

DOWNSHIRE HILL RESIDENTS' ASSOCIATION

Minutes of EGM Committee Meeting re Abacus School

9 March 2016

Keats Library

The meeting started at 7 PM with approximately 40 people in attendance. Meeting notices had been distributed on Downshire Hill and surrounding streets. An attendance list was created and indicated presence of resident from DH, Hampstead Hill Gardens, Pilgrims Lane, and Thurlow Road.

A representative of the Heath and Hampstead Society was also present in that capacity.

Most of the information presented had been provided by the School at a Camden Forum planning meeting on 24 February on Pond Street. (Note: A planning application has NOT yet been lodged so that had been an informative meeting only).

The library room had been prepared with renderings of the draft school design (provided to DHRA by School Architects) placed on the walls for attendees to review.

There were no representatives from the school or its supporting agencies as they were not invited. Attendees were informed that the Education Funding Agency (who own the police building and we understand have told Abacus that the school must be designed for 420 students) and have not engaged with DHRA or any public forum that we are aware of.

Andrew Neale, Bob Buhr, and Redding Thompson introduced the meeting objective and then went thru the slides (attached) to present DHRA's present understanding of the school design and the DHRA Board's position on the school as presently anticipated (objection to the scale of the school).

Questions were entertained throughout the meeting and answered to the extent DHRA reps had answers.

The main concerns raised by attendees cantered around:

- Traffic : especially key since the Finchley Road Cycle lanes will already exacerbate traffic on Rosslyn Hill
- Noise
- Amenity
- Overall Scale of the school
- Pollution

An opinion poll was taken with the following results

	Downshire Hill Residents	Nearby residents	Total
No. present	18	22	40
Those who do not object to a 420 student school	0	0	0
Those who object to that scale but would potentially support a smaller (210 student) school	13	11	24
Those who object to the use of the building as a school at all	5	11	16

Based upon the results, it was decided that the DHRA will challenge the present school plans on the grounds of scale.

DHRA reps noted that we must provide professionally backed positions on the matters above once the planning application is lodged. Our arguments must be solid and any weak arguments culled. This will require funding and assistance from local residents.

It was noted that a political strategy would also be important to secure support from local councillors. All conceded however that it is highly unlikely that we would get a local councillor to oppose a state school outright.

It was agreed that, while a planning application has not yet been lodged, residents should express concerns to the Council ASAP. This would be in the form of a common letter to be signed by local resident organisations and personal letters for those who wish to submit one as well

Bod Buhr reminded all that this effort would require funding and we will seek same.

Actions:

1. Develop and distribute meeting notes
2. Develop a summary draft letter for signature
3. Convene the next DHRA Board Mtg sooner than one month
4. Assemble volunteers and make assignments
5. Secure funding from residents
6. Secure professional consulting services as needed

Meeting ended at 2050. Thanks for Steven Bobasch for the projector and screen