

After proper notice, a Massage Business License Hearing was held on February 5, 2025. I (Chair Sandy Hart) presided over this hearing under Section 114.08 of the Lake County Code of Ordinances. Lake County Board Member Kevin Hunter was also present. Asian Queen Spa's owner Hongchun Liu sought a license for a massage business, "Asian Queen Spa", located at 14048 W. Petronella Drive Suite 101 in unincorporated Libertyville. Mr. Liu was aided throughout the hearing by a certified Chinese interpreter. Mr. Liu confirmed he was able to understand the interpreter. A certified copy of the translated proceedings is available for the Board to inspect. After presiding at this hearing and based on the testimony and evidence presented, I recommend to the Lake County Board that the Asian Queen Spa's application for a massage license **be denied**. The following is a summary of the testimony.

Eric Tooke, an enforcement officer for Planning Building and Development, testified. Mr. Tooke stated that on October 11, 2024, an inspection was conducted of the Asian Queen Spa which found the massage business operating without a license, a Conditional Use Permit or a certificate of occupancy. Tickets for the violation of a Conditional Use Permit and improper signage were issued to the location. Mr. Tooke further testified that on January 13, 2025, Mr. Liu admitted to the CUP violation in an Administrative Adjudication proceeding. Inspection reports, permit documentation, photos, tickets and the Administrative Adjudication Order were entered into evidence.

Detective Rossetti of the Lake County Sheriff's Office testified that he received information on January 14, 2025, that the Asian Queen Spa was operating without a license. He "googled" the location and discovered the business advertised publicly by providing contact information. He also found photos and reviews for the spa dating back 6 months and as recent as 1 week ago. After obtaining this information, the Detective testified that he made an appointment for the next day. He also went to the business on January 14, 2025, and determined it was operating. On January 15, 2025, in full uniform, Detective Rossetti went to the Asian Queen Spa and met Zhenzhi Liu who admitted the business was operating for approximately the past 3 months. Ms. Liu is the wife of Hongchun Liu and manages the business. She also has a massage business in Crown Point, Indiana. Detective Rossetti issued tickets to Ms. Liu for operating without a license that are currently pending at the Round Lake Branch Court. Police reports, citations, and photos of the Google search and postings regarding the spa were entered into evidence. Mr. Liu was afforded the opportunity to question these witnesses and chose not to do so. I find that the testimony of Mr. Tooke and Det. Rossetti was credible and dispositive that the Asian Queen Spa was operating for approximately 6 months in Lake County without a license.

Mr. Hongchun Liu also testified. He indicated that his background showed no police contact. He testified that he lives in Chicago, is married to Zhenzhi Liu and is from China.

On these limited issues he was forthright. However, Mr. Liu's remaining testimony was willfully evasive and contradictory, which led me to conclude that he was not credible. One Google review mentioned a couples massage. When questioned about how this service could be conducted by one masseuse, Mr. Liu stated he and his wife perform couples massages together. Mr. Liu admitted he is not licensed by the State of Illinois. Beyond being a violation of Illinois law, this admission contradicts his sworn application which states that he has no experience in the massage business and that the Asian Queen Spa had only one employee, his wife. Mr. Liu also admitted he has not completed a massage therapy program and has not passed the National Certification Examination, a requirement of the Lake County Code (§114.01(B)(12)).

His lack of veracity was further implicated when he had no credible explanation for Google reviews for Asian Queen Spa going back 6 months, reviews which identify multiple female individuals providing massages, other than his wife. His evasiveness was further on display when asked about his registered agent and his contact information. Mr. Liu was evasive in this line of questioning. He did admit to his operation of a massage business without a license. Without being specific as to time, place or to whom he spoke, Mr. Liu indicated he went to "City Hall" and was told he did not need a license. I do not find his testimony credible on this issue.

Mrs. Liu also briefly testified. She clarified that her business in Crown Point, Indiana is the Asian King Spa. However, her testimony beyond this was not credible. She claimed that posted reviews showing 6 months of operation and other female individuals who provided massages were from a prior business with a different name at the location. Not only do known facts contradict this, but the postings themselves are explicitly for the Asian Queen Spa, and not a prior business operating under another name. An additional aspect of her testimony was also troubling. During the hearing, the certified interpreter stated that Mr. and Mrs. Liu, while sworn witnesses and during the hearing, were communicating orally in a dialect that the interpreter did not understand. When asked about this, Mrs. Liu was not forthcoming about this communication. Whatever the nature of this communication, it is troubling that this occurred during an open proceeding between sworn witnesses. The Lake County Code provides, in relevant part, that a massage business license may be denied based on the establishment not complying with Chapter 114 of the Lake County Code or for just cause. I have considered all of the testimony provided, the application materials, the exhibits entered into evidence, and the record of proceedings. I ask the Board to vote and concur in the **denial** of a Massage Business License for the Asian Queen Spa in unincorporated Libertyville, Illinois.

Respectfully submitted,

Chair Sandy Hart