

Submitted by:

Suzanna Mayhugh: Office Administrator at Wheaton Montessori School
 Parent at Wheaton Montessori School
 Residential Property Owner in Adjacent Neighborhood

Enclosed:

April 2018 Facebook Comment Thread sent to Paul Hoss via email.

May 2018 Email to Paul Hoss requesting updates.

Emailed Remarks from Lorena Vaughn, current Wheaton Montessori parent.

To the members of the committee, I would like to open by saying “thank you” for the opportunity to speak with you today. I appreciate the chance to share my experiences and help answer questions the committee may have. In the invitation to attend today’s committee hearing, I was asked to relay any implications and effects that this particular establishment has had on our daily operations, if any. I’m sorry to say that we do indeed have experiences to share with the committee today.

It has come to our attention and is evident from the number of local businesses *not* on the schedule today that many of our neighbors are afraid to participate in this hearing. This is outrageous; not because these business aren’t participating, but because circumstances surrounding a new neighbor have led these business owners to believe they will not be safe if they speak at a government function. The proximity of one business in a town should not cause other residents, business owners, and patrons to fear for their safety in a government-sponsored forum. It is our school’s hope that by speaking today, we can provide a voice for our neighbors who feel unsafe doing so.

I am here in multiple capacities. I was invited to speak as a representative of Wheaton Montessori School, which serves children ages two through fourteen. I am both an administrator in the office and a parent of two currently-enrolled Wheaton Montessori Students. My role at Wheaton Montessori School focuses heavily on parent communication, providing tours to prospective student families, and

community outreach. In this capacity, I have had an increasing number of interactions that have involved concerns with a new neighboring business, just north of our school property known as “Hot Shots.”

In April of 2018, an alumni parent called to inform us about a post in “The Wheaton Moms” Facebook group that was asking about a new adult business in the storefront next to Sully’s Bar. We immediately called the county to try and get accurate information, rather than operate from speculation. We were asked to keep the county informed if we observed any suspicious activity and to tell our school parents to report the same. I have attached the original Facebook comment thread to my written statement, which I sent to Paul Hoss and the Zoning Board on that day.

Over the next month, calls from both current families and alumni parents increased on this topic. Parents are concerned about the proximity of the establishment; they are concerned that our playground may be visible to strangers going to a business for “adult purposes;” they are noticing an increased police presence in our neighborhood. They were reporting Facebook posts and rumors that an “adult photography studio” had opened within walking distance of the school. The number of phone calls, emails, and concerns rose to the point that I emailed the Building and Zoning Department and Mr. Hoss again to ask if they had any advice in what we could communicate to parents to help ease their minds on this particular topic. I have attached that email to my written statement to be submitted today.

Time that could have been spent communicating with parents, supporting teachers in the classrooms, fundraising for new materials, giving tours to prospective families, planning school functions, or assisting in daily office tasks was now taken in addressing community concerns for our school’s proximity to “Hot Shots.”

As for tours, we are now routinely addressing concerns about our new neighbors, rather than focusing on our own educational mission. Last summer, we had several parents call for information about enrolling. Unlike previous phone calls, at least four of these prospective calls including the question,

“Are you the school next to *that* place?” I remember one particular phone call with a grandmother, asking if her grandchildren could be observed from “the strip club” if they came to our school. I invited the grandmother to come tour and see the area for herself; she declined, stating that she just didn’t feel comfortable with “that place” so close to the school.

As an office administrator looking to fill open spaces, write payroll checks, and keep full classroom communities, four tours mentioning our school and concerns about an adult business so close by are four too many. How many families looking for Montessori education are *not* calling about enrollment because of their concerns?

Looking back at the four calls that came in last summer: none scheduled a tour of the school after hearing that yes, our property is “the school close to *that place*.” Our current annual tuition for a full-time student is \$11,900 and our programs are three-year-cycles. A loss of even one of these families due to concerns beyond our control is impactful to our small school.

In addition to office work being impacted, we’ve also had classroom lessons interrupted. Our Junior High students spend quite a bit of time “off-campus” for micro-economy purposes, physical education, and enrichment trips. On one such trip, one of our 7th-grade students asked in the school van as they drove by “Hot Shots,” “Do you know what kind of place that is?” The teacher responded that no, she didn’t know, and that perhaps the student could speak with the student’s parents if concerned. The student then told the teacher that the parents were the ones talking about “bad things happening nearby” the school at the establishment. These *seventh grade girls* were worried about people visiting a business for sex so close to their school.

