Sandy Spring Civic Association

www.sandyspringcivic.com

Meeting the second Monday of each month, 6:30pm at the Ross Boddy Community Center located on Brooke Road in Sandy Spring, Maryland

September 1, 2020

To Chairman Anderson and Members of the Montgomery County Planning Board

Re: Ashton Village Sector Plan

Dear Chairman and Members of the Planning Board:

The Sandy Spring Civic Association, which represents a diverse group of residents of the Sandy Spring, Brighton, and Ashton area, offers the following comments on the proposed Ashton Village Sector Plan to be discussed at the Planning Board meeting on September 17, 2020.

We fully support the Draft Plan's objective to maintain the rural and historic character of Ashton. However, we are gravely concerned about the height and density of the buildings that would be allowed on the Southeast Corner of the Ashton crossroads (referred to as the "Southeast Quadrant" in the draft). As presented, the proposal would seriously threaten the historic and rural character of our community.

The staff's proposal to permit a floor to area ratio (FAR) of .5 residential on all but one of the parcels (the exception being the parcel that is owned by Baltimore Gas & Electric, which cannot be developed in any event) could lead, by the staff's calculation, to as many as 159 units of apartments and small townhouses on the Southeast Quadrant (see Technical Appendix Draft, table I-6). A developer would also be permitted to build additional units in the form of Moderate-Price Dwelling Units (MDPUs). The height (40' to the midpoint of the roofs) and density visible from the streets would mirror the large townhouses in the Thomas Village development constructed next to the original Sandy Spring Bank building, The density of those townhouses will be overwhelming, especially because the portion of the Southeast Corner furthest away from the intersection is protected as a stream buffer but is included in the number of acres used to calculate building density of the FAR, even though building is not permitted in the stream buffer. Our membership views that type of development to be grossly out of character for what has been characterized as a rural village. Moreover, the local infrastructure simply cannot handle the number of cars that would be generated by so

many units.

We support increased mass transit to our area, but, realistically, in an area so distant from Metro stations and employment centers, residents in each unit will require at least two automobiles to commute, to shop, to attend private schools and public school events, and to utilize recreational facilities.

One of the critical points is that the parcels to be developed on the Route 108/New Hampshire Avenue corner include three parcels that are currently zoned R-60, permitting a maximum of 6 houses per acre (and, practically speaking, fewer than that when road and driveway infrastructure are included). In addition, the largest parcel is currently zoned RC, permitting only the one single-family home there to be replaced or rebuilt. Together, these parcels, which together comprise nearly half of the land area in the Southeast Quadrant, are currently limited to a maximum of about 23 homes (Technical Appendix Draft, Table I-3). However, the proposed plan would permit more than triple that many units to be constructed based on the amount of land in those parcels (indeed, nearly 80 units), and all at a height of 40'. In addition to destroying the concept of a transition from large rural farms and fields into a dense village center, construction of this many large buildings would compromise the historic nature of many of the sites close by, including Cloverly, Woodlawn Farm, Sandy Spring Friends Meeting House, Tanglewood, and the original Sandy Spring Bank building (currently unoccupied). The community has watched as design recommendations, in the past, have fallen by the wayside as developers at Thomas Village and Ashton Market maximized development potential on those parcels. These types of development practices conflict with unfulfilled design recommendations and leave the community suspicious that design criteria will be met.

We do not oppose change, and we would welcome more moderately priced housing in our area, but we strongly request that the transitions to the village center be protected by a FAR of .25 on these outlying parcels (with a maximum height of 35'). This would allow an increase from a maximum yield of 23 units to as many as 38 units, representing a "modest increase" in housing (the stated goal of the staff proposal) compared to existing zoning.

We support the urgent recommendations of the proposed plan to improve pedestrian safety at the intersection of New Hampshire Avenue and Route 108, along with the following staff recommendations:

- Preservation of the green space in front of the existing Sandy Spring Bank Ashton branch building,

- Maintenance of the rural buffer between the village centers of Sandy Spring and Ashton,
- Creation of an advisory citizens' group to address the plan's implementation (we request consideration of allowing the advisory citizens' group to exercise a veto over plans that propose overdevelopment in Ashton, if the overdevelopment threatens rural character), and
- Preservation of publicly accessible open space, ideally adjacent to the environmental features at the eastern edge of the Southeast corner.

