



CITY OF HARRISONBURG COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

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August 31, 2026

**TO THE MEMBERS OF CITY COUNCIL
CITY OF HARRISONBURG, VIRGINIA**

SUBJECT: *Consider a request for a Special Use Permit at 291 West Wolfe Street & 336 West Market Street*

**EXTRACT FROM THE DRAFT MINUTES OF HARRISONBURG PLANNING
COMMISSION MEETING HELD ON: August 12, 2026**

Chair Baugh read the request and asked staff to review.

Ms. Rupkey said the applicant is requesting a special use permit (SUP) per Section 10-3-97(10) of the Zoning Ordinance (ZO) to allow for recreational and leisure time activities, which may include non-transient dwelling units in the M-1 General Industrial District. The +/- 5.35-acre property is addressed as 291 West Wolfe Street and 336 West Market Street and is identified as tax map parcel 35-R-23. The request does not include residential occupancy or non-transient dwelling units.

The property is the former location of Artisan Packaging, which ceased operations in October 2023. The applicant plans to make modifications to physically separate the building into two. In the northern building adjacent to West Wolfe Street, the applicant plans to operate a by-right self-storage facility. And in the southern building, close to West Market Street, the applicant plans to operate an indoor recreational facility. The applicant has identified two potential tenants. One tenant would like to operate an indoor rock-climbing facility and another that would like to operate an indoor pickleball facility.

The applicant's letter states that the indoor rock-climbing gym may include climbing walls, bouldering areas, fitness equipment, instructional and training areas, youth and family programming, merchandise and refreshment sales, and may have tournaments or events in the future. The indoor pickleball facility could include courts for open or league play, lessons, clinics, and youth and adult programming.

The applicant has noted that all proposed recreational activities would occur indoors.

Land Use

The Comprehensive Plan designates this site as Neighborhood Residential and Industrial and states:

Neighborhood Residential

These areas are typically older residential neighborhoods, which contain a mixture of densities and a mixture of housing types, but should have more single-family detached homes than other types of housing. This type of land use highlights those neighborhoods in which existing conditions dictate the need for careful consideration of the types and densities of future residential development. Infill development and redevelopment must be designed so as to be compatible with the desired character of the neighborhood.

Industrial

These areas are composed of land and structures used for light and general manufacturing, wholesaling, warehousing, high-technology, research and development, and related activities. They include the major existing and future employment areas of the City.

Staff finds that the proposed use can be compatible with the adjacent Neighborhood Residential land use designation when considered in the context of surrounding development patterns and existing site conditions. Although recreational and leisure-time activities are not residential uses, the proposed indoor recreational use would provide a lower-intensity transition between industrially zoned land and nearby residential properties than many industrial uses permitted by right.

Staff also finds that the proposed use can be appropriate within the industrial land use designation because it would utilize the existing industrial building. Compared to many of the by-right M-1 industrial uses, the proposed indoor recreational use would generally be expected to have fewer impacts related to noise, odor, outdoor storage, truck traffic, or heavy equipment.

Transportation and Traffic

A traffic impact analysis (TIA) was not required for the SUP request.

Public Water and Sanitary Sewer

Staff has no concerns with the requested special use permit regarding water and sewer matters.

Conclusion

Staff believes that the proposed use does not adversely impact the surrounding neighborhood and recommends approval of the SUP with the following conditions:

1. All recreational and leisure-time activities shall occur entirely within an enclosed building. No outdoor recreational activities shall be permitted.

2. The recreational and leisure-time activity use shall be limited to indoor rock climbing, pickleball, and substantially similar indoor recreational uses, as determined by the Zoning Administrator.
3. Non-transient dwelling units are not permitted.

Commissioner Kettler said regarding substantially similar indoor recreational uses, I know that is open-ended going into the future, but what does that tend to look like?

