

**RESOLUTION #2024-002**

**RESOLUTION OF THE BOARD OF ADJUSTMENT  
OF THE BOROUGH OF HAWTHORNE  
(the "BOARD")**

**In the matter of:**

**33 Lafayette LLC  
219 Lafayette Ave  
Block 31, Lot 1  
Hawthorne, New Jersey (the "Property" or the "Premises")**

**WHEREAS**, Applicant has submitted a certain application to the Board, January 11, 2024, for Use Variance (the "Application"); and

**WHEREAS**, Applicant appeared before the Board on January 22, 2024; and

**WHEREAS**, the Board concludes that the requisite legal public notice was provided by Applicant; and

**WHEREAS**, the Board further concludes that it has jurisdiction to consider the application; and

**WHEREAS**, Applicant submitted the following in support of its application:

1. Borough of Hawthorne Zoning Board of Adjustment Application for Variance;
2. A four page site plan prepared by Edward A. Easse, AIA, dated August 30, 2023; and

**WHEREAS**, Applicant has made application to the Board for permission to convert a first floor vacant commercial space into residential apartment use, which violates Borough Zoning Code Section 540-161F. That provision requires all R-2 type residential uses (such as is proposed here) in the B-1 District to be located on the second floor with the first floor used for commercial purposes; and

**WHEREAS**, Applicant has submitted overwhelming proofs that commercial use of the first floor is not viable and essentially "zoned into inutility" in this instance. Applicant has made several efforts to rent the vacant portion of the first floor without success. The Board views this as a substantial

hardship connected to the size of the first floor space and location of the Premises. It is not suitable for commercial use, but its size and layout are ideal for an apartment use. The proposed use is therefore more harmonious. Also this proposal fits well as there are other first floor residential uses in the immediate vicinity. We also note that any use of the commercial space for commercial uses would have to abide by A.D.A. requirements, thus making the usable area of the first floor space smaller and even less marketable.

**NOW THEREFORE**, after due consideration the Zoning Board of Adjustment of the Borough of Hawthorne makes the following findings of fact and conclusions, based upon the evidence presented at its public hearing and the findings enumerated herein:

**A. FINDINGS**

1. All of the preamble recitals set forth above are hereby adopted as factual findings.
2. Applicant has applied for permission to use the first floor of the Premises for residential use.
3. The Premises is located in the Borough's B-1 District which prohibits first floor residential uses as described above. Furthermore, the proposed residential use does not meet the minimum lot area required (6,500 square feet required/5,245 square feet existing to remain).
4. There is a general lack of rental activity for commercial use, leaving a glut of unusable and less desirable office and retail space. The proposed apartment use is ideal since it is less intense than commercial and requires less parking while creating an economic benefit by adding more potential customers to the downtown area.

The application advances the goals of the Municipal Land Use Law by providing for appropriate densities.

**B. CONCLUSIONS**

In considering this application, the Board adopts the testimony presented and hereby reaches the conclusion that ample evidence has been presented to justify the grant of the use variance. Per the

applicable law, the Applicant must demonstrate, with an enhanced quality of proof, “special reasons”, namely that the use is peculiarly fitted to the particular location for which the variance is sought or that there is a substantial hardship associated with the physical condition of the Property.

Specifically, this Board determines that based on the evidence, the existing first floor unit is devoid of any reasonably potential commercial use as it is simply too small, lacks adequate parking and is not ADA compliant.

The Board also concludes that Applicant has satisfied the negative criteria, namely that this proposal will not result in substantial detriment on the neighboring properties and also there is no substantial detriment to the public good and no substantial impairment to the zone plan.

**THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED**, that the Board determines the Applicant has met its burden of proof for the requested relief and hereby **APPROVES** such application subject to the following conditions:

**C. CONDITIONS OF APPROVAL**

1. These Conditions of Approval shall be binding upon the Applicant, the owner, and any successors and/or assigns of either.

