



**RESOLUTION 2026-13**  
of the  
**ZONING BOARD OF ADJUSTMENT**  
of the **TOWNSHIP OF VERONA**

Application No. 2026-09; 725 Bloomfield Avenue, Block 1608, Lot 10 Zone: TC (Town Center) District

**WHEREAS**, Liberty Bank (the “Applicant”), represented by Alan Trembulak, Esq., Montclair Real Estate Law Group, is the tenant operating a bank branch at the property located at 725 Bloomfield Avenue, Verona, New Jersey (the “Property”); and

**WHEREAS**, the Property is located in the TC (Town Center) Zone District on the Township of Verona Zoning Map; and

**WHEREAS**, the Applicant submitted an application to the Verona Zoning Board of Adjustment (the “Board”) seeking approval to: (1) operate a drive-in teller service and ATM at the bank branch; (2) erect a 25-foot flagpole; (3) install a freestanding monument sign; and (4) allow temporary signs occupying 50% of window space on two identified windows; and

**WHEREAS**, this matter was heard during a Regular Meeting of the Verona Zoning Board of Adjustment conducted on May 14, 2026, at which time it was established that the Applicant had met the notice requirements set forth in the Municipal Land Use Law and the Applicant was permitted to proceed; and

**APPLICABLE ORDINANCE PROVISIONS**

**WHEREAS**, the Ordinance provisions applicable to this Application and the variances required by the Applicant are as follows:

**§ 150-17.14 A.(3) – Drive-In Use Variance (D-1).** Banks and other financial institutions are a principal permitted use in the TC Zone; however, drive-in uses associated with banks are expressly prohibited. A D-1 use variance is required for the proposed drive-in teller and ATM facility. A drive-in use was previously approved for this property pursuant to a Board of Adjustment Resolution dated December 9, 2004; however, following the closure of the prior bank tenant, the nonconforming drive-in use is deemed abandoned after 12 consecutive months of non-use;

**§ 150-7.2 E. – Flagpole Height (C-2 Variance).** Accessory structures in nonresidential districts shall not exceed two stories or 20 feet in height. The proposed flagpole has an external height of 25 feet, exceeding the 20-foot maximum by 5 feet. A C(2) variance is required;

**§ 150-7.9 X.(12) – Freestanding Monument Sign (C-2 Variance).** Ground signs, freestanding signs, pylon signs, outdoor advertising signs, and billboards are prohibited in the TC Zone. A C(2) variance is required for the proposed freestanding monument sign. A freestanding monument sign was previously approved for this property pursuant to a Board of Adjustment Resolution dated October 12, 2006;

**§ 150-5.3 D. – Window Signage / Sight Triangle (C-2 Variance).** The Applicant seeks approval for temporary window signage covering up to 50% of two identified windows on the northwestern corner of the building.

The Applicant further represented that the flagpole location would comply with applicable sight triangle clearances at the intersection of Bloomfield Avenue and West Lincoln Street. A C(2) variance is required for the window signage; and

### **TESTIMONY AND EVIDENCE**

**WHEREAS**, the following witnesses were sworn and testified on behalf of the Applicant:

- Richard Spengler, President and CEO of Liberty Bank; and
- George Williams, Professional Planner, Nishuane Group, Montclair, New Jersey.

**WHEREAS**, the following exhibits were introduced into evidence:

- Exhibit A-1: Resolution dated December 9, 2004;
- Exhibit A-2: Resolution dated October 12, 2006; and
- Exhibit A-3: Photographs depicting nearby properties with extensive window signage.

**WHEREAS**, Mr. Trembulak provided a history of the Property, explaining that it previously operated as a bank branch beginning in 2004, when approvals were originally granted to American Savings Bank of New Jersey, including a D-1 use variance permitting drive-through lanes and an ATM facility, and a variance permitting a freestanding monument sign within the Town Center Zone. American Savings Bank was subsequently acquired by Investors Bank, which continued operations at the Property. Investors Bank was later acquired by Citizens Bank, which closed the branch in approximately late 2024. Liberty Bank thereafter assumed the lease and reopened the branch earlier in 2026. Mr. Trembulak represented that no substantial changes had been made to the building or site other than signage and installation of a flagpole; and