Ms. Rupkey said it would be up to the Zoning Administrator. Similar specialty gyms that have a similar amount of people, take up the same amount of floor area, and operate similarly could be allowed. It means that a shooting range is not something that we would say is substantially similar to a rock-climbing gym. Possibly gymnastics, or something of that nature, might be allowed in the future, while keeping out the more noisy or controversial uses.

Councilmember Dent said does that mean if a new tenant wanted to do something different, it would have to go through the Zoning Administrator?

Ms. Rupkey said they would have to check with our Zoning Administrator when they are getting their permits and changing uses to confirm that the use they want to put in would fall under this. If not, they would have to come back and get a new special use permit.

Councilmember Dent said I was wondering what would trigger that. Do they have to have a certificate or a permit for the uses, so they would have to come back? Even the same owners might say, never mind the pickleball, we want a basketball team. They would have to come back?

Ms. Dang said our zoning staff are involved in building permit review, so that is one way. When a new business moves into a location, they have to get a business license. A prerequisite of that business license is to check with our Zoning and Building Inspections Office so they know what permits are necessary and to confirm that the use is allowed.

Councilmember Dent said okay. Good. Thanks.

Commissioner Seitz said I would assume the use of the rest of the property for storage is allowed by right in M-1?

Ms. Rupkey said yes.

Councilmember Dent said where is the delineation for the rest of the property?

Commissioner Seitz said it is in the applicant's material, I think.

Chair Baugh said if we can put the map back up?

Ms. Dang said the indoor recreation facility is proposed to be in the part of the building closest to Market Street.

Commissioner Kettler said if we or City Council wanted to be slightly less restrictive in terms of alternative uses, do you have a sense of what that might look like while still maintaining protections?

Ms. Rupkey said we based the conditions on what they submitted and proposed to us. They were originally thinking of making it only pickleball or rock climbing, but we wanted to allow them flexibility in the future if something were to come through. You could make it more restrictive or less restrictive.

Ms. Dang said you could modify your recommendation to City Council as to what the condition should be. If I may clarify, while the applicant has proposed in their exhibit where they are going to have the indoor recreation facility, staff has not recommended a condition for where that is. We have only recommended the condition that it is all inside a building. We were comfortable with it being inside a structure, no matter how large or where exactly.

Chair Baugh said they could find a way to roll it over to the other building.

Ms. Dang said or build a new building, hypothetically.

Commissioner Seitz said I am comfortable that there are protections in place in the building permit process and business license process if another use is proposed there. I could see a physical therapist wanting to go into a space like that. There are any number of uses for a location like this. It is on a prominent thoroughfare. Somebody would have to get a business license, which would trigger a review. I am using that as a less extreme example of something that I would hope we would facilitate through administrative processes.

Commissioner Kettler said I think that better reflects my concern than I could. I appreciate that.

Councilmember Dent said here is a thought to encompass that: substantially similar indoor recreational or therapeutic uses?

Ms. Rupkey said therapeutic uses are not covered by the special use permit. That would be more like a medical clinic.

Councilmember Dent said medical clinic, yes. Okay.

Commissioner Seitz said I was trying to think as a developer that if I had to market this to something else, we might have you talking again.

Commissioner Kettler said could we recommend approval with suggested conditions, and staff could come to City Council with a possible alternative if you investigate that?

Mr. Fletcher said can you give an example?

Commission Kettler said in suggested condition number two, if we wanted to do something slightly less restrictive, instead of saying it should be limited to indoor rock climbing, pickleball, and substantially similar activities, it should be limited to something slightly more broad, so they would not necessarily have a higher risk of requiring another special use permit or a change before it came back. I do not have a particular recommendation, so I do not want to make one right now other than what staff has submitted. I am just asking if it is a possibility.

Mr. Fletcher said yes, you can. We kicked some of these different things around because we have similar concerns. We do not want to restrict people or have people go through processes if they do not have to. But it was also a matter of the applicant saying, this is what we want to do. We were trying to build in flexibility, like we tried to build in flexibility for the last special use permit, where they said they would probably only have two or three guests, and we said that under a by-right ability, if they were a homestay inside the home, they could have four. We were trying to build some flexibility in here. It is a matter of coming up with the right terminology and what you want to broaden it to, because recreational and leisure-time activity uses have a pretty wide spectrum. That is why Ms. Rupkey said a shooting range has been classified and determined in years past as a leisure-time and activity use. We did not want to permit such a use at this particular location.

