

IN THE MATTER OF THE	*	BEFORE THE ALCOHOLIC
APPLICATION OF MATTHEW	*	
OLIVER KRIST AND ALLISON	*	BEVERAGE HEARING BOARD
ELIZABETH KRIST ON BEHALF	*	
OF BACKWATER BOOKS, LLC	*	FOR
T/A BACKWATER BOOKS FOR	*	
AN EXTENSION OF PREMISES	*	HOWARD COUNTY, MARYLAND
AND CHANGE IN CLASS FOR	*	
A CLASS D BEER, WINE AND	*	Case No.: 26-01
LIQUOR 7-DAY ON/OFF SALE	*	
LICENSE	*	

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**DECISION AND ORDER**

The Board of License Commissioners for Howard County, Maryland (the “Liquor Board”), pursuant to Rule 1.02(A) of the Liquor Board Rules and Regulations, has delegated the authority to hear and decide cases to the Alcoholic Beverage Hearing Board for Howard County, Maryland (the “Hearing Board”).

On January 27, 2026, the Hearing Board heard the application of Matthew Oliver Krist and Allison Elizabeth Krist (the “Applicants”), on behalf of Backwater Books, LLC t/a Backwater Books (“Backwater Books”), for an extension of premises and change in class for a Class D, Beer, Wine and Liquor, 7-Day on/off sale License for 3,850 sq. ft. bookstore with a 277 sq. ft. patio located at 8156 Main Street, Ellicott City, MD 21043.

The hearing was properly advertised, and the property posted pursuant to the Alcoholic Beverages Article of the Annotated Code of Maryland. The Applicant was represented by Chris DeCarlo, Esquire and there were no protestants who appeared in opposition to the application.

All the documents on file were incorporated into the record by reference.

**PROFFER**

Mr. DeCarlo proffered that Backwater Books has an existing Class D license which was

approved in January 2023, and he stated that since that approval, there have been no issues with compliance with the alcoholic beverage laws. Mr. DeCarlo stated that due to increased demand, there is a need to extend the licensed premises to include the first floor of the building and to allow for off-sale privileges so that customers may purchase bottles of wine to go. Mr. DeCarlo stated that no alterations will be made to the first floor and that the alcohol in the off-sale area on the first floor will be stored in a locked cabinet with a limited number of items for sale. Mr. DeCarlo stated that no changes will be made to the previously licensed patio area.

### **SUMMARY OF TESTIMONY**

Matthew Oliver Krist, 50% interest holder and current resident agent, was sworn in and testified before the Hearing Board. Mr. Krist testified as to the location of the establishment and to photographs of the bar, and he stated that the business opened in November 2022. Mr. Krist stated that he is a Howard County resident, and that he has no felonies or alcohol violations. Mr. Krist stated that he and his wife were former special education schoolteachers and that they decided to open a bookstore with a bar. Mr. Krist stated that he has had no complaints in the 3 years that he has been open, that he holds monthly events, and that he is requesting approval to extend the licensed premises to the first floor. Mr. Krist stated that the kids' room was moved, that they wanted to have another area to accommodate book clubs, and that they wanted to have another area to purchase wine. Mr. Krist stated that alcohol sales will occur in the upstairs bar area and that no purchases of alcohol will be made in the retail section on the first floor. Mr. Krist stated that another bar will not be opened on the first floor. Mr. Krist stated that the new license will allow patrons to walk from the second floor to the first floor with alcohol and to allow for the off-sale purchases of alcohol. Mr. Krist stated that they offer pre-packaged foods, that food sales will be at least 20% of total gross sales, and that he will certify every year that he has met his ratio of

food sales to alcohol sales.

Mr. Krist stated that he may pair alcohol with a book for off-sales purchases and that he and his wife are Alcohol Awareness certified. Mr. Krist stated that he is at the bookstore 6 days a week, that he is closed on Mondays, and that the hours of operation are Tuesday through Thursday from 11 a.m. to 9 p.m., Friday from 11 a.m. until 10 p.m., Saturday from 11 a.m. until 11 p.m., and on Sunday from 11 a.m. to 6 p.m. Mr. Krist stated that he has 4 full-time employees, 1 part-time employee and that the two bartenders are Training for Intervention ProcedureS (TIPS) Certified. Mr. Krist stated that any employee working on the first floor will be Alcohol Awareness certified and that he is familiar with the Howard County Liquor Board Rules and Regulations. Mr. Krist stated that an approval of this request would be an accommodation to the public and that he is a community independent bookstore. Mr. Krist stated that the main entrance is on the first floor, that there is a side door on the second floor that leads to the patio, and that employees will ensure at all times that customers do not leave the premises with an open container. Mr. Krist stated that alcohol sales will be less than 10% of the total gross sales.

