

IN RE: APPEAL READING HOUSING AUTHORITY RELATIVE TO A PROPERTY LOCATED AT 1001 SCOTT STREET, CITY OF READING, BERKS COUNTY, PENNSYLVANIA	: BEFORE THE ZONING HEARING : BOARD OF THE CITY OF READING, : PENNSYLVANIA : : APPEAL NO. 2506-0022 : : VARIANCE, INTERPRETATION : AND/OR SPECIAL EXCEPTION
---	--

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

AND NOW, this 9th day of July, 2025, a hearing having been held on July 9, 2025, upon the application of Reading Housing Authority, 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 Reading Housing Authority with a principal mailing address of 400 Hancock Boulevard, Reading, Berks County, Pennsylvania 19611 (hereinafter referred to as the “Applicant”).
2. Applicant is the fee simple owner of the property located at 1001 Scott Street, City of Reading, Berks County, Pennsylvania (hereinafter referred to as the “Subject Property”).
3. The Subject Property is located in the R-3 Residential 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 Edwin L. Stock, Esquire, of 50 North Fifth Street, Fourth Floor, Reading, PA 19601.

5. Applicant seeks a special exception to adaptively reuse the existing building known as the Neighborhood Resource Center as permitted by Section 600-804.B.(4)(a) and expand the use from offices and a community center to include a grocery store, food pantry, kitchen and classrooms. In the alternative, Applicant is seeking a special exception to expand the existing nonconforming use and any other relief required to use the space for the proposed uses.

6. On May 11, 2022, Applicant was granted relief to convert a decommissioned boiler house at the Oakbrook Homes development into a community center (Appeal 2022-18).

7. Applicant renovated the management and community building which will allow the building to contain a grocery store, food pantry, kitchen and classrooms to better serve the Oakbrook Homes community.

8. Applicant stated Section 600-1202.A(2)(b) permits adaptive reuse to include the proposed uses for the Subject Property.

9. Applicant stated the grocery store area will be operated under a lease agreement with Dilaria Herrera and will include the sale of fresh fruits and vegetables, household goods and baked goods. The lease prohibits the sale of alcohol, lottery tickets, skill games, and tobacco products.

10. Applicant stated the hours of operation for the grocery store will be from 6:00 a.m. to 10:00 p.m., seven days a week.

11. Applicant stated the remaining area of the renovated building will consist of the Oakbrook Residential Office, Neighborhood Resource Center Office, offices for outside service providers of various social service work, classrooms, community meeting rooms and food pantry.

12. Applicant stated the food pantry will only be accessible by the Housing Authority tenants.

13. Applicant stated there are 52 parking spaces located at the Subject Property and believes the parking meets the requirements that would be applicable to the Neighborhood Resource Center.

14. Applicant stated the requested relief will not be detrimental to the neighborhood and will benefit the residents of Oakbrook Homes and the community.

15. There were no objectors to the proposed relief.

16. The Board finds the Subject Property will be used in a manner which will not be detrimental to the health, safety and welfare of the neighborhood.

DISCUSSION

Applicant seeks a special exception to adaptively reuse the existing building known as the Neighborhood Resource Center as permitted by Section 600-804.B.(4)(a) and expand the use from offices and a community center to include a grocery store, food pantry, kitchen and classrooms. In the alternative, Applicant is seeking a special exception to expand the existing nonconforming use and any other relief required to use the space for the proposed uses. Applicant's proposed use complies with the requirements of the Zoning Ordinance and will not be a detriment to the health, safety and welfare of the neighborhood or the zoning district in general.

CONCLUSIONS OF LAW

1. Applicant is the Reading Housing Authority.
2. The Subject Property is located at 1001 Scott Street in the City of Reading, Berks County, Pennsylvania.
3. The Subject Property is located in the R-3 Residential Zoning District.

4. Applicant seeks a special exception to adaptively reuse the existing building known as the Neighborhood Resource Center as permitted by Section 600-804.B.(4)(a) and expand the use from offices and a community center to include a grocery store, food pantry, kitchen and classrooms. In the alternative, Applicant is seeking a special exception to expand the existing nonconforming use and any other relief required to use the space for the proposed uses.

5. The Zoning Board incorporates the findings of fact as though fully set forth at length herein.

6. In order to grant the variance and/or special exception, 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 hereby granted a special exception to adaptively reuse the existing building to include a grocery store, food pantry, kitchen and classrooms.

b. There shall be no sale of alcohol, lottery tickets, skill games, or tobacco products in the grocery store.

c. A Revised Plan of Record must be approved prior to the issuance of a zoning permit.

d. Applicant shall attend a One Stop meeting with the Building and Fire Inspectors to ensure compliance with all applicable Building and Fire Code requirements.

e. Applicant shall apply for all required building, trades and fire permits and submit to all required inspections deemed necessary.

f. Signage at the Subject Property shall comply with Section 600-1703 of the Zoning Ordinance. If Applicant does not provide sign drawings and specifications, then a separate zoning permit shall be required prior to the installation of the signage.

g. Applicant shall comply with all relevant building and occupancy codes and ordinances as well as the plans and testimony submitted before the Zoning Board.

h. 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.

i. 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/ Philip Rabena

PHILIP RABENA, CHAIRPERSON

/s/ Thomas Fox

THOMAS FOX

/s/ Jeffrey Gattone

JEFFREY GATTONE

/s/ Jared Barcz

JARED BARCZ

/s/ Charles Jones

CHARLES JONES