

NARRATIVE IN SUPPORT OF A SPECIAL EXCEPTION APPLICATION

Home Occupation – Natural Hair Braiding

Applicant: Siewe Ngassa Willy Peken

Property Address: 1427 Montrose Avenue, Bethlehem, PA 18018

I respectfully submit this narrative in support of my application for a Special Exception to operate a Home Occupation for natural hair braiding in accordance with Section 1322.03(E) of the City of Bethlehem Zoning Ordinance.

The purpose of this request is to allow my wife to provide natural hair braiding services on a very limited basis from our residence. Hair braiding is a quiet, low-impact personal service that does not involve the use of chemicals, hair dyes, relaxers, permanent wave solutions, or any hazardous materials. The business is limited exclusively to natural hair braiding.

The activity will be conducted only within the dining room of our home. No other area of the residence will be used for business purposes. The residential appearance and character of the property will remain unchanged, and there will be no exterior modifications, commercial signs, or outdoor business activities.

Services will be provided strictly by appointment only. Because my wife is currently attending school, appointments will be scheduled only during her available hours. Most weeks, she expects to serve approximately one client per day, with no more than two clients on days when her schedule allows. Business hours will generally be between 9:00 a.m. and 5:00 p.m., Tuesday, Friday, and Saturday, although appointments may vary depending on her school schedule.

The business will generate minimal traffic. Only one client will normally be present at a time, and there will be no waiting area or groups of customers gathering at the property. The residence has adequate off-street parking to accommodate clients without affecting neighboring properties or public streets.

The operation of this home occupation will not create excessive noise, odors, vibrations, smoke, glare, dust, or any other condition that would negatively impact the surrounding neighborhood. The business is intended to remain small, quiet, and fully compatible with the residential character of the area.

This home occupation will provide our family with an opportunity to earn supplemental income while allowing my wife to continue her education and care for our young

The proposed natural hair braiding business is small in scale, appointment-based, and compatible with the surrounding residential neighborhood. The applicant respectfully requests approval of the Special Exception and is willing to comply with any reasonable conditions established by the Zoning Hearing Board.

Conclusion

This business is intended to provide a modest source of income while respecting the residential neighborhood. Because of the limited hours, appointment-only scheduling, absence of outside employees, lack of chemical treatments, and available private parking, the applicant believes the requested Special Exception satisfies the intent of the zoning ordinance.

Responses to Home Occupation Requirements (Items 1–19)

Property Address: 1427 Montrose Avenue, Bethlehem, PA 18018

Business: Home-Based Natural Hair Braiding

Application: Special Exception – Home Occupation

These responses are submitted in support of the application for a Special Exception. The proposed business is a very small, family-operated home occupation. The business will be conducted in a manner intended to preserve the quiet residential character of the neighborhood and to comply with applicable City of Bethlehem requirements.

Response to Item 1

Only the dining room of the residence will be used for the business. The area used for the home occupation will not exceed 25% of the habitable floor area of the main building. The remainder of the home will continue to be used exclusively as a family residence.

Response to Item 2

No detached garage, shed, or accessory building will be used for the business.

Response to Item 3

The property will remain a single-family residence. No exterior changes will be made to give the home a commercial appearance. The residential character of the building and lot will be preserved.

Response to Item 4

The business will be operated only by my wife, who lives at this residence. There will be no outside or non-resident employees, and the property will not be used as a meeting place for employees traveling to another work site.

Response to Item 5

No exterior sign, banner, or advertising display will be installed on the property.

Response to Item 6

There will be no non-resident employee requiring an additional parking space. The property has three off-street parking spaces. Customer visits will be limited and scheduled by appointment only, and customers will use available off-street parking on the private driveway whenever possible.

Response to Item 7

Natural hair braiding services will be provided to individual clients strictly by appointment only. Business hours will be Tuesday 3:00 PM–6:30 PM, Friday 3:00 PM–6:30 PM, and Saturday 9:00 AM–5:00 PM. These limited hours were established because my wife is a full-time student. Normally only one client will be scheduled at a time, with a maximum of two clients only if scheduling requires it. No walk-in or unscheduled customers will be accepted.

Response to Item 8

No retail sales of products will occur at the residence.

Response to Item 9

Only a small amount of braiding supplies, such as hair extensions and basic hair-care items, will be stored inside the home. No outdoor storage of supplies, equipment, storage trailers, construction equipment, landscaping equipment, cement mixers, or similar equipment will be used or parked on the property in connection with the business.

Response to Item 10

The business does not involve a biological, medical, or other testing laboratory.

Response to Item 11

The business will not require deliveries by tractor-trailer truck or heavy commercial vehicles.

Response to Item 12

Natural hair braiding does not create excessive noise, smoke, noxious odor, vibration, glare, electrical or electronic interference, or other impacts detectable on neighboring properties. No chemical hair treatments will be performed. The business will not involve the storage or use of hazardous, flammable, explosive, toxic, or highly hazardous substances beyond ordinary household-type materials.

Response to Item 13

The business will operate only during the stated business hours: Tuesday 3:00 PM–6:30 PM, Friday 3:00 PM–6:30 PM, and Saturday 9:00 AM–5:00 PM. No business activity will occur between 9:00 PM and 7:30 AM.

Response to Item 14

No tutoring, classroom instruction, group training, or similar instructional sessions will be conducted.

Response to Item 15

The natural hair braiding service will be performed solely by my wife, who resides at the property. There will be no non-resident employees. No hair cutting, chemical hair treatments, manicuring, or other unrelated salon services will be provided.

Response to Item 16

The business is not the main office of a medical doctor, chiropractor, dentist, funeral home, or similar professional use prohibited as a home occupation.

Response to Item 17

The proposed home occupation will have minimal impact on the neighborhood. Customer traffic will be very limited, appointments will be scheduled, adequate off-street parking is available, there will be no non-resident employees or walk-in customers, and the residential appearance of the property will remain unchanged. The applicant respectfully requests approval of the Special Exception and will comply with any reasonable conditions imposed by the Zoning Hearing Board.

Response to Item 18

The business does not involve manufacturing, industrial activity, or commercial repair of motor vehicles. The activity is limited to natural hair braiding services.

Response to Item 19

The proposed use involves limited customer visits by appointment and is therefore being submitted to the Zoning Hearing Board as a Major Home Occupation/Special Exception rather than as a Minor Home Occupation. Customer visits will be strictly controlled by appointment, normally with one client scheduled at a time and no walk-in customers.

The applicant intends to operate responsibly, comply with all applicable City requirements, and maintain a safe, clean, and respectful environment for the household, neighbors, and clients.

For these reasons, I respectfully request that the Zoning Hearing Board grant the requested Special Exception to permit the proposed Home Occupation. The requested use is intended to preserve the residential nature of the neighborhood and not adversely affect public health, safety, or welfare.

Respectfully submitted,

Siewe Ngassa Willy Peken

Applicant and Property Owner