Even if it isn’t “that kind of place,” our Junior High team had to take time away from lessons to address concerns our *adolescent* students had about a neighbor. They had to take a moment to reassure a child dealing with adult worries, when they should have been looking forward to gym.

We have experienced implications to our daily operations not just regarding lesson time, work time, and the bottom line, but it has also rendered many of our co-workers and families insecure about the property in question *and* our own school property.

Both school staff and school parents have noticed that our parking lot is being used while we are in school, at nights, and on weekends. While we don't know that this use is *always* related to the business at-issue, it was not a problem prior to that business opening its doors.

Just this past weekend, we had a family event at the school from 3:00 until 4:00 on Sunday afternoon. We had several families and staff members in attendance. When the staff member hosting the event arrived at school, she saw an unfamiliar vehicle in the parking lot. While these families, with children ranging in ages from 4 through 8-years-old were leaving the school, a woman from the establishment entered our parking lot, entered the vehicle, and left.

On another night, school staff and students were here until 5:00 pm for an after-school art class, held in our classrooms. When the last staff member was leaving, she looked out onto the dark parking lot and saw several vehicles, all with men that were not parents or caregivers of students. She was afraid to leave the building by herself.

As a parent of students at Wheaton Montessori School, and in the future, Wheaton North High School, I agree with many of the concerns vocalized by parents since "Hot Shots" opened for business in such close proximity our school, as well as the local children's art studio, bowling alley, and high school. Many of us have a disrupted sense of security in our immediate neighborhood.

Parents are noticing an increased police presence at Wheaton Bowl. Please let me be clear: We are grateful and indebted to the men and women who place our safety and well-being as their utmost priority. In the current atmosphere regarding school safety, as a staff member in a school I could never express how thankful I am to know that these community helpers are nearby.

However, an increased police presence is worrying to many families. If the police are present, surely there is a reason for their presence, in the eyes of our parent community. If the neighborhood requires a police presence to be safe, should their children be present? In other words, if police *need* to be in the area *should* my children be in the area?

I was asked to speak about whether our business had undergone any “operational change” as a result of adult businesses or businesses with “adult characteristics” in our proximity. In thinking about “operational change” for my workplace, I also must say that many of our school *families* have undergone operational change in choosing extra-curricular activities, allowing children to walk to or from school, and more. The close proximity of the business at-issue to our residential area is worrying. We have many families who want their children to walk to school and have a neighborhood-level of independence. With this business so close to their homes and school; they feel unable to do so. I have attached emailed remarks from one such parent to this statement.

Speaking from an additional role: I am also a residential property owner in the immediate area. I live just blocks from the establishment on Gary Avenue. My neighbors are concerned about patrons of an alleged adult business in and around our neighborhood. We worry about an increased number of cars on our residential streets.

We are looking to sell our home soon. While the existence of this business is not our primary motivation to *leave* the neighborhood, it is certainly a reason *not* to stay. I think about potential buyers driving by the establishment on their way to a showing or open house. I think about my children one day attending Wheaton North, but not wanting them to venture from the campus if “Hot Shots” is still in business.

Personally, the effects of having “Hot Shots” so close to my school hit home as I prepared for today’s hearing and spent the majority of a work day preparing my remarks. Discussing my absence with my co-

workers. Informing school parents that I would be attending. Asking if they had additional concerns for me to relay. I realized that once again, I would be setting aside work that I love because of this issue. I would be leaving work in the middle of the day, during a time of day that is extremely busy. Instead of being there, I'm HERE. I'm not at the school. I'm not with students, parents picking up their children at noon carpool, or with my co-workers. I am here by choice and willing to help. But my job and my professional duties are on-campus, with my co-workers, students, school families, and fellow school parents.

Thank you for the opportunity to speak today; I look forward to answering any questions you may have.

Wheaton Area Moms

Kim Rueschaw Fett 21 hrs · Brookingsdale, IL

Ok ladies, I know there is an old saying... only believe half of what you read and none of what you hear, BUT, this particular rumor is too much and I need to know 1. if anyone else knows anything about it and 2. If anything can be done about it... here goes... I HEARD that the vacant space on Gary next to sullys bar is being renovated to open a strip club. I am so NOT OK with that. I heard the nude dance club on north ave closed and that same owner is planning on opening a place there on Gary and Geneva across from Wheaton bowl. Does anyone have knowledge of this or know how to find out and if so how can this be stopped before it even gets started. I've already seen people in the space cleaning it out