3. The Applicant shall promptly pay any professional staff fees billed, in excess of the required application escrows.

4. The Applicant must obtain approvals from any and all other governmental and/or public agencies as required, whether federal, state, county or local, over which the Board has no control but which are necessary in order to finalize and/or implement the relief being granted herein, as well as any construction that may be a part of said relief. The Applicant is solely responsible for determining which governmental and/or public agencies, if any, such approvals are required of. The Applicant is further required to submit a copy to the Board’s secretary of all approvals and/or denials received from such outside agencies, with a copy thereof to the Board’s Secretary, Attorney, Engineer and Planner.

5. Any improvement(s) to be constructed as a result of this approval shall be constructed and operated in full compliance with the Code of the Borough of Hawthorne, the Revised Statutes of the State of New Jersey and any other applicable county and/or federal law.

6. The Applicant shall certify that all taxes and assessments have been paid up to the present time.

7. The Applicant shall correct and make safe any dangerous or unsafe condition caused by the Applicant or those acting for and/or on its behalf affecting public safety or general welfare if any such condition develops.

8. The relief as granted herein is subject to the discovery of any and all deed restrictions upon the Premises which had not been known or had not been disclosed to the Board, but which would have had a materially negative impact upon the Board's decision in this matter had they been so known, or so disclosed.

9. The Applicant must maintain an escrow account with the Borough and pay the costs of all professional review and other fees required to act on the Application, pursuant to the applicable sections of the Borough's land development ordinances, zone codes and any other applicable municipal codes, and the New Jersey Municipal Land Use Law. The Applicant's escrow account must be current prior to any permits being issued, or construction or other activity commencing on the approved project.

10. The Applicant must obtain all other construction or other municipal permits required with respect to the relief as granted herein.

11. Any improvement(s) to be constructed as a result of the Board approving this application shall be constructed and operated in full compliance with the Uniform Construction Code, Code of the Borough of Hawthorne, the Revised Statutes of the State of New Jersey and any other applicable county, state and/or federal law.

12. The Applicants/owners are hereby advised that this application and plan have not been reviewed for conformance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). It is the responsibility of the Applicants/owners to conform to said legislation.

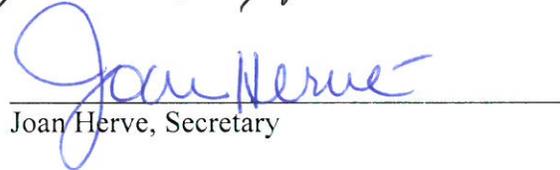
13. The Applicant shall not expand the residential use of the first floor beyond this approved apartment unit.

14. Applicant shall revise its plans to provide five (5) parking spaces (a reduction of one (1) space), and convert the abandoned space to pervious surface, subject to Borough review and approval.

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, that the Borough of Hawthorne is hereby directed to mail a copy of this Resolution to the Applicant and/or the Applicant's attorney and to file copies of this Resolution with the Borough Clerk, Borough Construction Official, Borough Tax Assessor and Borough Zoning Officer and to cause notice of these determinations of the Zoning Board to be published in the official newspaper of the Borough of Hawthorne within ten (10) days of the date hereof and thereafter published accordingly to law.

The undersigned certifies that the within Resolution was adopted by the Board and memorialized herein pursuant to N.J.S.A. 40:55D-10(g) on February 26, 2024.

  
John F. Gallagher, Chairman

  
Joan Herve, Secretary

	Motion	Second	Aye	Nay	Abstain	Absent
<b>Chairman Gallagher</b>						
<b>Vice Chairman Schroter</b>				X		
<b>Board Member Cuttitta</b>			X			
<b>Board Member DeMarco</b>					X	
<b>Board Member Hatch</b>		X	X			
<b>Board Member Totaro</b>						X
<b>Board Member Wenzke</b>	X		X			
<b>Board Member Lind (alt. 1)</b>			X			
<b>Board Member Ramirez (alt. 2)</b>			X			