

Shaun McGee

From: Loraine Mulligan <lorainemulligan@hotmail.com>
Sent: Wednesday 6 March 2024 09:25
To: oralhearing; Eimear Reilly; Conor Power
Subject: Fw: Metrolink Statement
Attachments: Loraine and Conor Power Updated 5.3.24 docx.docx

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Hi Eimear,

Please disregard the version I sent you last night and use the one now attached as I noticed one omission which I have since included.

Thanks.

Regards

Loraine

From: Loraine Mulligan <lorainemulligan@hotmail.com>
Sent: Tuesday 5 March 2024 22:21
To: oralhearing@pleanala.ie <oralhearing@pleanala.ie>; e.reilly@pleanala.ie <e.reilly@pleanala.ie>; Conor Power <conor@conorpower.net>
Subject: Metrolink Statement

Hi Eimear,

Attached is the statement from our family from today's Oral Hearing. It is updated with some remarks that I added in my address to the Inspector, compared to the printed copy I handed around earlier.

Thanks.

Regards,

Loraine

AN BORD PLEANÁLA



Lorraine and Conor Power, 5 Dartmouth Square West

05. MAR 2024

Hello Inspector.

LTR DATED _____ FROM _____

LDG- _____

ABP- _____

Thank you for the opportunity of making this presentation.

Inspector, this is our life, our lives. I trust the Inspector will not be influenced by overly-simplified characterisations of Charlemont as an easy choice for the Metrolink Terminus and the general dismissal of our concerns as nymbism in the media and public discourse. Let's be clear: this is not a call to abandon the Metrolink project in its entirety. We are simply objecting to a Terminus at this location. It is not a theoretical consideration or a book exercise that we can debate at a distance and determine with no real-world personal consequences. This is a really important decision with serious implications for us and for the city. The experts you heard yesterday speaking on behalf of our community have demonstrated gaps in the TII's proposal, in relation to various assessments, mitigation proposals, operational impacts and more. Further issues will be raised in Module 2. This is not some uninformed, unfounded or high-handed reaction by members of 'the leafy suburbs' as it may be portrayed by some.

Our family is being asked to endure considerable disturbance and the first question is why? The Luas already provides a good service to people along its line, including Charlemont. The proposed Metrolink Terminus in our neighbourhood is an expensive duplication of services when we know that residents in the South West of Dublin are crying out for the alignment to go in their direction. This would be better facilitated from Stephen's Green.

Furthermore, it is generally a quiet and peaceful residential area (disrupted lately by the construction of the Hines building, to which I will return). It is not a suitable area to bring thousands of commuters and airport-goers on a daily basis. It does not have an array of transport links, parking or other amenities. The people of Charlemont and Dartmouth have consistently tried over the years to convey this logic to TII but we are met with an unwavering refusal to take on board our concerns. In our experience, TII does not listen and has a gung-ho approach.

We have had no useful personalised engagement with or from TII about what is to happen to us in our house for the 8.5 years duration of the works. There will be a large building site outside our back door and we haven't heard a word directly from TII as to its impact on our family. Others who are affected have had specific communications in this regard but we have been left alone with the worry and stress of all this. Let me give you a picture of our situation.

We have four children, all of whom will be attending school locally during the construction phase. For all of their childhood, we will have a construction site outside our house. What happens if we have no option but to move out? There is no guarantee we would find a suitable alternative location at an affordable cost, close to the schools and after-school activities. The commute to work may also be lengthened. I'll be working from home so I will hear all of the noise, all of the time.

This so-called 'mitigation' strategy is better identified as serious and unacceptable upheaval for our family. There is a cloud overhanging us as we don't know if we will even be living in our own home over the next few years. We want our children to get to know the people in their community, rather than having to uproot and to be in a transitory situation, living here-and-there, in the years ahead. It is disruptive of their development and of the hopes and aspirations we had for our lives. That cuts very deep as a mother. I'm trying to raise my kids in the best way I can, along with my husband.

There are very practical questions: how long would we be moved for? 2 weeks? 6 months? Longer? How often? The uncertainty is intolerable. On top of the everyday stresses of life, our energy will be diverted into managing and trying to cope with the realities of a major build project on an ongoing basis. The very least we should expect if we are to endure this burden is that proper robust studies and modelling is undertaken prior to approval of the project. This does not appear to be the case from the analysis presented yesterday.

