

Dear Board Members,

I am a resident of 16th St Heights and am writing to express my support for LAMB's move to Kingsbury with eventual growth to 600 students. I think we've been fortunate and to some degree spoiled to have a school with such low enrollment at that site for years. Such significant underuse of that space in such an expensive city is unsustainable and bound to end--and some downside and concerns are inevitable with the space eventually being used to its capacity. But I think the concerns raised can be largely resolved through active ANC and community engagement with the school.

Here are a few steps we could take to ensure this transition works well:

- ensure that LAMB sets up a "kiss and ride" for at least drop off and potentially pick up to avoid neighborhood parking or congestion;
- help draft the pickup/drop off policy for their parents (neighbor Tracy Hart circulated an email to neighborhood listservs with some excellent ideas copied from other schools' dropoff policies);
- provide plenty of bike racks to facilitate more parents using alternate transit;
- work with DDOT to explore a bike share station out front;
- consider doing more buses;
- explore joint afterschool sports teams and activities with West (capoeira, ceramics, soccer, basketball, music, dance, etc.) so the talk of partnership isn't empty talk but realized and provides meaningful shared experiences).

LAMB says it would like to be a good neighbor, so let's work with them to negotiate an agreement to ensure they take steps to become one and ease the burden on neighbors. I would like to see the site continue to function as a school, especially one with such a stellar reputation. Alternatives (turning it into condos, selling it to Scientologists who want to turn it into a drug rehab facility) are far less appealing and pose enormous risk and downside for the neighborhood.

As a West parent, I'll also note that I realize there's some degree of negative impact for West as it tries to recruit new students given that the two schools are directly across the street from one another, which invites unwelcome comparison. If the schools were even a block apart that might not happen, but facing one another the comparison will be inevitable. LAMB was just ranked the #1 charter elementary school in the city and everyone wants to send their kid there. West is doing well, but wasn't ranked the top public school in the city. LAMB's future site looks like a castle and has a wow factor--I recently heard a neighbor exclaim "wow, that site is BEAUTIFUL!" West's current building isn't just an average elementary school facility--I've heard neighbors say it looks like a jail. West is the kid who's doing great but unfortunately will get compared to her gorgeous, brilliant big sister who goes to Harvard. Frustrating.

That said, I think having LAMB next door will be a great opportunity for West and LAMB to work together. I attended a community meeting where I heard the LAMB Director express her interest in building partnerships between the two schools. As a West parent, I've informally tried to work to set up more after school programs at West and would be happy to continue to try to do so, while considering potential areas of overlap between the schools. The two schools could set up sports teams that play together or against one another. They could share a part-time teacher or nurse. The opportunities to work together to build community, activities, and friendships between kids at both schools is exciting.

LAMB has taken multiple steps to indicate that it plans to be a good neighbor and member of the community. I expect them to continue to work with the community to iron out the inevitable bumps in the road as the transition progresses. I encourage you to allow them to use the space as they're requesting.

Thank you.

Elizabeth Topping

Submitted on 11/14/2017 by:
Elizabeth Topping
1322 Longfellow St NW

Board of Zoning Adjustment
District of Columbia
CASE NO.19581
EXHIBIT NO.110