.

8. Applicant is in the process of seeking approval from the City of Reading to convert the building located on the Subject Property to a commercial office on the first floor and five apartments in the remainder of the building.

9. The issue before the Zoning Board only relates to relief from the off-street parking requirements applicable to the Subject Property.

10. The Subject Property has never had off-street parking and Applicant has made no changes to the Subject Property which would create or worsen the hardship.

11. The applicable sections of the Zoning Ordinance require eight off-street parking spaces for the proposed apartments within 300 feet of the Subject Property.

12. There is no off-street parking requirement for the first floor business use in the CC District.

13. Applicant states that the sole source of reliable off-street parking is the Reading Parking Authority Garage located at Reed and Court Streets, which is approximately 536 feet from the Subject Property; and the maximum allowed distance under Section 600-1603.I. is 300 feet.

14. Applicant submitted to the Zoning Board an executed Agreement with the Reading Parking Authority for eight non-reserved residential parking spaces at the Reed and Court Streets Parking Garage.

15. Applicant stated the granting of the requested variances will allow the Subject Property to be operated as a permissible mixed-use property.

16. Applicant stated the requested variances are the minimum relief needed to allow the reasonable use of the Subject Property.

17. There were no objections to the requested relief.

DISCUSSION

Applicant is seeking variances from Sections 600-1203.D.(3) and 600-1603.I(1) of the Zoning Ordinance to allow off-street parking at the Reading Parking Authority Reed and Court Streets Parking Garage, which is 536 feet from the Subject Property.

The proposed use is in keeping with the spirit and intent of the Zoning Ordinance and will not be a detriment to the health, safety and welfare of the zoning district or the neighborhood in general as long as Applicant complies with the conditions set forth below.

CONCLUSIONS OF LAW

1. Applicant is Falls Mills, LLC.
2. The Subject Property is located at 531 Court Street, Reading, Berks County, Pennsylvania 19601.
3. The Subject Property is located in the Commercial Core (CC) Zoning District.
4. The Zoning Board is permitted to provide interpretation and grant applications for variances and special exceptions as set forth in the relevant sections of the Zoning Ordinance.
5. The Zoning Board incorporates the findings of fact as though fully set forth at length herein.
6. In order to grant the requested relief, the Applicant must show it has satisfied the relevant sections of the Zoning Ordinance.
7. After reviewing the Applicant's request in detail, the Zoning Hearing Board enters the following Decision:
 - a. Applicant is granted the requested variances for the proposed off-street parking spaces subject to the following conditions:
 - i. The relief is conditioned on the approval by the City of Reading of the conversion of the building located on the Subject Property to a commercial office on the first floor with five (5) apartments in the remainder of the building.

- ii. Applicant shall submit and maintain a lease for the eight (8) parking spaces.
- iii. Applicant shall apply for any required building trades, fire permits and submit to appropriate inspections deemed necessary.
- iv. Applicant shall comply with all relevant fire, building and occupancy codes and ordinances as well as the plans and testimony submitted before the Zoning Board.
- v. Applicant may not use, expand, alter or otherwise use the Subject Property inconsistently with the contents of this Decision without making application requesting further relief from the Zoning Board.
- vi. Failure to comply with any of these above-referenced conditions shall mean the immediate revocation of the relief granted herein.

The decision of this Board is by a vote of 5 to 0 .

**ZONING HEARING BOARD OF THE CITY OF
READING**

/s/ Jared Barcz

JARED BARCZ, CHAIRMAN

/s/ Philip Rabena

PHILIP RABENA

/s/ Thomas Fox

THOMAS FOX

/s/ Jeffrey Gattone

JEFFREY GATTONE

/s/ Charles Jones

CHARLES JONES