

Office Buildings

Business Challenge/Environment

Our client's proposal for two five-story, 125,000-SF office buildings at a 22-acre former automotive junkyard site straddling two municipalities required a special-use permit from the zoning board. Despite scheduling a hearing in late summer when the client expected limited local opposition, more than three-dozen neighbors and a city councilor turned up at the hearing to oppose the project, citing traffic and public safety concerns. This show of opposition persuaded the zoning board to reject the application, tying up the property and shutting down the project indefinitely.

Outcome

When the proposal went before the zoning board for a second time, it faced no significant opposition and won unanimous approval.

Our Approach

Brought in following the zoning board defeat, we had 120 days to change the politics before another attempt to win approval. We quickly launched an effort that included:

- A door-to-door canvas to reach out to residents and begin to identify and address their concerns.
- Work with the development team to mitigate the primary neighborhood concern, which was traffic and the safety of children walking to the neighborhood school.
- Securing funding for a sidewalk snowplow for use on walks leading to the school.
- Implementing additional traffic-mitigation measures and community suggested safety improvements.
- Circulating a petition in favor of the development, demonstrating communitywide project support.
- Building relationships with key neighbors and local leaders and turning opponents and skeptics into project supporters.

CASE STUDY