Councilmember Dent said could we broaden it by explicit exclusions, such as nothing noisy like a shooting range?

Mr. Fletcher said you can. We kicked that around. We thought about giving recommended conditions that did it that way. The question is where you end the exclusions and what you think is not appropriate.

Councilmember Dent said would gymnastics or basketball count as substantially similar enough that they would not have to go through the process again?

Mr. Fletcher said I do not know. Our Zoning Administrator would ask a lot of different questions about what those uses are. He does that on a daily basis with a lot of different applications or proposed uses. A lot of the limiting factors with this property are that it is zoned M-1. There have been a lot of different ideas, some more serious than others, about how people wanted to reuse this space. It has been discussed for residential, recreational leisure-time activities, and religious facilities. This is what they are proposing. We considered all those different ideas, and this is where we landed.

Commissioner Seitz said I appreciate Commissioner Kettler and Councilmember Dent asking whether we can make this fit a little bit better. I like this use here. I like the fact that it has plenty of parking for whatever goes on there. I like the fact that, whether it is access to West Market Street or Wolfe Street, where there is a stoplight, it does not seem to have some of the traffic impacts that other places might. I trust our Zoning Administrator to adjudicate these things properly. I would really like to facilitate this project moving forward.

Councilmember Dent said fair enough. I like this as an excellent reuse of facilities that have been sitting idle for a long time. It seems compatible with the neighborhood. People could go play pickleball or rock climbing for the kids. It is a nice neighborhood activation of what is otherwise an industrial zone.

Commissioner Kettler said I walk past this property twice a day every single day. I agree.

Chair Baugh asked if there were any more questions for staff. Hearing none, he invited the applicant or applicant's representative to speak to their request.

Benjamin Ho, 300 South Main Street, Holly Springs, North Carolina. Thank you, Meg, for introducing our project. Some background information for you all: you are really familiar with the property, which is great. We have the property listed as available for lease. We are in discussions with a pickleball operator and a rock-climbing gym, but no leases have been signed. Through those discussions, we have come to realize that the property may be a good fit for these types of leisure and sporting activities. That is why we are applying for a special use permit. One thing prospective tenants are concerned about is timing. They looked at the process for obtaining a special use permit and said oh my goodness, it could take three months or six months. How do we even think about this? We, as the property owners, said we would see if we could help with that process by getting it started. We do not have anything binding signed today. I mention that because we would ask the Planning Commission to consider making the second condition broader. Our suggestion is to define it based on specific activities to exclude. We are prepared to offer the following exclusions for your consideration. We would not request approval for outdoor courts, outdoor recreation, outdoor amplified events, indoor shooting ranges, go-karts, indoor or outdoor, paintball, or any sort of residential occupancy. The reason we offer that is because we have not signed leases with tenants. We do not know exactly what uses are going to be there. We are still marketing the property for lease. It would help us market it to a volleyball operator, basketball operator, or soccer operator. We are not sure at which point we would have to go back to the City to request approval. We hope we can offer some exclusions that make sense, but we are asking for a little more flexibility in that regard. Otherwise, I am available to answer any questions.

Commissioner Jezior said as far as operating hours go, would this be open to be a 24-hour facility, or would there be set operating hours?

Mr. Ho said we expect this to be retail operating hours. With the climbing gym we have talked to, they would be open typical gym hours. We would be open to restrictions on that. Our intention is not for this to be a 24-hour facility.

Councilmember Dent said typical gym hours mean into the evening, perhaps, but not just retail, like 9:00 to 5:00?

Mr. Ho said yes, correct. It could certainly be into the evening.