**WHEREAS**, Mr. Spengler testified that Liberty Bank took assignment of the lease in approximately August 2025; that the Property remained vacant between Citizens Bank's closure and Liberty Bank's occupancy; that the building remained configured as a bank branch during the vacancy period; and that no significant changes were made to the building footprint or site layout other than restriping and resurfacing the parking lot for safety purposes; and

**WHEREAS**, Mr. Spengler testified regarding the proposed drive-through teller and ATM operations, explaining that: the ATM had been removed by Citizens Bank upon branch closure; the proposed ATM would be installed through the building wall in the same location previously utilized by prior bank tenants; the drive-through lanes would function similarly to prior operations; ATM security cameras and lighting are federally required; and drive-through banking and ATM access remain important customer conveniences, particularly for customers with children or those requiring after-hours access; and

**WHEREAS**, Mr. Spengler testified regarding the proposed freestanding monument sign, explaining that a similar sign had previously existed at the Property pursuant to earlier Board approvals, that the proposed sign would be internally illuminated, and that the sign would identify the bank and improve visibility along the Bloomfield Avenue corridor. Following Board deliberation concerning the location of the monument sign, counsel for the Applicant requested that the application be modified to restore the monument sign to its previously approved location at the corner of Bloomfield Avenue and East Lincoln Street; and

**WHEREAS**, Mr. Spengler testified regarding the proposed 25-foot flagpole, acknowledging that it was installed without prior permits and that the Applicant had been cited by the Zoning Officer for installation without permits. Mr. Spengler testified that banks commonly display American

flags and that the proposed flag would not advertise the business. The Applicant agreed to comply with all Township ordinances governing flag size, number of flags, placement requirements, and sight triangle regulations. Following Board deliberation, counsel for the Applicant requested that the application be modified to restore the flagpole to its previously approved location along Bloomfield Avenue near the building entrance; and

**WHEREAS**, Mr. Spengler testified that the Applicant sought approval for temporary window signage covering up to 50% of two windows located on the northwestern corner of the building, that the signage would advertise temporary banking products and promotions, that signage would rotate periodically and not remain permanent, and that smaller signage permitted under the Ordinance could create additional driver distraction as motorists attempted to read smaller text; and

**WHEREAS**, Mr. Williams testified as a Professional Planner regarding the D(1) use variance and C(2) variances. He stated that his review included the Township's 2022 Master Plan, the Land Development Ordinance, prior approvals from 2004 and 2006, planning literature, applicable case law, and site visits; and

**WHEREAS**, with respect to the positive criteria for the D(1) use variance, Mr. Williams testified that the facility had operated successfully for decades, existing traffic controls remained in place at the signalized intersection, no negative impacts had resulted from the long-standing operation and approval would advance purposes of zoning by eliminating a vacancy on Bloomfield Avenue, supporting public welfare, and promoting a desirable visual environment and civic design consistent with Master Plan goals; and

**WHEREAS**, with respect to the negative criteria, Mr. Williams opined that granting the requested variances would create no substantial detriment to the public good and no substantial impairment to the zone plan, as the use had operated for decades without issue and was consistent with Master Plan goals promoting economic vitality and appropriate redevelopment along Bloomfield Avenue; and

**WHEREAS**, with respect to the C(2) variances, Mr. Williams testified that window signage exceeding Ordinance limits would improve readability and visibility, that monument signage remained appropriate for the site based on prior approvals and branding needs, and that the additional five feet of flagpole height would have negligible visual impact and would not obstruct light or air; and

**WHEREAS**, no members of the public appeared in opposition to the Application; and

**WHEREAS**, the Board deliberated regarding the location of the monument sign and flagpole, traffic and safety concerns related to the ATM drive-through, the size of the monument sign, sight triangle compliance, and window coverage calculations. Following deliberation, the Applicant's counsel agreed to modify the application to restore the monument sign and flagpole to their previously approved locations; and

### **BOARD FINDINGS**

**WHEREAS**, the Board carefully considered the testimony and evidence presented and makes the following findings:

**D(1) Use Variance – Drive-In Teller and ATM Facility:** The Board finds that the Property is particularly suited for the continued operation of a drive-through banking facility. The facility operated successfully at this location for approximately twenty years under prior approvals. The

existing signalized intersection provides adequate traffic control. The Applicant demonstrated that the use advances the purposes of zoning by eliminating a commercial vacancy along Bloomfield Avenue, supporting the economic vitality of the Town Center Zone, and providing a public benefit consistent with the Master Plan. The Board further finds that the use would not create a substantial detriment to the public good and would not substantially impair the intent and purpose of the Zone Plan or Zoning Ordinance;

