

Dear Planning Board,

To clarify our intent, I wanted to provide an overall description and history leading to the “Volleyball space use” for 8 Verizon Lane.

The project was conceived when the space became available last summer (around June). My company, St. John Design Group, rented the space as an overflow workspace for our existing projects. We planned on using the space for storage, paint, and assembly for some of our larger builds/client needs.

However, as our son and daughter started talking about the upcoming volleyball season, it became clear that one of the main limitations to developing youth volleyball in the area was available indoor practice space. Additionally, we found that 8 Verizon Lane was EXACTLY big enough to support one, full size volleyball court.

Over the course of about 6 months, we began adding equipment to space including a professional volleyball floor, training equipment, and a new adjustable professional net system. Also, we added floor to ceiling nets, new lights, security system, biometric front door lock, and an enclosure for the boiler system to protect it from errant volleyballs.

Volleyball (girls and boys) is the fastest growing youth sport in the country with girls’ volleyball seeing a 40% increase over the last 10 years and boys’ participation up 51% in a much shorter time. Lansing has a strong history of volleyball success with several state level championship teams bringing home trophies in the last 10 years. Due to this our goal of the space is to provide a training facility for local volleyball coaches to use as an extension of their existing programs. Additionally, we wanted to create the area’s first boys’ volleyball team. The space is limited to reservation by coaches only – it will not be a “public gym” as instruction, rather than, exercise, is our focus.

Through this process, we’ve had a ton of support from local coaches (both high school and college), area organizers (USAV Excelsior Volleyball) and a huge outpouring of interest from local parents. The boys’ team, The Cascade, signed up 10 players and we have a group of 5 local college players, several club and varsity coaches, and a few parents offered to help coach.

As “club season” is coming to an end (Dec-April), we are currently planning to offer classes, directed by our coaching staff, to all local volleyball parents and anyone else that might be interested. We’ve been talking to Lansing Rec about the possibility of running summer programming for early youth development, potentially starting a “feeder program” for area volleyball. Also, we’re beginning to look to expand offers for more club teams (boys, U12, etc). for next season.

To round out our space usage, further offers might include Pickleball during school/ non-volleyball hours. Also, we are looking at rentals for the local adult volleyball leagues on weekends. Both options will limit spectators and be coach driven as with all other offerings.

I have attached the parking plan submitted to the Codes Department along with this updated description of use. In order to obtain the Operating Permit, I worked directly with the Codes Department to address their questions, and they have reviewed and approved all safety and parking considerations.

As a point of comparison, the Town Barn baseball and soccer fields, also zoned within the IR District, are used for outdoor recreation and typically generate a high volume of vehicles, parents, and participants. In contrast, our operation will be private, structured, and limited in number, all within an indoor setting.

I'm happy to answer any other questions you may have.

Thanks,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "Peter St. John". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

Peter St. John