Councilmember Dent said maybe not past 10:00. I am glad I was on the same wavelength about having specific exclusions, or types of exclusions, nothing noisy, including but not limited to shooting ranges and go-karts. A way to make exclusions broad enough that we do not have to enumerate all of them might work. We already have an exclusion of outdoors, so that is covered.

Commissioner Seitz said I appreciate your flexibility on that. Not wanting to bog down the process, if you are willing to tailor that a little more closely, that only increases my support for the project.

Councilmember Dent said I also do not like paintball as an idea. How do characterize that? It is not exactly noisy, but it is violent.

Commissioner Seitz said it is fun.

Mr. Fletcher said Chair Baugh, may I ask the applicant a question?

Chair Baugh said please.

Mr. Fletcher said the exclusions you listed, do you have that written down?

Mr. Ho said it is included as part of Exhibit A that we attached. It is within the scope of requested approval.

Councilmember Dent said you say potential tenants, so nothing has been signed.

Commissioner Seitz said in the second paragraph on the second page, there is a list of things that they could see happening here. Then on the second-to-third page, there are things they would not see happening here.

Councilmember Dent said okay. There we go. Not requesting approval for... outdoor amplified events, indoor shooting ranges, go-karts, paintball, and residential occupancy excluded. Or unrelated entertainment or event use unless otherwise permitted. What if you wanted to have a concert in a pickleball facility? You are not talking about that.

Commissioner Kettler said my only real question is for staff: what do you all think about the suggestions?

Commissioner Seitz said can those restrictions, explicit inclusions, or explicit exclusions be crafted so it does not have to come back here again next month? Is there any way to approve this pending further refinement?

Ms. Dang said you could state what your intention is for changing that second condition and make a motion with that modified statement.

Councilmember Dent said do we have to approve the language tonight, or can we say staff, please do this?

Mr. Russ said no. You do not have to approve the language that goes into the special use permit. You can recommend approval of the special use permit but suggest something less restrictive for condition two. We routinely do that. You do not have to massage the language yourselves here. I think we have sufficient context at this point to know what your intentions are and can propose possible alternative conditions.

Ms. Dang said Mr. Russ is correct. We just need enough detail to know what your intentions are so that we can draft the language.

Councilmember Dent said can you put the language back up on the screen? I might say in number two that it shall be limited to indoor recreational uses, maybe even cutting out rock climbing and pickleball, because those are examples you have on the table now, with exclusions for noisy uses. It is good to have some examples for what they are wanting to do, I guess. Never mind.

Commissioner Seitz said I think the applicant has given us good material to work with in their letter. I am comfortable letting staff continue this conversation using the letter as a beginning point.

Chair Baugh said I am not sure you have convinced me that I am comfortable with it. I am of two minds on it. I understand and do not disagree with the general impulse not to make this property owner come back in over and over. Presumably, the more modest the change, the more it is going to fit under recreational leisure-time activity. It is not like there is no possibility. I have a philosophical concern that by doing it this way, the burden is on us for any unattractive activity that we did not think of to exclude. I am not sure I want to do that.

Commissioner Kettler said I share that concern. I think it is somewhat mitigated by the fact that, even forgetting condition two, condition one is there and it is going to be inside. You are right. It is ultimately a question of how disruptive a use we can think of. Shooting is about the most disruptive one I could possibly think of that could happen inside.

Councilmember Dent said go-karts are another one.

Commissioner Jezior said I share the same concern. Only listing the things that are not allowed opens the door for things we are not going to think about and staff might not think about. I think

having some sort of review that kicks in is a good idea. I think just saying rock climbing and pickleball is limiting, too. I agree with you all on that.

Chair Baugh said I have said this before, not necessarily in this exact context. You approve something that seems all right with the applicant, which you are doing right now, and then five years later you are looking at it and thinking, we do not really like this, but we cannot tell them not to do it.

Commissioner Seitz said Chair and Commissioners, are you advocating for leaving the conditions as stated?

Chair Baugh said I am okay with it.

