

January 8, 2009 Planning Board Hearing

Re: #120080410, EZ Storage

For the record, my name is Leslie Cronin and I reside at 16320 Batchellors Forest Rd., Olney, MD 20832

I agree wholeheartedly with the opinions of those who have testified before me urging denial of this application. While the zoning governing the use of this site does not expressly prohibit a storage facility of this nature, I think it takes an incredulous leap of rationalization to come to the conclusion that the Master Plan intends this type of development on this site. (What, by the way, is the functional difference between a self-storage facility and warehousing and storage service, one of which is permitted under C2 and one of which is not?)

The guidelines for commercial development under the Rural Village Overlay Zone note that a key feature is the ***exclusion of new auto-oriented or typically large-scale uses that are inconsistent with traditional rural development patterns.*** Personally, I can't imagine a less pedestrian-friendly, more auto-oriented, non-local, out-of scale business that will continue to thwart a main objective of the plan—to *provide ample opportunities for social interaction and promotion of a strong sense of community.* Discounting what I would consider a gratuitous throw-in of a retail packing supply store, the function of which is duplicated in part by the post offices in Sandy Spring and Ashton, what exactly will 800 units of faceless, anonymous, dead space contribute to the soul and well being of Sandy Spring village?

I urge you to consider carefully a mantra of the overlay zone—to *encourage a compatible relationship between new or expanded business and traditional neighboring structures that reflects the **BEST** (capped, bolded, and underlined, can I emphasize it any more?) of local village character . . .* Surely you can better your efforts to achieve what the Master Plan envisions for this historic village of many voices. Please deny this application. If by some odd happenstance you do approve, at the very least extend the Category 1 Forest Conservation requirements met on the adjacent property to this property, and carve the on-site manager's housing out of the proposed behemoth, rather than utilizing a detached building, in order to provide a breath of fresh air on the site.

And speaking of fresh air, I've been thinking about the possibility of nominating this site for inclusion in the Legacy Open Space program. Used as a park, its location on Route 108: would serve to maintain the individual identities of the village centers of Ashton and Sandy Spring, as the Master Plan envisions, but also to unite them; would provide great visibility and PR for the attractions of the Rural Legacy trail; would cement the relationship of the downtown Sandy Spring community to the surrounding Rural Legacy area; would provide for further interpretation of the rich history and culture of the community and enhance the function of the museum; would provide a venue for pick-up games and activities; most of all, it would provide a visible focal point where Moms and Dads, kids of all ages, grandparents and neighbors could meet to share some ice cream and trade the latest goings-on—because as Sandy Spring and Ashton develop, there's going to be lots of good news to spread about.

I'll leave you with that thought. Thanks for the opportunity to testify.

Leslie Cronin

