

To: Board of Zoning Adjustment

From: Laurence F. Jones

Date: November 14, 2017

Subject: Case No. 19581, LAM School, [5000 14th Street NW](#)

I am a resident with standing and I am writing in opposition to the LAM School (LAMS) application, as it currently reads.

I have been an Emerson Street, NW resident since 1984. My home is immediately south of 5000 14th Street NW. My concerns and the reasons for my opposition follow.

The proposal as currently submitted is, at best, vague. The neighborhood already has more than 25 institutional uses. My concerns include the proposed number of students, resulting traffic and environmental impacts, and construction of a gymnasium.

16th Street Heights neighborhood residents supported the Kingsbury Center's application in 2000. We communicated reasonable requests which were basically ignored, such as adequate landscaping to minimize visual impacts. We need the opportunity to completely understand all implications of LAM School's entire proposal.

We believe that LAMS' proposal is too large scale for our residential neighborhood. If implemented as proposed, the LAM school's 600 plus students (and staff) will only magnify the already high proportion of non-residential uses and activity in the neighborhood.

In 2000, the Board of Zoning Adjustment (BZA) granted a zoning exception to The Kingsbury Center which included the condition that the number of students would not exceed 300. Additionally, the Office of Planning (OP) made strong recommendations concerning protection of trees during renovation, avoiding obtrusive lighting, replacing cut trees, care of remaining trees, noise abatement, and permeable driveways and parking areas. The Kingsbury Center disregarded these during renovations and throughout its operations.

In 2009, with more than 35% of the neighborhood's land use being non-residential, the DC Zoning Commission approved a protective Zoning Overlay. The overlay was implemented to minimize adverse land use impacts and preserve the predominantly single-family residential character.

However, 16th Street Heights has continued to experience negative impacts on residents' quality of life. Just months ago, after protracted study periods, Emerson Street NW between 13th Street NW and 16th Street NW was changed to one-way traffic by DDOT as a necessary measure to mitigate unprecedented traffic volume and speeding incidents.

On November 3, 2017, OP submitted its report on the LAMS application drawing similar conclusions as it did regarding Kingsbury Center in 2000. Relative to the LAMS application, the OP stated similar recommendations on student and faculty/staff limits of 300 and 138 respectively. Further, OP calls for a BZA review after an interim period if there is an increase in student and staff numbers, and when the gymnasium plan is ready for review. This review period would allow the community to evaluate the impact on the neighborhood of the increase of people entering, leaving and using the property, and of the plans for the gymnasium.

There is also an issue with the traffic study that is currently associated with the LAMS application. It is inadequate and should be considered an incomplete submission for this application. There are very few details about the proposed gymnasium's structure, dimensions, location and projected times of use.

Almost two decades ago, the BZA and OP understood the effects of non-residential land uses on our neighborhood. The OP again demonstrates that it understands that we are experiencing even greater pressure on the neighborhood when it recommended a two-phased approval process which would allow neighborhood residents substantive review of the project over a 2-year period.

While we appreciate LAMS parents and staff's willingness to accommodate residents' concerns, they do not know how 600 students, staff, and increased traffic will affect the neighborhood. We must first analyze the effects of an increase to 300 students before even considering doubling that number of students and additional staff.