Councilmember Dent said I think I would come back to that. On what basis would we not like paintball? It is not as if it is noisy. I am pulling back on trying to recommend exceptions, because what if it is something we cannot pick up?

Commissioner Jezior said with the substantially similar language in there, that does not mean it automatically has to get reviewed by us again. It would be reviewed by zoning. The applicant would have to go through a process, but it would not necessarily have to go through this whole process again if it is deemed substantially similar.

Commissioner Kettler said it could be additive. We could instead say it shall be limited to indoor rock climbing, pickleball, basketball, just as an example, and substantially similar recreational uses. You would not be doing it by exclusion. You would be doing it by addition. We can run into a similar problem.

Chair Baugh said now we are back to listing every sport that we think would be good. Basketball, lacrosse, soccer, gymnastics, perhaps some sort of baseball or a batting range. I would like not to do that.

Vice-Chair Porter said I am seeing the common sense of what the applicant is bringing us. At a certain point, you know what a reasonable indoor recreational activity is. There are many multi-sport models, such as Horizon's Edge. I would not want them to have to come back if they want to put in a futsal court or some other activity along those lines. I am almost uncomfortable with naming the two potential activities. It might be better simply to allow them to have an indoor recreational facility and exclude the items they have put forward.

Chair Baugh said for specific tenants potentially looking at this, if they are looking for a pickleball tenant and it says you can do pickleball, they may answer that question. Depending on what it is, if you just leave it general, then somebody has to contact City staff just to ask whether they are in that definition or not.

Vice-Chair Porter said that sounds like where we are going to be regardless.

Chair Baugh said except for pickleball and rock climbing, which they specifically asked for.

Commissioner Seitz said which I appreciate that because those are the most likely tenants they have lined up. I feel like we can circle back around to being okay with this language.

Councilmember Dent said staff has talked about it a lot. What about axe throwing? I do not like that because it is potentially dangerous. Where do you draw the line if you get into exceptions?

Commissioner Kettler said it is a weird line to draw. if you are going by exclusion and not including paintball, laser tag is actually not a problem.

Councilmember Dent said I am coming back to staff having thought about this, and it is good. We tossed around ideas to expand, contract, or exclude. We do not need to do that. I appreciate that you listed what you do not intend. Whether it is an official approval, we do not necessarily need to include that, but it gives some clues if it comes back for review. Is it fair to say that if the new tenant wants to do paintball, you have already said you do not want to do paintball. It would be up to you then to say no to that lease. We are putting this on the owner, not on our review. Is that okay with us? I guess. I do not know. Would we be horrified if suddenly there is paintball? I do not know.

Commissioner Seitz said we could spin out hypotheses ad nauseam.

Vice-Chair Porter said the facility at 291 West Wolfe Street, you said that is an indoor storage facility?

Mr. Ho said currently, it is empty. The multi-story portion is slated to become an indoor storage facility.

Vice-Chair Porter said would that be the sort of facility someone could access on a 24-hour basis, or would that also have limits?

Mr. Ho said typically, it is limited to around 10:00 or 11:00 at night.

Vice-Chair Porter said I am really excited about the potential to develop this into something other than what it is. It sits like an island of M-1 in the middle of a residential neighborhood. For years, I have watched trucks try to make the turn onto Brooke Avenue and struggle to make that turn. There are folks on Brooke Avenue who will be happy to have something like this across the street from them compared to what was there previously. My concern would have been whether 291 [West Wolfe Street] was going to open them up to having more trucks and more traffic, particularly in the evening hours. That does not seem to be an issue.

Chair Baugh said generally speaking, warehousing and storage activities are by right in M-1.

Councilmember Dent said I am having a sort of déjà vu about data centers. I have been talking a lot about data centers lately. When we considered and passed the ordinance for data centers to be only in industrial zones and only by special use permit, this site was an example Mr. Fletcher brought up of an industrial zone where we would not like to have a data center because it is in the middle of a residential neighborhood. That is a side point about this site. I am glad to see it getting some beneficial uses for the neighborhood. Again, I appreciate that. Right, remember that, Mr. Fletcher?

