

NEW BUSINESS

2025-0250 Public Hearing and Request for Conditional Use Recommendation for Unified Volleyball, a health, recreation and physical education facility over 5,000 sq. ft., to occupy space within the EC Employment Center zoning district at 1655 W. Hamlin Rd., located south off Hamlin Rd. and east of Crooks Rd., Parcel No. 15-28-126-033; Brian Kim, Unified Volleyball/Unified Ventures, LLC, Applicant
(Staff Report dated 6/11/25, Unified Volleyball Letter dated 5/9/25, Development Application, Environmental Impact Statement, Plans, Phase I ESA and Public Hearing Notice had been placed on file and by reference became a part of the record hereof.)

Chairperson Hooper introduced this item noting that it was a request for conditional use approval for a health/recreation/physical education facility over 5,000 square feet to occupy space within the EC Employment Center zoning district at 1655 West Hamlin Road. He invited the applicant to the presenter's table and asked for the Staff Report.

Present for the applicant were Brian Kim and Jason Gambone representing Unified Volleyball, and John Wernis representing Industrial Ventures, the building owner.

Mr. McLeod noted that the site is located on the south side of Hamlin Road, east of Crooks in one of the city's industrial subdivisions, with the building located in the middle among a number of industrial buildings. He stated that as this is a conditional use, the Commission will be making a recommendation to City Council. He explained that this is a 30,000 square foot building, a unified singular tenant-type building that is proposed to be used for volleyball and training purposes. The site has 99 parking spaces, and a shared drive provides access to three buildings, with a smaller building up front. The building to the south or rear is a multi-tenant building with those tenants including a dance studio as well as the Friendship Factory. He mentioned that Robot Garage was in there for a short time as well, and there is one other smaller industrial tenant.

He reviewed zoning, noting that the entire area is the EC Employment Center district. He recalled that a couple of years ago when the Zoning Ordinance was revised, one of the major changes was shifting recreation-type uses from permissible to conditional use in the EC district. He explained that one of the concerns with the industrial type buildings was that if there are a proliferation of non-industrial or non-tech users within a particular area, the true intent of the district would not be met. He added that the overall change to the district results in industrial and tech uses not wanting to go in there as they are not compatible with recreational uses. He stressed that recreational uses are allowed as conditional uses dependent upon Planning Commission and City Council review.

He mentioned the space was previously used as a dance studio and housed Deborah's Stage Door. He noted that the proposed hours are after the normal business hours and are proposed as winter/spring/fall hours of 4 p.m to 10 p.m.,

and summer hours of 10 a.m. to 7 p.m.

He reviewed parking, noting that the site has 99 total spaces, with the majority toward the north end of the building as well as to the east side, and with a singular row on the south side of the building. He explained that their current location is on Waterview Drive, and due to their popularity and growth within their business, they are looking for a bigger building. He stated that they service 30 different volleyball teams and provide camps, clinics and associated programming, for an age range of two years old to about 18 years. He mentioned that the projected occupancy of the building based on the five courts that were shown on the applicant's floor plan would be 90 persons. He explained that there is a one-to-three ratio for parking requirements, and utilizing that ratio, they have more than enough parking. He mentioned that transitions may be a little tight if the operation is running at full scale in terms of all courts being operated; however, most of those transitions will occur after the 5 p.m. hour. He pointed out that the site plan includes a pro shop, cafe, garage, supply room, work room and singular locker room and there is no proposed outdoor use.

He reviewed the Planning Commission criteria for evaluating the conditional use for recommendation.

Chairperson Hooper asked if the applicants had anything to add.

Mr. Kim stated that Unified Volleyball has been in business since 2015 and has been in the Rochester area since 2017. He noted that they have been at 2938 Waterview Drive since 2017, and the facility is about half the size of their proposed new location. He explained that they have grown to capacity, and this new facility offers benefits that the current facility does not offer with higher ceilings and a bigger floor plan that will allow them to continue to grow.

Mr. Wernis stated that the building was built in 2006 or 2007 to be a dance studio and was set up as a recreational use for the long-term. He pointed out that the building was not set up for industrial use. He explained that there are a couple of overhead doors but no truck wells, and the building is underpowered for use as a manufacturing facility without modification. He added that parking was set up for recreational use and it is overparked for use as a manufacturing facility. He mentioned that it is not a cut through street and there is a very limited amount of large trucks that come in because of the multi-tenant uses in the building behind.

