



Memorandum

To: Board of Zoning Appeals
From: Matthew Glassman, Chair of the Planning Commission
Meeting Dates: May 13, 2026
Re: Recommendation for Conditional Use Permit – Specialized Instruction at 421 Church Street NE Unit G

Summary:

The Planning Commission met on May 13, 2026, to review and discuss the application from the owners of New York School of Arts, Ray and KJ Lee (henceforth referred to as “the applicants”), to be approved for a Conditional Use Permit from the Board of Zoning Appeals (BZA) to relocate a portion of their existing business offering Specialized Instruction to 421 Church Street NE Unit G, in the Avenue East zone. The Planning Commission’s role is to provide a recommendation to the BZA.

After discussion, the Planning Commission voted 5-0 on May 13 to recommend approval of the CUP.

Site & Proposal Overview:

The site is a 45,215 square-foot parcel with an address of 415-421 Church Street NE. The property consists of two two-story buildings, with 421 Church Street NE being a 10,409 square foot building, and approximately 60 parking spaces. The property is triply zoned RS-16, Transition, and Avenue East, but 421 Church Street NE Unit G is located within the Avenue East zone.

The applicants operate the New York School of Arts, a school offering visual arts classes for students aged 3-18. They wish to move a portion of their existing business from 320 Maple Avenue East Suite E to 421 Church Street Unit G as the lease for the former property will be expiring soon. The classes proposed for 421 Church Street Unit G would be limited to weekday afternoons and evenings, and Saturday mornings and early afternoons. Classes would be limited to five students and no more than two classes would be taught at once, meaning no more than ten students and two instructors would be in class at any given time. As Specialized Instruction is a Conditional Use in the Avenue East district, the applicants must obtain a Conditional Use Permit that allows them to operate at 421 Church Street NE.

Discussion:

Two owners of the Skinfinity medical spa, located at 421 Church Street NE Unit H, provided comments regarding concerns they had for previous Specialized Instruction businesses oriented towards children located in Unit G. Specifically, they had concerns about excessive noise and children playing in the parking lot, which is both a safety hazard as well as taking up parking that might otherwise be used by Skinfinity customers. Further, they testified that parking spaces that they needed for their customers were frequently occupied by parents waiting for their children

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while they were in class. The Planning Commission was sympathetic to their concerns but noted that issues regarding noise and parking were under the landlord’s purview rather than that of the Planning Commission. The applicant in attendance, KJ Lee, confirmed that the school operates indoors only and would not conduct any outdoor activities with students.

Planning Commission Recommendation

After staff presentation and discussion, the Planning Commission voted unanimously to recommend approval to the BZA, as follows:

Motion: Commissioner Noble

2nd: Commissioner Miller

Roll Call Vote:

Matthew Glassman, Chair	Aye
Douglas Noble, Vice Chair	Aye
Keith Aimone	absent
Deepa Chakrapani	absent
Evan Fallor	Aye
David Miller	Aye
Jessica Plowgian	Aye