Mr. Fletcher said I do recall.

Chair Baugh said anything else?

Mr. Ho said if we cannot define the second condition by exclusion, can we broaden the included activities? Gymnastics, soccer, basketball, anything that might help us ease the administrative burden as we try to lease this property. I am not sure if there is a general phrase, such as indoor team sporting-type activities. We would be open to any feedback or consideration on that point.

Commissioner Jezior said if we approve with that condition and ask staff to broaden or give a recommended list of broadening?

Commissioner Seitz said I would be supportive of approving this with an opportunity for the conversation you asked for to happen.

Mr. Fletcher said I think it is reasonable to believe we could come up with some of the sports you are listing. You think of high school sports: basketball, volleyball, tennis, racquetball, and things similar to pickleball. If you are comfortable, we could broaden the list. City Council is going to hear or read the minutes. You [Councilmember Dent] will be present representing. Unless staff has opposing feelings, we could come up with that general list of things like that, nothing outside the ordinary of what you would normally look at. Horizon's Edge is a great example, where they have indoor soccer and might have flag football. It is a lot of those types of uses. If there is general consent about that, I think we can come up with something for you and explain it to City Council.

Councilmember Dent Futsal is considerably more active than pickleball, but it could still be included as an indoor sport.

Mr. Fletcher said we talked about adding basketball, volleyball, and these sorts of things. Then we talked ourselves back, like the group did this evening, to what was presented to you.

Councilmember Dent said maybe a couple of things that are not as similar as something involving a ball, like gymnastics, dance.

Mr. Fletcher said sure. I think one of the greater limiting factors is condition number one. That was the most important one.

Commissioner Seitz said what is the clear height in that space?

Mr. Ho said approximately 20 feet.

Commissioner Seitz said that is going to place some limitations on things as well.

Councilmember Dent said badminton might be hard. I do not know.

Mr. Fletcher said I think we have good guidance.

Councilmember Dent said it will come to Council with your modified language if we approve this.

Chair Baugh opened the public hearing and invited anyone in the room or on the phone wishing to speak to the request.

Mary Boitnott 55 North Brook Avenue. It is right across from those loading docks. My biggest concern is parking. Yes, they have a parking lot there, but it is not adequate. When the plant was operating, I worked there for 30-some years. Running three shifts, that parking lot was not big enough for everybody, so people had to park out on the street. Thank goodness, the employees there were always very considerate of the homeowners and they would not park in front of their homes. They would park on the side of the street at the plant. That is my biggest concern is the parking. Right now, with the college kids coming back, I know we will be having a parking problem because Brooke Avenue seems to be the place for them to park their cars and go somewhere else. Then that leaves us with no parking space. This is my biggest concern right now is the parking, and I know that parking lot at the plant is not that big.

Vice-Chair Porter said can we ask someone the number of spaces?

Chair Baugh said let's come back to that. Keep that thought in mind.

Ms. Boitnott said that was all I had to say. That is my concern, along with a lot of the neighbors, because we are residential, but a lot of it is rental to others. In fact, I think I am the only property owner on-site there on Brooke Avenue, or maybe one of them, but I think I am probably the only one. That is my concern, just the parking. Of course, I know there is going to be some noise. There probably will be some music played and all that. That is something I would like to see kept down as far as noise there. Believe it or not, when the plant was operating, you could hear the machinery running and everything inside the plant over at my house. Thank you.

Carina Young, 29 Shenandoah Avenue, said [I live] about a block away. I wanted to thank you for your consideration of this. When I learned that this was a potential, my family got so excited about

potential pickleball and rock climbing. I appreciate the concerns from the lady one street over on Brooke Avenue, but I am excited about this idea. Thank you, and I appreciate your thoughtful consideration of the different factors. That is all I have to say. Thank you.

Chair Baugh said thank you very much for your input. In the interest of transparency, she is married to one of my partners.

