

January 4, 2009

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

Dear Mr. Hanson,

We are writing to express our opposition to the proposed development of an EZ Storage facility in Sandy Spring. As life-long residents of Montgomery County, it saddens us to see the continuous demise of the limited rural landscape within the county. Sandy Spring is home to many unique and important historical sites, including the Ashton Orthodox Meeting House (Sherwood Library), Auburn Farm, Bloomfield (Bloomingdale), Cloverly Historic House, Free Negro Settlement Site, Harewood Farm, Marden Lane Houses, Mt. Pleasant II (Esther Scott House), Oakleigh, Odd Fellows Hall (Odd Fellows Lodge), Pen-Y-Brynm, Sandy Spring Friends Meeting House, Sandy Spring Historic District, Sharon (Brooke Grove Nursing Home), Sharp Street Methodist Church, Snowden Manor Farm (Pleasant Grove), T.R. Moore House (Miraval, Rutledge), Tyson House (Mrs. W. Chandlee Farm), and Woodlawn (Woodlawn Manor). The majority of these sites are homes and farms, which is a testament to the rural significance of the area.

The construction of an EZ Storage facility does not fit within the rural nature of the Sandy Spring community, nor does it provide a needed service to the residents. This violates the intent of the Master Plan. Though the developer has attempted to make the exterior of the structure look consistent with the surrounding community, the purpose of the structure does not adapt at all to the community. The Sandy Spring community cannot support such a business given its small population. Therefore, those planning on using this type of facility will likely commute from surrounding areas, placing a strain on an already overwhelmed infrastructure.

A storage facility is much better suited for a larger more industrial area than a small, rural community with historic treasures. For example, an EZ Storage facility exists within Gaithersburg. Per the 2006 census, there were 1,336 total businesses located in Gaithersburg compared to 50 businesses in Sandy Spring. Of those 50 businesses, about 70% employed 10 or fewer people. As of October 2007, Gaithersburg had a population of 57,934 compared to Sandy Spring's 3,789. Additionally, Gaithersburg had 21,812 households compared to 1,335 for Sandy Spring. Clearly, an EZ Storage facility is better suited, both from a business venture and service provider standpoint, to the city of Gaithersburg, compared to a small, historic community such as Sandy Spring.

Please do not move forward with the construction of an EZ Storage facility in Sandy Spring. It is imperative that we begin to truly treasure and protect our rural communities. In this way, we respect the contributions they have made toward making Montgomery County the great county that it is today.

Respectfully,

Steven and Betsy Sirk
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Silver Spring, MD 20905