

Minutes of the Meeting and Hearing of the Zoning Board of Appeals
City Hall-745 Second Street, La Salle, IL 61301
5:00 p.m. February 22, 2021

The meeting was called to order by Zoning Board of Appeals Chairman Bob Thompson at 5:00 p.m.

ROLL CALL

PRESENT: Bob Thompson, Nikki Baer, June Gardner, Larry Happ, Sam McNeilly

ABSENT: Mike Schmotzer

OTHERS PRESENT: City Attorney Jim McPhedran, City Clerk Carrie Brown, Deputy City Clerk Brent Bader, Alderman John Lavieri, City Engineer Brian Brown, Economic Development Director Leah Inman, Mr. JJ Raffelson

A quorum was present.

Chairman Thompson made a motion to forego the formal reading of the Legal Notice and enter it into the record as Exhibit A. The motion was seconded by Nikki Baer.

Voice vote, all ayes. Motion carried.

Chairman Thompson swore in the petitioner Mr. JJ Raffelson, owner of JJR Next Level Training & Fitness, LLC. Located at 32 Gunia Drive.

Mr. Raffelson explained that his business has recently expanded with a 9,500 square foot addition. He explained that he is requesting a variance from the required 81 parking spaces to 47 parking spaces, two of which are handicapped parking spaces. Mr. Raffelson explained that with the nature of his business, he does not typically have people parking for extended periods of time therefore he believes the reduction in the number of parking spaces is adequate. His clients are mainly dropped off and picked up.

Attorney McPhedran confirmed that the requested 47 parking spaces are for both the existing building and the new addition and that of those 47 spaces two are designated for handicapped parking. Mr. Raffelson confirmed those statements to be correct. Attorney McPhedran stated that it was his understanding that part of this variance request was to extend the time requirement for the new parking area to be paved. Mr. Raffelson stated that it is his plan to have the parking lot paved by August 1, 2021. Attorney McPhedran asked the petitioner if he was agreeable to an occupancy limit of 200 with the understanding that if he were to permanently exceed that amount he would need to request an additional variance or permission from the City Council if he were to exceed that amount for a specific event. Mr. Raffelson stated that he understood this but did not foresee having more than 200 people in the future.

Larry Happ asked if it would be possible to add more than two handicapped parking spaces as part of the 47 allowed spaces. Mr. Raffelson said that in the last three years they have not had the handicapped spaces used. Mr. Happ said that he was thinking more in terms of tournaments or larger events, where more handicapped parking spaces may be needed. Mr. Raffelson said that they do not host tournaments, they are a practice facility. He said that the amount of space he currently has and

the rules regarding club volleyball would not allow him to host sanctioned club tournaments at this time. However, Mr. Raffelson added that it is in his business plan as a goal in the future. Chairman Thompson indicated that this is the reason the 200 occupancy will be included as a stipulation of the variance, as if his use were to change or expand, the variance would need to be revisited.

Fire Chief Andy Bacidore said if, for some reason, his facility were to go over the 300 person limit, the building has to be equipped with a sprinkler system for fire suppression.

Sam McNeilly questioned the layout of the parking lots and wondered if they were tied-in in some way to assist with traffic flow. Mr. Raffelson stated that the lots are not tied-in together, however there is a breezeway that connects both buildings making access easy from either parking area.

Nikki Baer asked if there would be a time where people would be walking through the parking lots to get to the building they need. Mr. Raffelson said there are doors everywhere, so there is no reason to walk through the parking lots to get access.

Alderman John Lavieri asked how many parking spaces are normally required for a building of this size. Attorney McPhedran responded that 81 spaces would normally be required in total for both buildings.

City Engineer Brown said the ratio that was used to determine the number of parking spaces required for the original 2017 development was the same used for this calculation.

Alderman Lavieri expressed his concern regarding a future change of use. He asked if this variance is permanent. Chairman Thompson said the board will vote as far as the reduction in parking spaces, as well as the 200 occupancy limitation. Larry Happ said that the Zoning Board will make a recommendation to the City Council, but the council has the final say so, so they can add any additional requirements Alderman Lavieri and the council deem appropriate.

Alderman Lavieri responded by saying that his main concern is about use. He continued by saying that even though the occupancy may not change, if the use changes, the variance may not apply. He used the example of a reception facility, where patrons would park, versus dropping off as with the current use.

Attorney McPhedran stated that the variance is permanent however, the Zoning Board has the discretion to add language that indicates that the variance applies as long as the use of the property remains consistent with its current use.

Nikki Baer asked if Mr. Raffelson has space for 81 parking spaces. He said they do, but it would take up most of the acreage they have. Nikki said she was concerned for future growth. She did not think we needed to be at 81, but felt 47 was a bit light.

Attorney McPhedran stated that 47 seemed to be an acceptable amount and it was consistent with the recommendations of the Fire Chief and City Engineer. Nikki Baer said the required number of spaces for the first building was 57 and we are well under that number for two buildings. Mr. Raffelson again

explained that he does not allow parents to come in and watch their kids train. The older kids may park in the lots, but there is always ample parking. In addition, if two teams are practicing it is done when the business is closed and there are well under 80 people in the building. Some concerns were expressed that it may be busier once Covid restrictions are lifted. Mr. Raffelson said they have been busier during the pandemic and it is actually starting to slow down as restrictions are lifted and sports are once again being allowed.