Thank you for your consideration of our position on these matters.

Respectfully submitted,

W.B Schauffler, President

The SSCA is the first racially integrated civic association in Montgomery County. Founded in 1958, it represents the interests of residents of the greater Sandy Spring area.

From:	Rachel Hickson
To:	Anderson, Casey; Wright, Gwen; Berbert, Benjamin; Pratt, Jamey; Duke, Roberto
Subject:	SE Quadrant development project, Ashton
Date:	Wednesday, September 2, 2020 8:47:28 AM

The proposed project for the southeast quadrant in Ashton (intersection of 108 and New Hampshire Avenue) must adhere to the agreed-upon Master Plan and Rural Preservation Goals and must not be allowed to be overturned by commercial interests. The small town setting of Ashton MUST be preserved.

A jump in density, building height allowances or other characteristics from what is in the Master Plan and the Rural Preservation Goals is not acceptable.

The following need to happen.

Commercial spaces developed as part of the project must be in accordance with input from local residents.

Enforce the planning staff recommendations for the southeast quadrant.

Key points from within the the design guidelines must have a method for enforcement:

- Varying building heights (no neighboring buildings same heights; buildings articulated to avoid massing of a large structure)
- Architectural details (porches, stopps, dormers, setbacks, etc.)
- Open space (public, inviting, accessible; at least 10,000 square feet of contiguous space)

An advisory group that includes local residents should be created to address implementation.

Sincerely,
Rachel Hickson
1600 Gamewell Road

Planning Board Public Hearing

Ashton Village Center Sector Plan

September 17, 2020

Testimony of Françoise M. Carrier on behalf of Nichols Development Company

Good evening. For the record, my name is Françoise Carrier and I am testifying tonight on behalf of Nichols Development Company. Nichols is the master developer of a 9-acre tract of land in the southeast quadrant of the intersection of Olney Sandy Spring Road and New Hampshire Avenue that is mostly vacant and will be instrumental in achieving the Sector Plan's vision of "a viable and vibrant rural village that protects and enhances the character of the greater Ashton community." I would like to focus for a moment on two key words in that vision: viable and vibrant. Those qualities go hand in hand, and one cannot be attained without the other. The village center can only be vibrant if the Sector Plan provides the flexibility to support development that will be economically viable. At the same time, development will not be economically viable unless it creates a place that is vibrant, attracting new residents, businesses, and visitors.

The Sector Plan describes at some length the history of master planning in the Ashton area. It confirms five elements of rural character that were identified in the previous area master plan, including rural open space, neighborhoods, and roads, but it makes the important distinction that only the "rural villages" element of rural character is relevant within the boundaries of this Sector Plan. The other elements of rural character apply to the larger area surrounding Sandy Spring and Ashton, as opposed to the two village centers. This is a crucial distinction, because it acknowledges that to serve the function of a village center, the land covered by this Sector Plan needs to be regulated differently from the surrounding area. It needs to be regulated in a way that will promote the viable, vibrant development that will help Ashton thrive. Past master plans have not created conditions that led to the desired development. Nichols is hopeful that the present Sector Plan will create the right conditions, but some adjustments will be needed.

At a basic level, the combination of height limits and design guidelines in the current draft is inconsistent with the vision of a vibrant and viable village center. The design guidelines section contains a number of images of buildings in vibrant, pedestrian-friendly settings. Nichols obviously doesn't have exact specifications for these buildings, but most of them look like they could not satisfy all of the many parameters specified in the draft plan. Nichols considers it unlikely that a project could be built on this

site, consistent with all of the height and design recommendations in the draft plan, that would even reach the recommended density of .5 FAR, let alone create a viable development with a vibrant streetscape.