Like Comment

Heather Armstrong There is no way wheaton would give them a liquor license. And I don't know any dry strip clubs. I think it's safe to say that's a rumor.
Like · Reply · 21h

Liz O'Leary I have seen the garage sale on the one on North Ave. I figured their building got sold.
Like · Reply · 21h

Heater Rini Cooki Call the village and ask.
Like · Reply · 21h

Madison Ann Majeski It wouldn't surprise me because of sub's... That place is a hot mess. They break so many laws. You

Matthew Ehlers
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REK REPTICK
This site is for Wheaton moms to join together and get to know a... See More

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Wheaton, Illinois

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FOR SALE
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YOUR PAGE 1
Wheaton Momsesson

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Liza Lushig Drost
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Kirsten Foley Shikany
Hope Erickson
Shelli Star
Tamara Taha
Quinn Krista Speckle
Dolan Kayman Bu...
Wendy Tye
Veda Mehta

8:27 AM 4/9/2018

Wheaton Area Moms

Madison Ann Majeski It wouldn't surprise me because of sub's... That place is a hot mess. They break so many laws. You can smoke in there and they sell cigarettes behind the bar. It's a popular place for the younger crowds because you can get away with so much. I know some people who go there... They are in unincorporated.
Like · Reply · 20h

Navatha Chp Property ownership is public record go to the county's property tax assessor page and search the address. that will give you all the ownership info.
Like · Reply · 20h

Becci Hethcote That entire place is for sale right now. We looked into buying it so I know for a fact that the building is for sale. I don't know if the person wanting to do this is buying the building or not but eventually it will be sold I would imagine. That would definitely not be cool right there by the high school. Or anywhere for that matter.
Like · Reply · 20h

David Dineff The unincorporated areas of this county has plenty of questionable things going on.
Like · Reply · 19h

Jamie Rose Clouka or Lyndie Sullivan hear anything of this?
Like · Reply · 19h

Sara Vlack DicLodge Following. I live right by there! Please tell me this isn't true!
Like · Reply · 19h

Libby Phillips Hill That would never happen by a high school.
Like · Reply · 19h

Kim Rueschaw Fett My concern is this is unincorporated. Who

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Groups make it easier than ever to share with friends, family and teammates. [Create Group](#)

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185 members

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Wheaton Momsesson

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Trevor Bailey
Liza Lushig Drost
Matthew Ehlers
Kirsten Foley Shikany
Hope Erickson
Shelli Star
Tamara Taha
Quinn Krista Speckle
Dolan Kayman Bu...
Wendy Tye
Veda Mehta

8:28 AM 4/9/2018

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Wheaton Area Moms

Discussion

Moison Ann Majeski It wouldn't surprise me because of stuff... That place is a hot mess. They break on many laws. You can smoke in there and they eat cigarettes behind the bar. It's a popular place for the younger crowd because you can get away with so much. I know some people who go there... They are in unincorporated.

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Like Reply 15h

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Kim Roenschaw Fert My concern is this is unincorporated. Who

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Groups make it easier than ever to share with friends, family and teammates.

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Suggested Groups

Lombard Area Babies & Kids

190 MEMBERS

YOUR PAGE

Wheaton Moms

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Trevor Baker

Lisa Ludwig Dress

Matthew Enters

Kristin Polay Shakyar

Hope Erickson

Shel Stair

Tamara Taha

Olson Kevin Specter

Wendy Tye

Vera Ulfida

8:38 AM 4/9/2018

Wheaton Area Moms

Discussion

Joanna Joy Slerning who practicing real estate pros

Like Reply 15h

Lisa Cardotta That would be horrible since they are getting back to disard in our neighborhood

Like Reply 15h

Virna a reply...

Melissa Falvo-Kallenbach Following, and will do some digging tomorrow

Like Reply 8h

Rebecca Urigo Hello all - I am the Head of School at Wheaton Middlesex, just a few properties away from the business mentioned above. This morning, we called Paul Hess, the Zoning and Planning Administrator for DuPage County. He assured us that the particular property is NOT zoned to allow any "adult entertainment" (It's a B-1 zoning area - for local businesses, not an I-1 or I-2 zoning area, which would allow adult entertainment.)

He is going to do some digging as well and check in at the place of business today to be sure that nothing is happening without the county's knowings.

He also encouraged us to share his direct contact information for any future information tips that you hear, especially given that the adult businesses on North Avenue have recently been shut down.

His contact info is: paul.hess@dupageco.org and his cell phone is 833-614-9828.

