City of La Porte Board of Zoning Appeals Meeting Minutes	
Tuesday, March 10, 2026 at 6:00 PM **Immediately upon conclusion of the Plan Commission meeting**	
City Hall Council Chambers, 801 Michigan Ave.	
www.cityoflaporte.com	**(219) 362-8260**

A meeting of the City of La Porte Board of Zoning Appeals ("BZA"), was held at City Hall on Tuesday, March 10, 2026 at the hour of 6:18 PM, ("local time"), pursuant to notice duly given in accordance with the rules of the Commission and the Indiana Open Door Law.

ITEM 1. Call Meeting to Order

The meeting was called to order by Chair Brian Kajer at 6:18 PM.

ITEM 2. Pledge of Allegiance

ITEM 3. Roll Call & Determination of Quorum

On a call of the roll, the members of the BZA were shown to be present or absent as follows:

Members Present:	**Members Absent:**	**Staff Present:**
Chair, Brian Kajer		Mark Worthley, BZA Attorney
Vice Chair, Nate Loucks		Craig Phillips, CDP Director
Vickie Gushrowski		David Heinold, City Planner
Pete Saunders		Josette Schoof, Eng. Coordinator
Mark Danielson		

ITEM 4. Approval of Minutes: January 13, 2026 Meeting Minutes

Chair Brian Kajer called for any changes or corrections to the January 13, 2026 Meeting Minutes. There being no changes or corrections to the meeting minutes, Nate Loucks made a motion to **approve the January 13, 2026 Meeting Minutes** and the motion was seconded by Vickie Gushrowski. The motion passed 5-0.

ITEM 5. Special Exception Use # 26-01 Petition to Allow Amusement/Arcade Establishment – Virtual Reality
Type of Request: Special Exception Use
Staff Report: David Heinold

APPLICANT

Name – Immersion Point, LLC (Taylor O'Heran)

PROPERTY OWNER

Name – XL Investment Properties, LLC-S Series

PREMISES AFFECTED

Parcel Number - 46-06-35-380-006.000-043				
Actual/approximate address or location from major streets – 1700 Lincolnway Street, Ste. 7				
Total Acreage – 0.55 acre		Flood Zone on Site? - No		
Zoning of Subject Property – B2		Use of Subject Property – Multi-tenant commercial building		
Zoning of Adjacent Properties	North: B2	South: B2	East: B2	West: B2
Land Use of Adjacent Properties	North: Office	South: Restaurant/ Retail Stores	East: Office	West: Residential

SUMMARY: The petitioner proposes to allow a virtual reality gaming facility.

HISTORY OF SITE: Per the site aerial image, the total parcel size is 0.55 acre and is currently zoned B2 (General Commercial District). Currently, the subject property is an existing multi-tenant commercial building and parking lot. The petitioner proposes to allow a virtual reality gaming facility.

DESCRIPTION OF PROPOSED SPECIAL EXCEPTION USE:

The petitioner is requesting a special exception use to allow a virtual reality gaming facility.

STATEMENT OF COMPLIANCE: Section 7.02 Uses sets forth the list of uses for land and buildings in the B2 General Commercial District. The proposed use for a amusement/arcade establishment – virtual reality gaming facility requires special exception use approval prior to operation in the B2 General Commercial District. Article 24 Special Exception Review Requirements and Procedures set forth the process for review and approval of a special exception use by the City of La Porte Board of Zoning Appeals. The proposed use for an amusement/arcade establishment does not have additional use requirements.

SITE REVIEW FINDINGS: Site review is not required for this type of variance petition.

DECISION CRITERIA:

(1) General Welfare. The proposal will not be injurious to the public health, safety, and general welfare of the community.

The proposed virtual reality gaming facility will not be injurious to the public health, safety, and general welfare of the community because much of the surrounding area is commercial use. The proposed use will be designed, constructed, and maintained in accordance with all applicable codes and regulations. The proposed use will be conducted entirely within the building and there is shared parking for the building onsite.

(2) Surrounding Property. The special exception use will not be injurious to the use and enjoyment of other property in the immediate vicinity for the purpose already permitted, nor substantially diminish or impair property values within the neighborhood. The establishment of the special exception use will not impede the normal and orderly development and improvement of the surrounding property for uses permitted in the district.

The special exception use to allow a virtual reality gaming facility will not be injurious to the use and enjoyment of other property in the immediate vicinity for the purpose already permitted nor substantially diminish or impair property values within the neighborhood because the majority of the surrounding area are commercial businesses. The establishment of the special exception use to allow a virtual reality gaming facility will not impede the normal and orderly development and improvement of the surrounding property for uses permitted in the district because it will improve the signal for businesses and residential properties in the surrounding area.