And there is an equally concerning scenario which may emerge if TII decides we don't "need" to move out. We are facing the prospect of having to live with noise that is deemed 'acceptable' for 8.5 years and more. From past experience, it is like banging your head off a wall dealing with a developer about problems that impact us from on-site. At the very least, it is frustrating and very time-consuming.

As a community we have four years of experience of living with noise, emanating from the construction of the Hines building behind our house, including the building of an unlawful table for the station box which we will come back to in Module 2. The developer will point to noise controls and being within noise limits. But I know that during this period I have not needed to set an alarm because the heavy thud of machinery, the sound of horns, the thumping of hammers and men working did the job for me. I know we have not been able to use our back garden for social events or even for relaxation for years because the level of noise was so pronounced. It was hard to hold a conversation. I felt the vibrations of the piling process in the house. I know that it was difficult to get my small baby (who is now two) to sleep because of the ructions from the site. It

is already difficult trying to nurture a newborn and growing baby and this only made it harder. I know the countless emails I had to write to the site manager because the noise was excessive.

We learned to 'put up with it' but did it contribute to my anxiety level and to a decline in my peace-of-mind and wellbeing? The definitive answer is yes. There have been many sleepless nights worrying about my family's future. Hines put in place noise mitigation measures, including an unsightly noise hoarding – regrettably, the reality is it didn't work. Likewise TII says that noise mitigation will be effective. We have no confidence that this will be the case as TII has not demonstrated how this would be achieved. Listen to the noise from repair works in the room today – it is not normal or nice to have to listen to this all the time and that is the type of prospect facing us. It was very difficult to bear during the Hines project and that was within legal limits. The Metrolink project would be an even greater imposition.

For affordability reasons, we bought our house as a doer-upper. The house had been split into three flats. We did enough essential work, including knocking partition walls, to be able to move in 5 years ago. But our house badly needs further extensive work to make it fit-for-purpose for our family, including reconfiguration internally at the garden level. However, our capacity to make decisions on all of this has been paralysed by the prospect of 8.5 years of construction and subsequent operation. We do not know for certain whether the structural integrity of the house will be compromised. We do not want to invest in an upgrade and/or extension only to find ourselves affected by subsidence and other issues. Effectively we cannot move on with our lives. This is blatantly unfair. We had to apply for an exemption from the requirement to get planning permission to refurbish (not even replace) our windows so that our house would be warm enough. Coming into winter, we encountered a delay in installing a small gas meter at the front of our house owing to the fact that our house is a protected structure. We have had to jump through hoops to do anything to our house. And yet TII can come along with the potential to do significant damage to our home.

There are scores of experts here from TII, who could be described as hired-guns, with the sole mission of picking holes in the arguments put forward by our community. We do not have the resources that are available to TII to fight on a level playing pitch. It is an intimidating environment to step into – having to lay our lives bare – set up with a view to discounting or minimising the lived experience of living with noise and disruption. It is David and Goliath. This is not an exaggeration or overly dramatic. TII does not want to concede any of our issues – the message is 'there's nothing to see here'. They want to wrap us in reassurances and platitudes that all will be well. But this doesn't wash. There is

merit and substance to our concerns. Yet we are being treated in a condescending manner for even raising questions. TII is determined to push through this project – having already predetermined the route (notwithstanding the illusion of a democratic process) – and we are mere collateral damage. The only thing standing in the way is the integrity of this Oral Hearing process. I hope we can have faith in it.

TII is drip-feeding information. This has been hugely stressful. It feels like an ambush every time. It beggars belief that for a project of this scale the information is coming this late. TII can act in any way it sees fit, without consequence or comment. This is to put us on the backfoot. They will say it is to provide clarification. But it's not really. It's to push through their will at all costs. It's to bamboozle us; to break us. I implore you, Inspector, to ensure that people have an effective and fair process, rather than allowing the tricks that TII are trying to get away with.

We are trying to raise a family. We have a busy household. Understanding this project a full-time job. We are ordinary people. TII holds all the cards. We need you, as Inspector, to equalise the power imbalance and take our concerns seriously.

Thank You.