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# Sandy Spring Civic Association

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November 25, 2008

*By Electronic Mail*

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

Re: EZ Storage/Sandy Spring (Preliminary Plan No. 120080410)

Dear Mr. Hanson:

I am writing on behalf of the Sandy Spring Civic Association (SSCA) to express the membership's strong opposition to the proposed EZ Storage facility to be situated on the former W.H. Rental Center property on Route 108. In a community where divergence of views is celebrated as the norm, this proposal provides an exception where we are united, having voted unanimously to oppose the EZ Storage plan.

The 1998 Sandy Spring/Ashton Master Plan gives scant attention to the parcel in question, recommending only that it remain available for commercial use and that it be rezoned from I-1 to C-2 "to limit uses to those consistent with the village center concept." While neither the C-2 zoning nor the Sandy Spring/Ashton Rural Village Overlay Zone specifically prohibit self-storage facilities, we believe that such a use is inconsistent with the village center concept as described in the Master Plan and would actually serve to frustrate many of the other goals of the Master Plan:

- Preservation of rural character (p.1)
- Retention of small scale business, service and employment opportunities (p.6)
- Provision of better pedestrian, bicycle and vehicular access (p. 6)
- Provision of ample opportunities for social interaction and promotion of a strong sense of community (p.8)
- Redevelopment and revitalization of the village centers (p.31)

Sandy Spring is at a crossroads in its development today. The village center now boasts a new restaurant and a specialty foods market, together with a French bakery, a florist, a general store, a post office, a bank, a barber shop, a beauty salon, a pediatric medical clinic and several other small businesses. These are businesses patronized by the community, employing members of the community, and providing mutual synergies in furtherance of the community's desire to restore "main street" Sandy Spring. As sidewalks are installed, we grow closer to the vision of a walkable community. An EZ Storage facility, on the other hand, does not serve the community, does not employ the community, and brings nothing into Sandy Spring to add to the synergies of existing businesses.

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The Master Plan calls for a more detailed design study for the future of the Sandy Spring village center. Allowing EZ Storage into our historic community not only sets an irreversible tone for such a study prior to its inception, it diminishes the attractiveness of the village to those businesses we hope to attract and devalues the properties held by those who seek to uphold the vision of the Master Plan.

Without high density housing nearby, demand for personal self-storage within Sandy Spring and Ashton is virtually nonexistent; accordingly, we would expect a disproportionate amount of trade customers, with trucks entering and exiting in early morning and evening hours when traffic is already overburdened on Route 108 and students are on their way to Sherwood High School next door. Conversely, nearly every other business permitted in C-2 would operate during business hours that would have a lesser impact on traffic congestion and would create fewer safety considerations at the high school.

The membership of the SSCA is not generally opposed to the development of the parcel in question, but we believe at a minimum that new commercial development needs to serve the community, be compatible with existing businesses and, perhaps most importantly, create no impediment to the realization of the goals of the Master Plan. Please don't hesitate to contact me at (301) 570-5070 or via email at [thenemartin@yahoo.com](mailto:thenemartin@yahoo.com) should you wish to discuss the matter further.

Very truly yours,

Thene Martin Mernick  
President

cc: Josh Sloan, Development Review  
Fred Boyd, M-NCPPC Staff