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Chairman
Maryland National Capital Parks and Planning Board
8787 Georgia Ave.
Silver Spring MD, 20910
Attn: Royce Hansen

November 30, 2008

Sent by email to: mcp-chairman@mncppc-mc.org
Re: EZ Storage/Sandy Spring (Preliminary Plan # 120080410)

Dear Mr. Hansen,

In my capacity as President of GOCA, I am writing to you about the proposed EZ-Storage facility that is planned for a prominent space along Route 108 in the village of Sandy Spring. The Sandy Spring Civic Association came to GOCA and indicated that they felt this was an improper use of the village concept plan as it was envisioned in their Master Plan's latest revision. They gave a presentation to GOCA that included their concerns about the character of their community if this storage business were to be allowed to build there.

The proposed storage facility is said by its' developer to serve as a buffer to connect the two zones of Ashton and Sherwood High School with the small village center of Sandy Spring which has historical value. It is unclear why one feels that a buffer is necessary when something that connects and unites might be more appropriate. The small population of Sandy Spring is not sufficient to support this facility and the developers have been quoted as saying they expect most of their business to come from nearby Olney. This would increase traffic outside usual business hours as well as during rush hours since storage facilities typically have extended hours of operation. All of this would occur along the two limited lanes of State Route 108 and increase the entries and exits at a traffic point that is not a usual stopping area. It is said to fill a need for storage and also meet zoning requirements as to permitted uses. GOCA does not think this is a correct use of this parcel – one of the few that is available – to currently provide meaningful construction that could utilize the village streetscape that has long been planned for this area.

Sandy Spring is a village in transition, it has some new and viable, mostly owner operated businesses in the tiny commercial areas and it is looking to provide some additional employment in a walkable community for those who live nearby. In recent months, a new food market and a new supper club opened, which serve to enhance this commercial center. The community has struggled for

years to add sidewalks and a demand light to facilitate traffic and pedestrian safety. The historic Sandy Spring Bank site is being reviewed for a possible small school and additional development in keeping with this limited scope. A large storage facility should be in an industrial area or alongside major high density housing, not in an area given to small developments and discreet neighborhoods of older homes. The rural character of the upper portions of Montgomery County remain under threat of encroaching commercialization in several areas; GOCA strongly believes that we should support our neighbors by advocating for more appropriate development in Sandy Spring in keeping with the village that currently exists and by aiding those who have been working diligently to address the concerns as delineated in their 1998 Master Plan.

To this end, at our recent monthly meeting, GOCA passed a resolution which generally states: "that GOCA strongly supports the Sandy Spring Civic Association in their quest to deny the construction of the EZ Storage facility along Route 108 on the site on the former WH Rental facility and further agrees that this is not in keeping with the expected scope of limited development suggested for this rural village in the 1998 Master Plan and asks that this proposal be denied outright and not be subjected to further consideration."

We suggest that there can be better options that more adequately address the needs of the community and pull it in toward suggested smaller growth projects rather than erect those that are off-putting and push the community away.

We would appreciate your consideration of this resolution.

Sincerely,

Sharon Dooley

Sharon Dooley
President GOCA

CC: Thene Martin Mernick SSCA
Kathleen Donodeo Secretary GOCA