Chair Baugh closed the public hearing and opened the matter for discussion.

Chair Baugh said [to Vice-Chair Porter] I know you had a question. I asked you to defer on that.

Vice-Chair Porter said [to Mr. Ho] are you able to tell me how many parking spaces there currently are in that lot?

Mr. Ho said [unintelligible].

Commissioner Seitz said I just counted them from the aerial photo.

Vice-Chair Porter said I did, too.

Commissioner Kettler said it is massive.

Commission Seitz said out of curiosity, I am trying to quickly find it in the zoning ordinance, but I cannot get there fast enough. For a gym, which I guess is a B occupancy, what is the parking per square foot?

[Speaker unidentifiable] said is it A assembly?

Commissioner Seitz said then it is. See our earlier conversation about that. I suspect for that square footage...

Ms. Rupkey said private clubs and recreational facilities, civic and religious organizations not considered for public assembly, are required to have one parking space for every 10 members.

Commissioner Seitz said so in a situation like that, would membership or occupancy, in turn, be capped by available parking?

Ms. Rupkey said yes.

Mr. Fletcher said I do not know if I would agree with affirming that statement. There are minimum required parking spaces, but it does not mean that the person attending has to park on the site. Do you see what I am saying?

Commission Seitz said right.

Mr. Fletcher said the space is not capped based on the parking.

Ms. Dang said I misunderstood. Commissioner Seitz, why do you not tell us what you were trying to ask?

Commissioner Seitz said I was trying to do the parking calculations in my head. We have a civil engineer in the room, so maybe we should ask him to do it. I am comparing it to Harrisonburg Family Fitness further out on West Market Street. The square footage of that building, with two stories, has less parking than this. Intuitively, it seems like there is more than ample parking there relative to the square footage of the building.

Ms. Dang said if this was a site with a small parking lot, the parking lot would put a cap on the occupancy allowed in the building. They are related to each other because we would use the occupancy to determine the number of vehicles [parking spaces] that are required.

Mr. Fletcher said it is 10 percent of the ratio.

Ms. Dang said right, of the occupancy. In this case, the site has such a large parking lot that they may not run into an issue. But if it was a smaller parking lot, it could cause somebody in another location challenges if they wanted to have more people in a warehouse building.

Commissioner Kettler said I think this proposal is also a great example of why parking minimums do not make any sense at all to begin with. This is an area where there are at least 100 homes within easy walking distance of this place, and it has 130 parking spaces on top of that. I have some potential concerns about things, and parking is not one of them.

Ms. Dang said I would imagine this type of facility would attract people from the region, not just from the neighborhood.

Commissioner Kettler said I think that is true.

Vice-Chair Porter said I think the only time there would be a real concern in terms of the amount of parking would be, like at Horizon's Edge, where there were tournaments, for example, where you have multiple teams playing in closely stacked games. Each player probably has a parent who brought them in a vehicle, and you can run into a high number of cars pretty quickly. Other than that, I think this would be adequate parking for people just coming to play pickleball or do basic gym-type activities. Unless you have some sort of organized event like a tournament, I do not see where this will be an issue.

Ms. Dang said do you have concerns about tournaments being hosted at this facility?

Vice-Chair Porter said I do not. I understand. I drove down North Brook Avenue to my place of employment when I worked at Mercy House for years. I always thought it was a very tight little

street and I was always concerned because I saw trucks consistently struggling on that street. If I lived on Brook Avenue, I would be much happier to see this than semis trying to make that turn to get into those loading docks. I can understand the concern about having people come here and park in the neighborhood. That could get to be a real burden fairly quickly in that neighborhood because there are a lot of tightly packed rental units, and a lot of those folks have multiple cars. My memory of going up and down Brook Avenue is that there is almost a line of cars on one side of the street consistently. I know when you get on other streets in that neighborhood, you have a lot of on-street parking. It could have an impact, especially considering there will not be any parking on the West Market Street side. But you would have to have an activity that would draw a lot of people. That is a lot of parking spaces.

