

**MINUTES OF THE VILLAGE OF JOHNSBURG  
JUNE 11, 2025 MEETING OF THE  
SPECIAL ZONING COMMISSION MEETING**

**CALL TO ORDER** – Chairman Larsen called the meeting to order at 7:01 p.m.

**Commission Members Present**

James Barrett (absent)  
Steve Dixon  
Daniel Loud  
Roger Block  
Ken Calhoun  
Tom Benck

**Staff Present:**

Village Administrator Claudett Sofiakis  
Assistant Administrator Vinny Lamontagna  
Village Attorney Michael Smoron

Attorney Smoron swore all those in attendance intending to present testimony including the petitioner, Jeff Elser, his partner Clayton Cerer, Cross Fit gym owner Dréa Shanahan, Joe Huemann and Mike Maretich.

The petitioner, Jeff Elser, was in attendance to request a text amendment to the Johnsburg Zoning Ordinance to add Health Club; Gymnasium or Athletic Club as permitted uses in the I-1 and I-2 zoning district. Mr. Elser stated that he purchased the property at 2604 Chapel Hill Road to house the offices for his pallet and packaging brokerage businesses. He stated that after buying the property he leased a portion of the building for a Cross Fit gym and then later discovered it was not allowed. He stated that gyms are currently allowed in B-1, B-2, B-3 and C-1 zoning districts. He remarked that you frequently see Cross Fit gyms in industrial zoning districts and explained that the gym owner runs 5 classes per day with a 10- member limit for each class. He added that she has been running the gym for a year and has not experienced any incidents. Mr. Elser stated that there are two bathrooms in the building and his operations only require 4-6 office workers so they don't have problems with parking. He added that he has arranged for the septic to be pumped every six months. Mr. Elser remarked that Johnsburg has bars and gambling but no gyms.

**COMMISSION DELIBERATION**

Chairman Curt Larsen explained that the commission is cautious when making decisions regarding text amendments because their decision impacts all properties within that zoning district. He added that the commission previously recommended approval of an accessory structure on the subject property predicated on the property being cleaned up and the outside storage eliminated, but outside storage is again occurring so the commission needs to be mindful of what is approved.

Mr. Elser stated that he bought the property to use it in an industrial capacity. He added that he has bought many commercial properties in the past and understands zoning requirements, but he did not look into what could be done on the property prior to purchasing it. Mr. Elser stated that he may want to manufacture pallets and crates on the property and he would not be able to do that if he changed to B-1 zoning as recommended.

Commission Member Loud questioned if he would be installing machinery in the building if the gym goes away. Mr. Elser confirmed that he would install equipment to pursue manufacturing in the building. Commission Member Loud questioned if the building has sufficient bathroom facilities. Mr. Elser stated that he needs to provide one bathroom for every 8-10 persons and each class has one coach and up to 10 members per session. He stated that the gym has a separate access from the other business activities on the property and the classes are held at 5:00 a.m., 6:00 a.m., 9:30 a.m., 4:30 p.m. and 5:10 p.m.

Commission Member Benck questioned what problems could be anticipated if gyms are allowed in industrial zoning districts as he can't find anything that indicates it would be worse than an industrial activity. Commission Member Block concurred and questioned the size of the building. Mr. Elser stated the building is 4252 square feet. Commission Member Block stated that he has a member in his family that has Cross Fit gyms and is looking for additional locations. Mr. Elser stated that many people come to the community to go to the gym.

Commission Member Dixon questioned the type of equipment utilized in the gym. Ms. Shanahan stated that the gym is equipped with ropes, treadmills, rowers and includes a children's area. Mr. Elser identified the location of the gym in proximity to the office area for his pallet and packaging brokerage and real estate management businesses. Commission Member Dixon questioned if the health department had any concerns. Mr. Elser stated that he contacted the health department and they had no issues.

Commission Member Calhoun expressed concern with the impact on the property as zoning runs with the land, not the owner. He questioned if Mr. Elser could operate his businesses with B-1 zoning. Mr. Elser stated that activities have grown on the brokerage side of his business since he sold his pallet manufacturing business which was large in scale, so he won't likely use the property for an industrial purpose but he wants to have the flexibility of the uses allowed in the industrial zoning district. Commission Member Calhoun remarked that it would not be possible to perform his manufacturing operations at the scale he was operating before selling and questioned why the petitioner is unwilling to pursue B-1 zoning which allows for gyms. Mr. Elser stated that he wants to have the option to perform specialty manufacturing operations. He stated that he buys and sells a lot of lumber and may want to stack lumber in the building. Commission Member Calhoun questioned what the petitioner will do when McDot widens the road as the right of way will go right up to the front door. Mr. Elser stated that he will adapt and add parking in the rear. Commission Member Calhoun questioned the size of the property. Commission Member Dixon stated that it appears to be 1.42 acres.

Commission Member Loud questioned if Cross Fit is a separate company. Ms. Shanahan stated that it is and she has a franchise of the company and pays an affiliation fee to use the Cross Fit name.

## **COMMENTS FROM THE PUBLIC**

Joe Huemann of 3811 Spring Grove Road attended to express support for Mr. Elser's request.

Mike Maretich stated that he previously lived in Johnsburg and now resides in Richmond and his grandchildren participate in the Cross Fit gym. He stated that he understands the concerns raised by commission but feels Mr. Elser approached the request methodically and it is good for the community.

With no further public comments, the public hearing closed at 7:36 p.m.

Commission Member Dixon stated that he understands the need to support businesses in the community and agrees the community needs gyms. He expressed a desire to table the matter to get more information and visit the facility. Mr. Elser questioned what the concern is with allowing gyms in the industrial zoning districts. Commission Member Dixon stated he has concerns with the possible health and safety issues associated with incompatible uses being conducted on a property.

Commission Member Loud questioned why the petitioner is requesting the use in the I-2 zoning district when the subject property is zoned I-1. Mr. Elser expressed that he will withdraw the request in the I-2 zoning district and limit his request to the I-1 district. He pointed out that his property is the only property zoned I-1 in the Village.

**RECESS** - Commission Member Dixon moved to table the matter to June 25, 2025, at 7:00 p.m. in the David G. Dominguez Municipal Center. Commission Member Calhoun seconded the motion. All commission members present voted aye on the roll. Motion carried at 7:48 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

*Claudett Sofiakis*  
*Village Administrator*