Pursuant to Rule 6.13 of the Liquor Board Rules and Regulations, the Applicants waived their right to request the Liquor Board to hear the case.

Based on the evidence presented at the hearing, the Alcoholic Beverage Hearing Board makes the following Findings of Fact and Conclusions of Law:

#### **FINDINGS OF FACT**

1. The Hearing Board finds that Matthew Oliver Krist and Allison Elizabeth Krist (the “Applicants”), on behalf of Backwater Books, LLC t/a Backwater Books (“Backwater Books”), have applied for an extension of premises and change in class for a Class D, Beer, Wine and Liquor, 7-Day on/off sale License for 3,850 sq. ft. bookstore with a 277 sq. ft. patio located at 8156

Main Street, Ellicott City, MD 21043.

2. The Hearing Board finds that the Applicants are fit and proper persons to hold an alcoholic beverage license.

3. The Hearing Board finds that Matthew Oliver Krist, the resident agent applicant, meets the requirements of Rules 1.10(S), 1.10(T), and 2.06 of the Liquor Board Rules and Regulations concerning resident agent qualifications.

4. The Hearing Board finds that the granting of the application is necessary for the accommodation of the public.

5. The Hearing Board finds that the granting of the application will not unduly disturb the peace and safety of the residents of the neighborhood.

#### **CONCLUSIONS OF LAW**

1. The Hearing Board concludes that Matthew Oliver Krist and Allison Elizabeth Krist (the “Applicants”), on behalf of Backwater Books, LLC t/a Backwater Books (“Backwater Books”), have applied for an extension of premises and change in class for a Class D, Beer, Wine and Liquor, 7-Day on/off sale License for 3,850 sq. ft. bookstore with a 277 sq. ft. patio located at 8156 Main Street, Ellicott City, MD 21043.

2. The Hearing Board concludes that the Applicants are fit and proper persons to hold an alcoholic beverage license.

3. The Hearing Board concludes that Matthew Oliver Krist, the resident agent applicant, meets the requirements of Rules 1.10(S), 1.10(T), and 2.06 of the Liquor Board Rules and Regulations concerning resident agent qualifications.

4. The Hearing Board concludes that the granting of the application is necessary for the accommodation of the public.

5. The Hearing Board concludes that the granting of the application will not unduly disturb the peace and safety of the residents of the neighborhood.

**ORDER**

For the foregoing reasons, it is this 20<sup>th</sup> day of March, 2026, by the Alcoholic Beverage Hearing Board of Howard County **ORDERED** that the application of Matthew Oliver Krist and Allison Elizabeth Krist (the “Applicants”), on behalf of Backwater Books, LLC t/a Backwater Books (“Backwater Books”), for an extension of premises and change in class for a Class D, Beer, Wine and Liquor, 7-Day on/off sale License for 3,850 sq. ft. bookstore with a 277 sq. ft. patio located at 8156 Main Street, Ellicott City, MD 21043, be and the same is hereby **GRANTED**, subject to the following conditions:

- (a) That the Applicants comply with all State and County laws and regulations;
- (b) That the Applicants satisfy any requirements necessary to obtain the license by July 27, 2026 unless that deadline is extended by the Board upon good cause shown;
- (c) Failure to comply with these conditions shall render this Proposed Decision and Order null and void.

ATTEST:

**ALCOHOLIC BEVERAGE HEARING  
BOARD OF HOWARD COUNTY,  
MARYLAND**

Kel Berg  
Kel Berg  
Board Administrator

/S/  
Steven Chen, Chairperson

/S/  
Steve Hunt, Vice-Chairperson

**REVIEWED BY HOWARD COUNTY  
OFFICE OF LAW  
GARY W. KUC  
COUNTY SOLICITOR**

/S/  
Ed Coleman, Member

/S/  
Beth Johnson, Member

[Signature]  
Hyunjae Shin, Esquire  
Senior Assistant County Solicitor

/S/  
Claire Kim, Member