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Ashton Meeting Place
Preliminary Plan No. 120080070
Site Plan No. 820080040

TOPIC: A Walkable Village

I have lived in Ashton for 20 years and reside about 2 miles from the proposed Ashton Meeting Place development. I am a member of the Sandy Spring-Ashton Rural Preservation Consortium Steering Committee, but these comments are made by myself as a citizen of the Ashton community and do not represent the opinion of the Sandy Spring-Ashton Rural Preservation Consortium.

I recommend that the Planning Board approve the plan for Ashton Meeting Place.

I still believe that the buildings are too big for the lot, but at the same time the innovative design will make the space inviting and fit into a rural setting. I commend the people who developed the design for taking the extra steps to make this happen. I look forward to enjoying the shopping area when it is developed.

Pedestrian access and walkability are very important for the Ashton area, and needs to be considered in all developments in the area.

Ashton Meeting Place is at one corner of the Ashton village center. On the Southwest corner is a gas station and small car repair service. West of the gas station, on Route 108, will be the Chevy Chase Bank. On the Northeast corner there is planned to be a gas station and behind the gas station some type of commercial store. On the Northwest corner is a shopping area.

Gas stations and banks are focused on cars, not foot traffic. With two of the four corners taken up with gas stations – what attracts pedestrians to walk from one area to another? This is also true for the Chevy Chase Bank plan that the Planning Board approved a few weeks ago.

As the Ashton Meeting Place will be the first major redevelopment in the Ashton village center, the design is likely to set a precedent for future development. The Planning Board has said that the appearance of the developments should be consistent. I also would like to see developers consider the variety of services in the area and (re)develop areas with complementary services. The new developments should include services that will entice people to walk from one area to another. I am concerned about what is happening in the Ashton village center – two gas stations and two banks are not what make a walkable village.

Thank you for your time.