(3) Hazard. The special exception shall not be hazardous to adjacent property, or involve uses, activities, materials or equipment which will be detrimental to the health, safety or welfare of persons or property.

The special exception use to allow a virtual reality gaming facility does not involve uses, activities, materials, or equipment that will be detrimental to the health, safety, or general welfare of persons or property in the surrounding area.

(4) Public Facilities and Services. The use will be served adequately by essential public facilities and services such as: highways, streets, police and fire protection, drainage structures, water and sewage facilities, refuse disposal and schools. Adequate measures have been or will be taken to provide ingress and egress so designed as to minimize traffic congestion in the public streets.

The proposed use will be served adequately by essential public facilities and services such as: highways, streets, police and fire protection, drainage structures, water and sewage facilities, refuse disposal and schools. Adequate measures will be taken to provide for ingress and egress so designed to minimize traffic congestion in the public streets.

(5) Development Requirements. The development of the property will be consistent with the intent of the development requirements established by this ordinance for similar uses. The development will be designed, constructed, operated and maintained to be compatible with, and not significantly alter, the existing or intended character of the general vicinity, based upon the County Comprehensive Land Development Plan.

The development of the property will be consistent with the intent of the development requirements established by this ordinance for a virtual reality gaming facility. The development of a virtual reality gaming facility will be designed, constructed, operated, and maintained to be compatible with, and not significantly alter, the existing or intended character of the general vicinity, based upon the Countywide Land Development Plan.

(6) Ordinance Intent. Granting the special exception use will not be contrary to the general purposes served by this ordinance and will not permanently injure other property or uses in the same zoning district and vicinity.

The approval of the special exception use to allow a virtual reality gaming facility will not be contrary to the general purposes served by this ordinance and will not permanently injure other property or uses in the B2 General Commercial District and immediate vicinity. The surrounding area is primarily commercial businesses and office buildings to the immediate north.

(7) County Land Development Plan. The proposed use will be consistent with the character of the zoning district in which it is located and the recommendations of the County Land Development Plan.

The proposed use will be consistent with the character of the B2 General Commercial Zoning District in which it is located and goals and policies of the Countywide Land Development Plan.

Use Regulations. Where there are use-specific regulations contained in Article 14, the special exception use shall comply with all of the regulations applicable to the use.

There are no use-specific regulations contained in Article 14 of the zoning ordinance.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION:

Staff finds that approval of the special exception use petition to allow an amusement/arcade establishment – virtual reality gaming facility is consistent with the Countywide Comprehensive Land Development Plan and the general character of the surrounding commercial retail stores, restaurants, office buildings, and residential dwellings within the surrounding area. Staff recommends **approval** of Special Exception Use Petition #26-01.

Submitted to the Board of Zoning Appeals March 5th, 2026.

Applicant Presentation
Taylor O'Heran 1700 Lincolnway, Suite 7 (business address) mentioned he is seeking a special exception approval for a virtual reality (VR) lounge, that is classified under "amusement arcade." Taylor O'Heran briefly mentioned the following aspects of his business model:

- 6–8 VR headsets
- Appointment-based, online booking
- Pay-per-play (~30-minute sessions)
- Minimal noise and no large arcade machinery

Public Comment
Chair Brian Kajer opened the meeting to public comment and called for public comments. There being no public comment for or against the special exception use, Chair Brian Kajer closed the meeting to public comment.

Staff Presentation
David Heinold mentioned the property is in a multi-tenant commercial building (B2 zoning district). David Heinold mentioned the following key findings:

- Compatible with surrounding commercial uses (retail, restaurants, offices)
- No negative impact on public health, safety, or welfare
- No hazardous materials or activities involved
- Adequate infrastructure (parking, roads, utilities)
- Consistent with County Land Development Plan

Staff recommended approval.

Board Discussion/Action
Brian Kajer called for a motion. Nate Loucks made a motion to approve **Special Exception Use # 26-01 Petition.** The motion was seconded by Mark Danielson. A roll call vote was taken. The motion passed 5-0.

Yes	Brian Kajer	Yea	Pete Saunders	Yes	Nate Loucks
Yes	Vickie Gushrowski	Yea	Mark Danielson		

Special Exception Use #26-01 Petition – Approved 5-0

ITEM 6. Old Business

There was no old business.

ITEM 7. New Business

There was no new business

ITEM 8. Other Business

There was no other business

ITEM 9. Adjournment

Vickie Gushrowski made a motion to **adjourn,** and the motion was seconded by Pete Saunders. The motion to **adjourn** passed 5-0. The meeting was **adjourned** at 6:22 pm.

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Brian Kajer, Chair Josette Schoof, Secretary