

**IN RE: APPEAL OF BERKS COALITION TO : BEFORE THE ZONING HEARING
END HOMELESSNESS, INC., RELATIVE TO : BOARD OF THE CITY OF READING,
A PROPERTY LOCATED AT 325 S. 12TH : PENNSYLVANIA
STREET, CITY OF READING, BERKS :
COUNTY, PENNSYLVANIA : APPEAL NO. 2505-0016
:
: 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 June 11, 2025, upon the application of Berks Coalition to End Homelessness, Inc., 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 Berks Coalition to End Homelessness, Inc., a Pennsylvania Non-for-Profit Corporation, with a mailing address of 600 Penn Street, 3rd Floor, Reading, Pennsylvania 19602 (hereinafter referred to as the “Applicant”).
2. Applicant is the fee simple owner of the property located at 325 S. 12th 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 by Keith Mooney, Esquire, of Barley Snyder, 2755 Century Boulevard, Wyomissing, Pennsylvania 19610.
5. Applicant seeks variance(s) to construct a private garage to house a mobile shower unit on the Subject Property that exceeds the allowed square footage and dimensional relief with respect to the

rear yard set-back requirements under Section 600-804 of the Zoning Ordinance, and all associated Variances, Special Exceptions and Interpretations.

6. Applicant stated its mission is to prevent, reduce and end homelessness in Berks County through comprehensive coordination of programs and resources.

7. In an effort to address the hygiene and personal care needs of individuals experiencing homelessness, Applicant stated it has obtained funding to acquire a mobile shower unit which will offer a safe and clean environment for individuals to maintain personal hygiene, help prevent the spread of diseases and infections within homeless communities, and improve the health and self-esteem of homeless people by providing them access to improved hygiene and clean clothes.

8. Applicant stated the garage is needed in order to house the mobile shower unit.

9. Applicant will drive the mobile shower unit to the places where the homeless are camped and it will never be used at the Subject Property.

10. Applicant stated the garage will not have water access but it will have heat to ensure continued use of the mobile shower unit during the colder months.

11. Applicant stated the current garage located at the Subject Property is too small for the mobile shower unit and that garage will be used for storage.

12. Applicant stated the proposed garage is approximately 900 square feet which exceeds the required square footage under Section 600-804 by 300 square feet.

13. Applicant stated the required rear yard setback under Section 600-804 is 20 feet and Applicant is proposing a rear yard setback of 10 feet for the proposed garage.

14. Applicant stated that given the benefits to the community related to the mobile shower unit, it has a plausible hardship to warrant the granting of the requested relief.

15. Applicant stated the height of the proposed garage will be approximately 14 feet which complies with the height requirement of 25 feet.

16. Applicant stated the unnecessary hardship was not created by Applicant since it had no control of the lot location, configuration and size, and did not construct the improvements located on the Subject Property.

17. Applicant stated the granting of the requested relief will not alter the essential character of the zoning district, nor impair the use of adjacent properties, nor be detrimental to the health, safety and welfare of the neighborhood or zoning district in general.

18. There were no objections to the requested relief.

DISCUSSION

Applicant seeks variance(s) to construct a private garage on the Subject Property to house a mobile shower unit that exceeds the allowed square footage and dimensional relief with respect to the rear yard set-back requirements under Section 600-804 of the Zoning Ordinance, and all associated Variances, Special Exceptions and Interpretations.

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

CONCLUSIONS OF LAW

1. Applicant is Berks Coalition to End Homelessness.
2. The Subject Property is located at 325 S. 12th Street, City of Reading, Berks County, Pennsylvania.
3. The Subject Property is located in the R-3 Residential Zoning District.
4. Applicant seeks a variance to construct a private garage on the Subject Property to house a mobile shower unit that exceeds the allowed square footage and dimensional relief with respect to the rear yard set-back requirements under Section 600-804 of the Zoning Ordinance, and all associated Variances, Special Exceptions and Interpretations.
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, 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 relief to construct a garage on the Subject Property, subject to the following conditions:

- (1) The garage may not be used for living quarters.
- (2) Applicant shall comply with all relevant building and occupancy codes and ordinances as well as the plans and testimony submitted before the Zoning Board.
- (3) 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.
- (4) 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, CHAIRMAN

/s/ Thomas Fox

THOMAS FOX

/s/ Jeffrey Gattone

JEFFREY GATTONE

/s/ Jared Barcz

JARED BARCZ

/s/ Charles Jones

CHARLES JONES