He noted that while it is in the manufacturing-industrial zoning area, having listed the building for some time, they have seen very low activity for anyone wishing to lease or acquire the building for an industrial use.

Chairperson Hooper noted that the City's Economic Manager Pam Valentik has commented that the City needs more industrial uses and stated that Mr. Wernis is stating the exact opposite.

Mr. Wernis reiterated that they are not getting a lot of looks and stated that it could be because the building is not set up with truck wells and adequate power. He added that the activity is dramatically different today than what it was a

couple of years ago.

Chairperson Hooper noted that this item requires a public hearing. He opened the public hearing and noted that no cards were presented and no one wished to speak. He then closed the public hearing. He opened the discussion up to Commission members.

Mr. Dettloff noted that the business started in 2015 and asked if it was here at that time.

Mr. Kim responded that when the club first started, they rented facilities mainly out of Waterford.

Mr. Dettloff commented that he likes the idea of expansion and would definitely support this use. He asked if they work with the schools or Oakland University, and if they had adult leagues.

Mr. Kim responded that they do not directly work with Oakland University, but they do have some of the volleyball coaches for their youth teams that are a part of the Oakland University team. He explained that some of their athletes contribute to coaching a team or camps during their off season. He noted that they do not currently have any adult leagues and the leagues they do offer are for youth. He stated that most of the in-house youth leagues will be fifth through eighth grade, and have camps and clinics that are set up in a different format.

Ms. Neubauer stated that she does not have a problem with this request. She commented relative to parking that as the majority of people will be between ages two and 18, there will only be a small group of people who will actually be driving there. She asked what their ratio is of students to adults.

Mr. Kim responded that for the travel volleyball teams, they have 10 athletes per team and typically one coach assigned per team. For camps, a ratio of 10 to 1 is the maximum that they will go, but they try to stay five or six to one.

Ms. Neubauer pointed out that there were no objections from any of the City's reviewing departments, and the hours appear reasonable. She commented that she does not have a problem with this as parking is well accommodated and there is not a traffic issue.

Mr. Weaver stated that he understands that the City wants to turn industrial areas into more industrial uses; and questioned how this got approved and built if it does not meet the industrial parameters.

Mr. McLeod responded that it was built in 2007; and noted that prior to 2021-2022, recreational uses were permissible within the industrial district. He commented that this is not to say that every single industrial user has to have a truck well or additional power; however, this narrows down the pool of potential users. He stated that there are many industrial buildings that do not have truck wells or additional power; however, this seems to be an issue for a high-intensity industrial use.

Mr. Weaver commented that as he is hearing that this building was constructed specifically for dance or recreational use, he thinks that this makes perfect sense. He mentioned that it appears that court five on the plans has a conflict with a wall and asked if there were any plans for internal renovations to avoid conflicts or safety issues.

Mr. Kim noted that there is a wall area marked with a red "X" to create space around court five. He added that there is another area around court two where there is a vestibule that will need the same modification.

Mr. Weaver stated that he believes this makes perfect sense and is good use for an open space like this.

Mr. Gallina stated that he fully supports the request too as it makes sense and is a great space. He commented that it is great that they are staying in Rochester Hills; and it appears that they are clearly successful.

Ms. Denstaedt asked if the building closest to Hamlin is currently occupied.

Mr. Wernis responded that it is being moved into sometime soon; however, he does not know what the use is.

Ms. Denstaedt thanked the applicants for staying in Rochester Hills and congratulated them on their business growth. She asked where they see their students coming from.

Mr. Kim responded that most of their students come from the Oakland County area including Rochester Hills, Troy, and neighboring school districts such as Lake Orion, Clarkston, and Bloomfield. He added that about 80 to 90 percent of their participants are within a 20 minute drive of the facility and a few come from farther away.

Mr. Struzik stated that it is exciting that it will perhaps open up a more appropriate industrial space for industrial use with the business moving from one Rochester Hills location to another. He asked the building owner if they had any parking issues with the dance studio when it was operating.

Mr. Wernis responded that the tenant in the building had installed signs so that people in the back building would not utilize their parking lot; however, they never visually observed the parking lot be overparked and it was always underutilized.

