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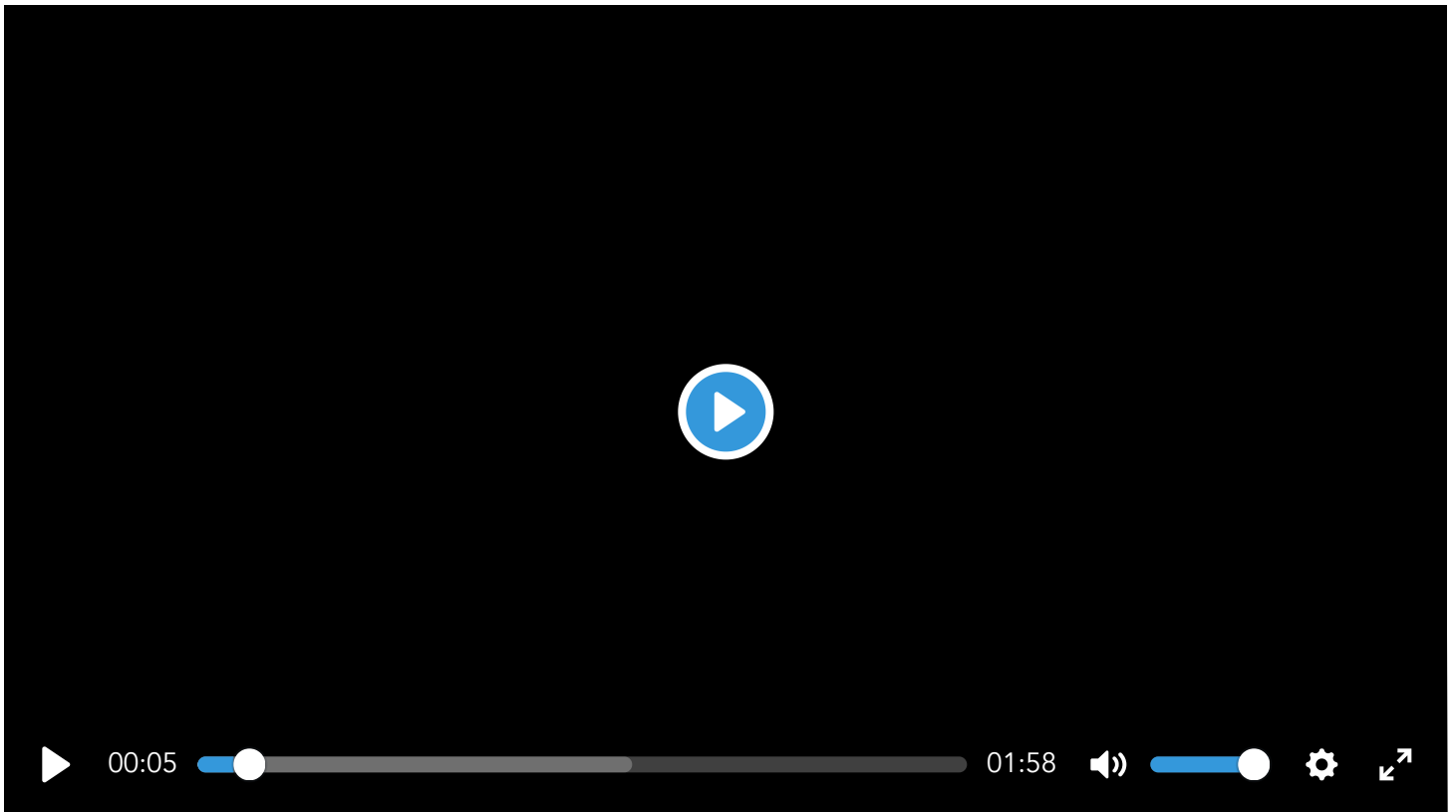
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Relocation vs Reflection: Growing debate as renovation plans move Los Gatos gym near veterans memorial



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What many have described as serenity at the Flame of Liberty Veterans Memorial in Los Gatos, will soon be met with the sounds of 6 a.m. workout classes.



By Amanda del Castillo

Thursday, July 11, 2019

LOS GATOS, Calif. (KGO) -- What many have described as serenity at the Flame of Liberty Veterans Memorial in Los Gatos, will soon be met with the sounds of 6 a.m. workout classes.

"I don't think anyone can say the memorial is not going to get more attention because of our members being down there," The Club at Los Gatos operating co-owner, Alex Anderson told ABC7 News.

Yet others say attention isn't the problem.

The gym will temporarily move from 285 East Main Street to 66 East Main Street, while the main gym is renovated.

The temporary location has long been the site of car dealerships.

There are concerns about gym activity- crowds, cars, and workout classes some believe will disturb the peace.

"This particular building that's been used as a car dealership isn't really correctly framed or constructed for that use," Kent Hillhouse said.

Hillhouse is the president of the Los Gatos Veterans Foundation. He explained the building's plexiglass won't stop light pollution or loud music.

"With lighting and noise, we're going to be well within the ordinances," Anderson maintains. "We're going to follow everything the town puts forth, both on the conditional use permit and beyond."

Anderson said the \$11-million remodel should take 12 months. To prevent parking issues, he's asked members to park at the gym's main lot and walk the few blocks to 66 East Main St.

"There are some growing pains, but we're doing what we can," Anderson added. "There's no angle you can look at this where anything is not above board."

Still, others maintain the move will impact any time of reflection.

"It's should be a focus of peace and retreat here," Alice Hoagland told ABC7 News.

Hoagland's son, Mark Bingham, is memorialized at the site.

Bingham was on-board Flight 93 on 9/11. He and others thwarted the hijackers' plans to crash a plane into the Capitol Building in Washington D.C.

Hoagland said the memorial has helped her heal.

"I certainly have no ill-will for the gym, or the people who want to have a thriving business here," she explained. "It's just, it seems inappropriate to me."

Despite the temporary use of the building, there is still concern any conditional use permit would allow this issue to continue long after the gym is gone.

Around 10:45 p.m. Wednesday, the Los Gatos Planning Commission voted unanimously to approve the Conditional Use Permit application for the temporary gym location.

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