

BOARD OF APPEALS

September 28, 2009

7:00 PM

ATTENDANCE: Board Members: Chairman William Malesh, Bob Matthews, Timothy Thompson, Town Attorney Keith Baynes, Court Reporter Carol Beresh, and Planning and Zoning Coordinator Dianna Battaglia.

Meeting was called to order at 7:05 PM.

Chairman Malesh started the meeting by asking the members to read the minutes from the previous meeting for changes or approval of the minutes.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Motion was made by Mr. Matthews and seconded by Mr. Thompson to approve the August 24, 2009 meeting minutes as written. **All in Favor; Motion Carried.**

NEW BUSINESS

File No. SE2009-01 Special Exception – Impact Martial Arts PROPERTY
OWNER: Wood Properties; APPLICANT: George & Angel Celona; LOCATION:
1486 Perryville Road, Perryville, MD 21903; Tax Map 800, Parcel 39; Zoned NB
(Neighborhood Business).

George and Angel Celona were sworn in.

Ms. Celona stated we are asking for a Special Exception to open our martial arts studio. We were under the impression when we signed our lease that the location was under commercial zoning and found out it was actually neighborhood business so we're asking for a Special Exception to open the martial arts studio, which isn't listed in the Code right now, at 1486 Perryville Road.

Mr. Malesh asked how many classes will you have each week.

Ms. Celona replied right now we're looking to be open three (3) days per week. We'll be open Tuesday, Thursday, and Saturday and as classes open up we'll have four classes each day. We have a 4 to 5 year old class, 6 to 7 year old class, an 8 to 12 year old class, and an adult program.

Mr. Malesh asked how many people usually attend each class.

Ms. Celona responded in all of our classes we have a cap on them of no more than eight (8) children maximum depending on their age. And then each class right now there is probably about ten (10) to twelve (12) children enrolled and the adult program is probably about three (3) right now.

Mr. Celona indicated you want to keep the smaller kids classes especially small because they don't have much of an attention span at first so we try to captivate their attention with the smaller class size. The youth program and the adult program are definitely more manageable because we have several classes on Tuesday, Thursday, and Saturday. The classes each night will not be excessively large, usually around ten (10) to twelve (12).

Mr. Malesh asked how about impact or contact martial arts.

Ms. Celona answered we don't. We are part of the World Tang Soo Do Association. And we teach a southern Korean martial art and it focuses on self defense. (Tang Soo Do is a Korean martial art which teaches empty hand and foot fighting, fighting forms, self-defense, and weapons. Tang Soo Do also teaches people to live a healthy and harmonious life.) We teach striking and at the more advanced level we use wands. But we don't have any weapons and we don't have anything even remotely close to that. I would say more striking with targets.

Mr. Malesh asked do you have experience with this in the past.

Ms. Celona responded between the two of us we have over twenty-five (25) years experience. We've owned Impact Martial Arts for two (2) years now. We opened in Aberdeen and then decided we wanted to move in Perryville because we really like this area. We've been operating out of Fun and Fit for Life currently, that's where our current studio is, and before that personally I taught at a school called Brandywine Martial Arts Academy in Pennsylvania. We both taught and trained at Palche Tang Soo Do.

Mr. Celona stated just to clarify with the whole sparring thing. If you look at our sparring tournaments and such, first of all none of our, the tournaments and things that kids can compete in, none of that is mandatory. If they want to do it, we encourage them. We both compete. It's definitely very light contact sparring. They wear full gear, helmet, mouth piece, and the whole nine yards, but heavy contact is not allowed. They get warnings and if it gets excessive they get thrown out. So we're not going to teach them how to be the next stage fighter or anything like that. In fact we're more self defense oriented and we're more focused on other things like confidence, self awareness, and discipline, different things like that, not just about contact.

Ms. Celona indicated one of the other things I like about the impact martial arts, while you mentioned it, is because it has a double meaning, impact that means hitting but it also has a double meaning that it's impacting your life, and it does a lot for a lot of people to help build their confidence and grow outside of the class.

Mr. Matthews asked what is the largest class you anticipate on having there and how will it impact the parking.

Mr. Celona replied I would say between twenty (20), twenty-five (25) tops. Keep in mind though that a lot of our students are families. I would say more than half of our students right now are families. They come together and a lot of them live very close, within walking distance. So I don't think parking will be too much of a concern. We don't want to have very large classes anyway. We will break it up if they start to get too big, the space is not humungous.

Ms. Celona stated as teachers we won't want that because we want to keep the quality. So we would want the class size small. We know we can't handle that so we want to keep them manageable. I taught at the Y a few years ago and I was teaching a class with like eighty (80) people and it is completely unmanageable. I don't recommend it.

Mr. Thompson commented a lot of the parents will be dropping their children off, and then come back to pick them up.

Mr. Celona indicated class size will be no more than twenty (20) or twenty-five (25) maximum. The school that we came from had over a hundred students and the classes were still smaller than

twenty (20) to twenty-five (25) on any given night at any given time slot. Because of the nature of how many different classes you have and the amount of space that you have.

Motion was made by Mr. Thompson and seconded by Mr. Matthews to approve the application for Special Exception to operate Impact Martial Arts at 1486 Perryville Road, as stated in section 4.500 as an educational site. **All in Favor; Motion Passed.**

Motion made by Mr. Matthews and seconded by Mr. Thompson to adjourn the meeting at 7:20 p.m. **All in Favor; Motion passed.**

Respectfully submitted,

Dianna M. Battaglia
Planning & Zoning Coordinator