

November 13, 2017

Chairman Fred Hill or Current Chairman
D.C. Board of Zoning Adjustment (BZA)
441 4th Street, NW, Suite 200S
Washington, DC 20001

Re: Opposition to Application #19581: Latin American Montessori Bilingual (LAMB) Public Charter School Application to Increase the Number of Students from 300 to 600 at 5000 14th St NW

Dear Chair and Members of the Board:

We are residents with standing and we are writing in **opposition** to the LAM School (LAMS) application, as it currently reads.

We have been a resident here since 1991. We reside on the southern boundary of 5000 14th Street. Our concerns and the reasons for our opposition follow.

The proposal as currently submitted is **too vague to approve**. The neighborhood is being asked to support this proposal on faith. It is an **ambitious project for a small and already highly institutionalized residential neighborhood**. There are too many unknowns, and **assessment of the impact of key variables in the current proposal is either not possible at present or inadequate**. (Student body size, traffic impacts, gymnasium details).

In good faith We and other neighbors supported the Kingsbury Center's application in 2000. As a community we made reasonable requests which were mainly ignored. This time around, we would like the opportunity to fully understand the implications of LAM School's entire proposal.

We believe that LAMS' proposal is too ambitious for the size of our residential neighborhood, and proposes to contribute significantly to the already high proportion of institutional use and activity within the neighborhood.

In 2000 after much study, the BZA granted a zoning exception to The Kingsbury Center under the following condition: that the number of students shall not exceed 300. Additionally, the OP made strong recommendations concerning protection of trees during renovation, avoiding obtrusive lighting, replacing cut trees, care of remaining trees, noise abatement, permeable driveway and parking, among others. Kingsbury Center disregarded these during renovations and throughout operations.

With more than 35% of our land use being non-residential and the neighborhood feeling the impact of this imbalance, the Zoning Commission in 2009, approved a protective Zoning Overlay in an effort to ameliorate the adverse impacts on immediate and nearby

neighbors and to preserve a predominantly single-family residential character.

Our neighborhood has experienced significant growth in terms of traffic. In fact, recently Emerson Street between 13th and 16th Streets was turned into one-way traffic by DDoT as a necessary measure to mitigate unprecedented levels of traffic, and resulting accidents.

On November 3, 2017, the Office of Planning submitted its report on the LAMS application drawing similar conclusions as it did regarding Kingsbury Center in 2000. Relative to the LAMS application, the Office of Planning stated similar recommendations on student limits at 300. 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.

Regarding the gymnasium, we have been provided with very few details about the structure, its dimensions, and its exact placement on the property.

Nearly 2 decades ago the BZA and the Office of Planning understood the limits to the neighborhood's absorptive capacity as regards non-residential use. The OP again demonstrates that it understands that we are experiencing even greater pressure on this little neighborhood when it recommended an initial limit on students and proposed a two-phased approval process, which would allow the community the benefit of a substantive review of the project over a 2 year period.

While we appreciate and believe in LAMS parents and staff's willingness to accommodate our needs, no one truly knows the extent of the impact on the neighborhood of having 600 students, six times the current level. Let us live with and analyze the effects of 300 students before asking us to blindly support double that number of students.

From my porch I don't see Russia, but I do see 3 schools and 4 churches.

For the well-being of the community and neighborhood, we urge the BZA to reject LAMS' application as it currently stands. We could support a modified application from LAMS if it follows the recommendations of the Office of Planning (and as relayed in the full ANC-4C resolution). Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,
Gael Murphy and Laurie Emrich

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