

LI flying trapeze school looking for a place to land

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Usually, the emphasis for a flying trapeze school would be on time spent in the air. But one local school is now looking for a place to land.

The I. FLY trapeze school - the only one of its kind on [Long Island](#), according to its owners - was denied a variance by the Town of Smithtown needed to continue operating at the Ivy League School on Brookside Drive.

The town's action shut down the trapeze school before classes were in full swing for the summer months.

The decision followed complaints by neighbors that the trapeze school was noisy and its lights shined in their backyards at night.

But others say the school was a place for kids to learn about themselves and raise their self-esteem.

Noah Cooper, who co-owns the Ivy League School with his wife, Margaret Velez-Cooper, gave I. FLY space on the 16-acre campus in exchange for free lessons for Ivy League summer campers.

"We have campers who came in, didn't have any friends, and they experienced the trapeze and they leave there saying, 'There's nothing I can't do after climbing that trapeze,' " he said at the Zoning Board of Appeals meeting at which the variance was denied.

One neighbor, Richard Duggan, called the noise from the microphone system "incredibly loud." He complained that music played during routines continued until 10 p.m., and reminded the board that there are toddlers in the neighborhood who go to bed by 8 p.m.

"We did not buy a house to live next to a circus," Duggan said.

I. FLY needed a height variance for its apparatus and lights, which reached 33 feet high - above the 15-foot limit in the town code. "Character of the neighborhood" is one issue

zoning boards must evaluate when granting a variance, and Smithtown's board had lengthy discussions on whether the school property was a proper fit for the trapeze school.

I. FLY co-owner Anthony Rosamilia said the program confused town officials. "People have questions about this apparatus. Is it recreational? Sport? How do we zone it? It's easier to just say no."

The program operated four nights a week, according to the May 26 meeting minutes, but Rosamilia and his brother, Marco, said they were willing to stop running classes at night, and only used music twice during the end of recitals.

The Rosamilias honed their craft while working at various Club Med resorts. After five years of teaching vacationers how to fly through the air, the two brothers, who grew up in [Franklin Square](#), decided to open a trapeze school at home.

The brothers are looking for a new home for I. FLY, and hope to get variances in the Town of Islip for a spot they found in [Sayville](#).

A former student, Antonella Pergola of Huntington, said she and her family can't wait for the school to reopen. "It's just great," she said. "It's something you can do with your kids."