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Royce Hanson, Chair
Montgomery County Planning Board
Maryland National Park and Planning Commission
8787 Georgia Avenue
Silver Spring, MD 20910

RE: EZ Storage in Sandy Spring (Case no. 120080410)

Dear Mr. Hanson and Board members:

I had hoped to be testify at today's hearing but am prevented by another commitment. I am therefore submitting my testimony by this letter.

I am opposed to the EZ Storage facility in Sandy Spring. This use is not compatible the plans, developed over many years, designed to preserve the rural village character of Sandy Spring. The Sandy Spring/Ashton Rural Village Overlay Zone itself was crafted with this purpose in mind. This zone requires that the Planning Board find, as part of the approval of the preliminary plan of development, that the development is consistent with the master plan and the zoning. This proposed use is inconsistent with the intent of the Master Plan.

The Sandy Spring/Ashton Master Plan contains numerous provisions to insure that the rural character of this area is maintained. At page 8 it states that land uses should "offer ample opportunities for social interaction and promote a strong sense of community through public and private cooperation," and emphasizes "the vitality and character of the village centers that contribute to the community's rural character." The "preservation and enhancement of the area's rural character" is the plan's "top priority". At page 32, the Master Plan calls for creation of pedestrian traffic, with "uses and designs that invite frequent visits by all members of the community," and at page 81 it requires "exclusion of new auto-oriented or typically large-scale uses that are inconsistent with traditional rural development patterns."

EZ Storage is not a use that will contribute to social interaction, promote a sense of community or increase community vitality. It does nothing to encourage pedestrian traffic or invite frequent visits by the members of the community. It is essentially a warehouse in the middle of a residential community. It will make 25% of the town's commercially-zoned land into a dead zone, as far as any community use or interaction is

concerned. Actual use of this facility by the community itself, if any, will be a tiny fraction of its total business, and even that use will not meet the criteria of encouraging pedestrian traffic, social interaction and community vitality. There will be virtually no reason to come to this business except by car (or truck) in order to deliver or pick up stored items. This use will discourage, rather than encourage, redevelopment and revitalization of the village center. (Master plan, p. 31)

The types of commercial businesses that are encouraged by the Master Plan include:

- “community-serving businesses” (page 8)
- “stores and other uses that provide services to local residents and are at a compatible scale,” (page 32)
- development with a “strong relationship to the community aspects of the high school” (page 24)
- pedestrian oriented (page 32)

In short, EZ Storage fails every test of a compatible use under the Master Plan. I urge the Planning Board to reject this development.

Sincerely,

Alan Wright