City Engineer Brown said when he made the calculations for parking when the first building was built in 2017, Covid was not a factor, just as it was not calculated in as a factor for the new addition. He explained that the same ratio based on square footage of the building was used for this calculation. He continued by saying that nothing has changed in this situation as the use has remained the same. Therefore, the calculation is accurate. He also stated that the requirement of two handicapped spaces meets regulation.

Nikki Baer said her concern stemmed from the ribbon cutting ceremony where there was no room to park. She said she realizes that was a one-time event.

Attorney McPhedran asked Economic Development Director Leah Inman how Mr. Raffelson's business has been in terms of working with the City. Director Inman said they have worked together very well, and being a parent of an athlete who uses the facility, she added that she agrees with what Mr. Raffelson has explained. Most parents drop their children off and pick them up at a later time.

Attorney McPhedran asked the Fire Chief and City Engineer if they have received any complaints about the parking situation at the facility. Fire Chief Bacidore said he has not had any complaints. Mr. Brown said he has not had any complaints, other than at times it can be difficult to maneuver in the parking lot when trying to park and turn around. Mr. Brown said in regard to Sam McNeilly's earlier comment, he agreed that it would be great if they could have some type of interior loop to create better flow and eliminate congestion when athletes are being dropped off.

Alderman Lavieri made it clear that he is not against the current use, but has concerns that this variance goes with the property, not the business. Attorney McPhedran stated that it is permanent, but certain terms and conditions could be added that address change of use. The Zoning Board agreed that this would be prudent. Mr. Raffelson also agreed with change of use language, but stated that he does not plan to go anywhere for a long time.

Moved by Larry Happ and seconded by Sam McNeilly to approve the request for variances by JJR Next Level Training & Fitness, LLC as requested by its representative, find that it is compliant with the required findings and provisions of our Zoning Ordinance and that we thus recommend City Council approval of a variance from the total number of parking spaces, including those in the original development and the proposed addition to be required to be no more than 47 spaces, further that paving of the spaces be allowed to be extended to be completed up to and including August 1, 2021 (except that handicapped parking spaces be required to be paved timely) further subject to an occupancy limit not to exceed 200 and provided use remains consistent with the present business use of JJR Next Level Training and Fitness, LLC, absent receiving an additional variance pursuant to the zoning ordinance

and/or a permit from the city council regarding a single event exception, all subject to such other terms and conditions as to the La Salle City Council deems just and appropriate in the circumstances.

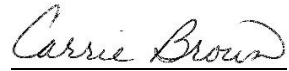
ROLL CALL: AYES: Nikki Baer, June Gardner, Larry Happ, Sam McNeilly, Chairman Thompson

NAYS: None ABSENT: Mike Schmotzer

Motion carried 5-0

Moved by Larry Happ and seconded by Nikki Baer to adjourn the Zoning Board of Appeals Hearing.
Voice vote, all ayes. Motion carried.

Adjourned 5:27 p.m.

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Carrie Brown".

Carrie Brown, City Clerk

**Notice of Public Hearing
Of the City of LaSalle Zoning Board of Appeals**

Notice is hereby provided that the LaSalle Zoning Board of Appeals will hold a Public Hearing on Monday, February 22, 2021 at 5:00 p.m. in the LaSalle City Council Chambers at 745 Second Street, LaSalle, Illinois 61301. At that time, the LaSalle Zoning Board of Appeals will consider a petition and request of Jimmy J. Raffelson, owner of JJR Next Level Training and Fitness LLC, requesting variances and/or exceptions from the provisions of the City of LaSalle Zoning Ordinance originally enacted as Ordinance Number 590 as the said Ordinance may have from time to time been amended, and in that regard said request for variance shall be specifically related to a 9,520 square foot addition to a commercial structure, and in that regard, said requests shall be for such variances and/or exceptions as may be reasonable, necessary and appropriate in reference to said potential development on said premises, including, but not necessarily limited to, variances and/or exceptions in reference to a reduction in the number of off-street parking spaces required in M-1 (Light Industrial District) from a total of 81 spaces to 47 spaces on premises commonly known as 32 Gunia Drive within the City of La Salle, which premises are more particularly described as follow:

Lot 14 of Civic Industrial Park 3rd Subdivision Phase II within the City of La Salle, in the County of La Salle, Illinois. That additionally, for informational purposes, the real estate PIN is 18-03-126-001.

That in connection with these proceedings and the public hearings in connection therewith, the City of LaSalle Zoning Board of Appeals may take such action and make such findings and recommendations as the Zoning Board of Appeals of the City of LaSalle may deem appropriate in the circumstances for recommendation and/or consideration thereof by the City Council in the appropriate exercise and discretion of the Zoning Board of Appeals of the City of LaSalle, including making recommendations in connection with any modification to any of said requests as the Zoning Board of Appeals may deem appropriate in the circumstances, all of which may be subject to and contingent upon such further covenants, terms, provisions and restrictions as the Zoning Board of Appeals of the City of LaSalle may deem appropriate in the circumstances at the time of said Zoning Board of Appeals hearing and/or any continuance and/or reconvening of the same, all of which will be held pursuant to and consistent with the law in such cases including, but not being limited to, all parties being provided an opportunity to be heard and to examine and cross-examine all pertinent witnesses.

/s/ Bob Thompson
Bob Thompson, Chairman
City of LaSalle Zoning Board of Appeals
February 4, 2021