Like Reply 2h 5m

Write a comment

People You May Know

Christine von Lersner

7 mutual friends

Buy and Sell Groups Near You

Berrym Forest Park/Dale Park/River Forest, Oakdale, Ca...

181 sold 6,532 members

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Wheaton Moms

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Trevor Baker

Lisa Ludwig Dress

Matthew Enters

Kristin Polay Shakyar

Hope Erickson

Shel Stair

Tamara Taha

Olson Kevin Specter

Wendy Tye

Vera Ulfida

8:38 AM 4/9/2018

Following-up on Parent Complaints

1 message

Wheaton Montessori <discover@wheatonmontessori.org>

Wed, May 16, 2018 at 12:05 PM

To: buildingandzoning@dupageco.org, Paul Hoss <paul.hoss@dupageco.org>

Hello,

We've had several complaints and concerns from our student body's parent community about a business that just opened north of our school. The complaints focus on the property adjoining Sully's Bar. We've had several calls reporting that an "adult" business has opened there. The building has an "open" sign, states that it's open 24/7 for private photography, open only to 21-and-older, by appointment only.

I had sent Paul Hoss a screenshot about a month ago from a Wheaton Parent Facebook group full of concerns, rumors, and questions. In the last week, that same thread has taken on new life - parents are attempting to call the establishment, are concerned about the type of business being run in the location, and are very concerned that an adult business is being allowed to operate so close to both Wheaton North and our school.

Is there any update that we could share with our own student body parents to help either dispel the rumors or fill them in on an action plan if the rumors are true?

Thank you.
Suzanna Mayhugh

Alumni Perspectives Video <<https://youtu.be/iIX37kzrQqo>>

School Intro Video <<http://youtu.be/mMlmdVt1jew>>

Schedule your tour or classroom observation [HERE](#)

www.wheatonmontessori.org
www.facebook.com/wheaton.montessori
Early Childhood through Adolescence
Wheaton Montessori on Gary Avenue

Now Enrolling



Re: Committee Hearing at DuPage County: THIS Tuesday.

1 message

Lorena Audra Vaughn <lavaughn91@gmail.com>

Fri, Feb 22, 2019 at 3:02 PM

To: Wheaton Montessori <discover@wheatonmontessori.org>

Thank you for the update. Please relay some concerns on our behalf.

1. We live at 0N717 Knollwood Dr. Wheaton, IL 60187. You may record this comment from Lorena Vaughn
2. We have two key organizations I take our children to. WMS and Alicia's Art Studio. We must park (literally next to!) the business and walk in with small girls every week during art class. It repulses me that I have to walk my small girls next to this establishment and perhaps come across clientele that enter and exit. It is beyond inappropriate.
3. We are concerned this business will effect our property value. We are also concerned it will cause more traffic on our residential street.
4. We are blown away as to why this sort of business is allowed, while other reputable businesses have to jump hoops to operate within Wheaton. Why in the world is an exception made for a strip bar when local businesses struggle to get the necessary zoning and permits to contribute to a vibrant local economy?
5. I have also called Paul Hoss to register a complaint. I am greatly disappointed in the county's handling of this business.

Lorena Vaughn

On Fri, Feb 22, 2019 at 2:35 PM Wheaton Montessori <discover@wheatonmontessori.org> wrote:

Last Spring, a new business opened nearby on Gary Avenue that is alleged to be operating with "adult business characteristics." We have been in contact with the Zoning Committee and area authorities to be sure that we are kept informed as their investigation has progressed.

In the last few days, we have reached a new level of engagement with the county authorities in their efforts to shut down or relocate the business. On Tuesday, I will go to represent the school to the county at the next Ad Hoc Adult Business Committee hearing to relay concerns with the proximity of the business and its implications on our family.

Just this morning, I met with Paul Hoss, the official in charge of securing participation in Tuesday's hearing, as well as another WMS adolescent parent who has attended past hearings and will also be providing a statement on Tuesday.

During this morning's meeting, Mr. Hoss, requested that I invite any and all parents with concerns to attend the meeting. If you would like to speak, public comments will be accepted and heard at the end of the hearing. Each public-commentary speaker will be limited to 3 minutes.

The hearing will take place on Tuesday, February 26, 2019 at 12:30 PM in Rm. 3500b of the County Administration Building at 421 North County Farm Road.

If there is a concern that you have had that you feel we don't know about and would like for me to bring to the attention of the committee, please respond to this email.

I'm very sorry for the late notice; I hope that future meetings where we are requested to participate will come to our attention much earlier.

Thank you,
Suzanna Mayhugh