

Riley, Kate

From: Riley, Kate
Sent: Friday, December 6, 2019 10:22 AM
To: Riley, Kate
Subject: FW: School Meeting

From: ALVIN HELFELD [REDACTED]
To: citymanager@cambridgema.gov
Date: November 15, 2019 at 2:29 PM
Subject: School Meeting

Dear Louis,

I was expecting that one of the three plans would include a building on Concord Ave, but not all three. My neighbors and I walked out of the meeting in shock, not liking any of the plans. In fact, most of the people who attended the break down meetings had something to complain about.

No one expected that there would be three separate building units and so much space would be taken up by the proposed new school.

The design group made three assumptions which need to be questioned:

1. They equated Vassal Lane traffic with the traffic on Concord Ave. This is obviously ridiculous. There is no reasonable comparison.
2. The building height has to be limited to a maximum of 3 floors. As a former text book publisher's representative, I have visited hundreds of schools throughout the country. Many schools make use of escalators when the building needs to be higher than 3 floors. The older children are placed on the top floors and the younger ones on the lower levels. And yes, the kids love riding the escalators. Also, many of the administrative offices can be placed on the top floor.
3. They assume parents dropping off children will want to drive onto the grounds and possibly get stuck in backups from other cars. As one mother stated at the traffic meeting, "I will continue to drop off my child on Vassal Lane by the curb. Concord Ave is too difficult to get to and I don't want my child to be walking between cars or buses."

I would recommend the following:

1. The building be in the shape of a T. with the front and top of the T facing Vassal Lane. It could cover part of the ground in back of the present building and present parking lot as well as part of the ground under the present building. This would provide more space in front of the building for bus and car drop offs. The building would have an extension that paralleled the Armory parking lot. It would extent no further than the basketball court. One or both sections of the T shape should be 4 floors with escalators.
2. Having bus and car cut-ins on Concord Ave is guaranteed to create traffic backups on Concord Ave and backup to the Fresh Pond Rotary. Fire engines, ambulances, police cars, delivery trucks and thousands of cars already cause backups. Lets not make it worse.
3. Part or all of the front part of the building that would be built over the present parking lot could have an open ground floor that could be used for parking and drop off, or entry

to an underground parking garage. For example, the new school addition on Harvard St in Brookline has a partial open section on the ground floor for staff parking.

4. Parents of pre-school and special needs children are more likely to drive their children to school than parents of older children. A very good reason not to have drop off areas on Concord Ave.

I hope my suggestions are helpful to you.

Sincerely,

Alvin Helfeld