Commissioner Jezior said comparing it to Horizon's Edge, that facility is much bigger. They do not have that much more parking than what is at this site. Even if you have a tournament and two soccer fields there, it will be few and far between that you have something that would fill that parking lot. Horizon's Edge is also much more isolated. You can only get there by driving, really.

Councilmember Dent said we heard testimony from somebody who lives a block away that, to your point, people will walk here to some degree.

Vice-Chair Porter said that neighborhood has a lot of people walking because I see people going down to downtown every day. I think this is an outstanding use of this space, particularly because it is an industrial facility located in the heart of a residential area. It is an island within that neighborhood. There is really nothing even remotely close to it that is the same. I think this would actually be something more neighborhood-friendly.

Commissioner Kettler said as one of those people who walks past every day, I have to tell you, I was expecting something not quite as nice to come there.

Councilmember Dent said a slight question off the top of my head: could it look nicer outside? It is just a big bland box. I do not know. Do you want murals on it? It is not up to us to decide that, but just a suggestion so it looks less industrial. Maybe signage or whatever would help.

Chair Baugh said of course, it is still zoned industrial.

Councilmember Dent said right. I also just thought of something. The transition from plastic manufacturing to healthy activity is overall a positive change. The story, as I understand it, is that Artisan Packaging used to specialize in tiny little bottles for hotels. But when they started making refillable bottles, there went their business. There is a positive evolution in the backstory.

Commissioner Kettler said unless someone has something else to add, I would like to make a motion.

Chair Baugh said sure. Please.

Commissioner Kettler said motion to approve the special use permit with conditions one and three as presented, and with condition two to include modestly increased allowed uses to be determined by staff. Is that fair?

Commissioner Jezior said second.

Chair Baugh said That motion has been made by Commissioner Kettler, seconded by Commissioner Jezior. Other comments or discussion?

Councilmember Dent said I think we have discussed it pretty much.

Chair Baugh said I keep coming back to the fact that this property is zoned industrial. You have always got the thing that people do not really think about: what could go there? Compared to what could go there, this is not the worst-case scenario. Maybe it is not that bad. The other thing I find interesting is that it really is an old model. You see it in other places that frankly harken to a time when the expectation was that being close to a residential neighborhood meant that is where your workers would come from, so it was put in the middle of the residential neighborhood. It is not a model that has held up. Here we are.

Vice-Chair Porter said the only other piece of commentary I would add is that I would sure love to see this develop for housing. It is in a great spot for housing. But again, I am impressed with the fact that this is the type of thing they are looking to bring in here.

Chair Baugh said I have one other thought. Assuming we go forward along these lines and ask staff to work on the language afterward, I think one thing that has come up is that the discussion has focused on particular sport and recreational activities themselves. I am not saying it is dispositive, but it is interesting. In theory, I could have a fantasy about a pickleball tournament that would bring so many people in as to be overcrowding. Then again, maybe I cannot. But an AAU basketball tournament? Maybe.

Commissioner Kettler said that is part of why I mentioned parking minimums. Especially if you look around the mall, you look at places where we plan for the most parking that could ever be required. You could argue about whether that is an improvement or not. I think that is a fair point.

Chair Baugh said it was a thought that came to me even in the site visit yesterday with the two properties we were discussing. This one, when it was functioning the way it was designed, would many times have had a full parking lot. We had testimony from somebody who lives in the neighborhood. As opposed to the Roses property that maybe has never, at any point, ever had a full parking lot. Are we ready to vote?

Vice-Chair Porter said sure.

Chair Baugh called for a roll call vote.

Vice-Chair Porter	Aye
Commissioner Jezior	Aye
Commissioner Seitz	Aye
Councilmember Dent	Aye
Commissioner Kettler	Aye
Chair Baugh	Aye

The motion to recommend approval of the special use permit with conditions one and three, as presented, and with condition two to include modestly increased allowed uses to be determined by staff was passed (6-0). The recommendation will move forward to City Council on September 8, 2026.

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