Mr. Struzik asked if they ever observed the dance studio attendees utilize adjacent parking to the east or west.

Mr. Wernis responded that those parking areas are actually not adjacent to theirs, and he never really noticed that.

Mr. Struzik stated that he just wanted to make sure there was not a known history of any disputes with the neighbors. He commented that the main thing he is concerned about when he sees things like this come before the Commission is that there could be spillover to other property owners that could

infringe upon their use of their own property. He stated that he did visit the site during a couple of different times during the day and did not witness any issues. He commented that he can support the request.

Vice Chairperson Brnabic stated that she supports this as well, and commented that it was occupied for 13 or 14 years by Deborah's Stage Door. She surmised that the occupancy may have been even a little higher than what is being proposed. She commented that the topic of the use of industrial type space had a lot to do with the economy at the time, and recreational users like the idea of renting in there because the price per square foot was a lot cheaper than going elsewhere in the City. She stated that what has been brought to the Commission is that these uses should be made conditional because there is a demand for industrial, along with consideration of factors about the industrial area itself including safety. She commented that other than those concerns, she supports it and offers congratulations for their moving forward.

Ms. Neubauer made the motion in the packet to recommend City Council approves the conditional use.

Mr. Dettloff supported the motion. He asked the applicants if they operate any other facilities in other communities or if this was exclusive to Rochester Hills.

Mr. Kim responded that it is exclusive to Rochester Hills. He mentioned that they do have some competitors such as Michigan Elite and noted that they are in Pontiac and practice out of the UWM facility.

Chairperson Hooper called for a roll call vote. After the vote, he announced that the motion passed unanimously.

After the vote, Mr. McLeod noted that the targeted meeting for this would be the July 7 City Council Meeting.

A motion was made by Neubauer, seconded by Dettloff, that this matter be Recommended for Approval to the City Council Regular Meeting. The motion carried by the following vote:

Aye 8 - Brnabic, Denstaedt, Dettloff, Gallina, Hooper, Neubauer, Struzik and Weaver

Excused 1 - Hetrick

Resolved, in the matter of File No. PCU2025-0003 (Unified Volleyball), the Planning Commission recommends to City Council Approval of the Conditional Use to allow for a health, recreation and physical education facility, based on documents received by the Planning Department on May 11, 2025 with the following findings:

Findings

1. The proposed use will promote the intent and purpose of the Zoning Ordinance.
2. The existing building and proposed conditional use have been designed and is proposed to be operated, maintained, and managed so as to be compatible, harmonious, and appropriate in appearance with the existing and planned character of the general vicinity, adjacent uses of land, and the capacity of public services and facilities affected by the

use. The limited maximum occupancy of 90 people for this business will be no greater than or even less than the occupancy for a light industrial type user that would be permitted by right and would be less than the health, recreation and physical education facility that previously occupied the building.

3. The proposed addition of a health, recreation, and physical education facility will provide expanded services being sought within the greater Rochester Hills community. The proposed use at this location represents an existing City of Rochester Hills business that is already located in the City and due to its success is seeking a larger, more efficient and effective building.

4. The existing development and proposed use are served adequately by essential public facilities and services, such as highways, streets, police and fire protection, water and sewer, drainage ways, and refuse disposal, particularly since the previous use that occupied the building was also a health, recreation and physical education type use.

5. The existing development and proposed use should not be detrimental, hazardous, or disturbing to existing or future neighboring land uses, persons, property, or the public welfare as the existing building and the surrounding buildings already include several other health, recreation and physical education type uses. Those other uses are of such a nature that they shouldn't necessarily be impacted by the introduction of the proposed use, as there is no proposed outdoor activity area, and the proposed limited number of persons to be serviced within the building do not directly conflict with normal business hours for the existing industrial type tenants.

6. The proposal will not create additional requirements at public cost for public facilities and services that will be detrimental to the economic welfare of the community.

Conditions

1. City Council approval of the Conditional Use.

2. If outdoor use areas are proposed or if the intensity of the use increases to include operations such as competitions or occupancy greater than 90 people for other events or uses inconsistent as those presented as part of this application (etc.), City staff may require and order the conditional use approval to be remanded to the Planning Commission and City Council as necessary for re-examination of the conditional use approval.