**C(2) Variance – Flagpole Height:** The Board finds that the five-foot excess in flagpole height above the 20-foot maximum would have negligible visual impact on the surrounding area and would not obstruct light or air. The benefits of the deviation substantially outweigh any detriment therefrom;

**C(2) Variance – Freestanding Monument Sign:** The Board finds that a freestanding monument sign had previously been approved for this Property and that the proposed sign is appropriate for the site based on the bank's operational needs and the visibility requirements of the Bloomfield Avenue corridor. The benefits of the deviation substantially outweigh any detriment therefrom, subject to the height limitation imposed as a condition of approval;

**C(2) Variance – Window Signage:** The Board finds that temporary window signage covering up to 50% of the two identified windows is appropriate for the bank's operational needs and that the Applicant sufficiently justified the relief requested. The Board further finds that the variances can be granted without substantial detriment to the public good.

#### **BOARD ACTION**

**WHEREAS**, Vice Chair Weston made a motion to approve the D(1) use variance for the drive-through ATM and the three C(2) variances, with conditions, and Mr. Tully seconded the motion; and

**WHEREAS**, the Board voted to approve the Application, with conditions, by a unanimous vote of 7-0.

**NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED** by the Zoning Board of Adjustment of the Township of Verona that Application No. 2026-09 for 725 Bloomfield Avenue is hereby approved subject to the following conditions:

- The Applicant shall comply with all testimony and representations made to the Board, which testimony and representations are incorporated herein as though fully set forth.
- The Applicant shall comply with all comments and recommendations contained in the reports of the Board's professionals except as specifically modified during the hearing.
- Signage shall be erected stating "No Left Turn onto Bloomfield Avenue" when exiting the ATM/drive-through lanes.
- Temporary window signage shall be permitted on the two identified windows on the northwestern corner of the building only, with coverage not to exceed 50% per window. All remaining windows on the building shall comply with applicable Ordinance limits.
- The freestanding monument sign shall not exceed four (4) feet in height and shall be restored to its previously approved corner location at Bloomfield Avenue and East Lincoln Street.
- Only one flag shall fly at a time on the flagpole; the flag shall not exceed five feet by eight feet (5' x 8') in size and shall not contain any commercial advertising. The flagpole



shall be restored to its previously approved location along Bloomfield Avenue near the building entrance.

- The Applicant shall comply with all applicable Township ordinances governing flag size, number of flags, placement, and sight triangle clearances.
- Hours of operation for the drive-through teller shall be Monday through Friday, 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m., and Saturday, 9:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m.
- The Applicant shall obtain all required permits and approvals, including any required building permits for the ATM installation and flagpole, from all governmental agencies having jurisdiction prior to commencement of any work.
- The Applicant shall comply with all applicable federal requirements governing ATM security, including cameras and lighting.
- The Applicant shall comply with all applicable Township ordinances and construction code requirements.

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED** that a copy of this Resolution shall be provided to the Applicant, Township Manager, Township Council, and Township Clerk.

**MOTION TO APPROVE:** Mr. Ryan **SECOND:** Dr. Cuartas

**Roll Call Vote:**

	AYES	NAYS	NOT ELIGIBLE	RECUSED	ABSENT
Mr. Tully	✓				
Dr. Ries	✓				
Dr. Cuartas	✓				
Mr. Ryan	✓				
Mrs. Murphy Bradacs					✓
Mr. Mathewson			Abstain		
Mrs. DiBartolo					✓
Vice-Chair Weston	✓				
Chair McGinley	✓				

**THIS IS TO CERTIFY THAT THE FOREGOING IS A TRUE AND EXACT COPY OF A RESOLUTION ADOPTED BY THE BOARD OF ADJUSTMENT OF REGULAR MEETING HELD ON JUNE 11, 2026.**

Dolores Carpinelli  
**Dolores Carpinelli**  
**Board Secretary**

Daniel McGinley  
**Daniel McGinley**  
**Chairman**