Nichols is in the process of preparing detailed written suggestions outlining specific changes to the Sector Plan that we believe are necessary to set the stage for vibrant, viable development in the Sector Plan's Village Core area. I would like to highlight a few of those suggestions for the Board. In the interest of time I will summarize these suggestions in my oral testimony.

- Eliminate the recommendation for an Implementation Advisory Committee. A small community like Ashton, with only one main developer, does not need a formal committee to provide opportunities for community dialogue and input. The site plan process already provides ample opportunities for community input on Nichols's plans. The main impact of an implementation committee would be to increase the delays and procedural hurdles Nichols will have to face, and therefore the cost of development. The hope for a viable village center in Ashton, where it is already difficult to develop profitably, cannot afford extra layers of cost.
- Instead of rezoning the southeast quadrant of the main intersection to CRN-0.5, C-0.5, R-0.5, H-40, with language in the current drafting indicating that maximum height of 40 feet should be "limited to certain buildings," rezone this key development tract to CRN-0.75, C-0.5, R-0.5, H-45, with language indicating that the maximum height of 45 feet should be limited to a modest number of mixed-use buildings located near the intersection. The slightly higher density would leave room for additional non-residential density if supported by future market conditions. Increasing the height limit by five feet would give Nichols the flexibility to create a project with a variety of building types and rooflines, giving it an organic feel, while still building a financially viable project.
- Extract the design guidelines from the Sector Plan and create a separate guidelines document to be approved by the Planning Board, rather than the County Council. This will avoid elevating extremely specific provisions from guidelines, which retain some flexibility in their implementation, to master plan recommendations, which requires a Planning Board finding of "substantial conformance" for every project, and allow no changes until the next sector plan amendment.
- Delete the recommendation that all residential buildings on the main roads should "suggest" a single-family detached house or duplex building. This language undercuts the ability to create a community with a variety of building types, rooflines, and architectural details, and would lead to buildings with their side facades facing the main roads, rather than their more activating front facades.
- Increase the recommended maximum length for residential buildings along the main roads from 80 feet to 90 feet to allow more variety in building types and unit types.
- Increase the recommended maximum length of mixed-use buildings along the main roads from "slightly longer" than 80 feet to 120 feet, to permit viable

mixed-use buildings that have an appropriate presence on the main travel routes.

- Increase the recommended maximum length of mixed-use buildings elsewhere on the site from 120 feet to 150 feet.
- Authorize the Planning Board to approve buildings that exceed the recommended lengths if the Board finds that an alternative design offers a superior way of serving master plan objectives and the public interest.
- The draft plan recommends downzoning property Nichols owns in the Residential Edge district, which is currently under construction with a modest mixed-use building, from CRT 0.75, C-0.75, R-0.25, H-35 to CRN 0.5, C-0.5, R-0.5, H-35. There is no justification for this downzoning. Changing from the CRT zone to CRN is not objectionable, but the overall density should remain at .75 FAR.

Thank you for the opportunity to speak. We look forward to working with you as this plan moves forward.

Email

Ashton VILLAGE Sector Plan

Email

From Robin Ziek

To <MCP-Chair MCP-Chair>; MCP-Chair #; MCP-Chair@mncppc-mc.org

Cc ashtonareaalliance@gmail.com; keepashtonrural@gmail.com

Subject Ashton VILLAGE Sector Plan

Date Sent **Date Received** 9/5/2020 6:51 PM

[EXTERNAL EMAIL] Exercise caution when opening attachments, clicking links, or responding.

Dear Planning Chair Anderson,

I have been participating in the county's development of this new sector plan. Please consider my comments:

1) I pity the single family house adjacent to the property on the SE corner, which will either have a public road or 40' height (to the mi-point of the roof) buildings right adjacent; and,

2) The proposed additional height is inconsistent with the approved building height across the street and in the remaining quadrants of the Village Center. This was a contested point in the past, and should not be revisited.

3) What rural village does anyone know that has its public green in the back of the village buildings? The best comparable is the tiny house directly between the new Fire Station on Brook Road and the commercial buildings. Very attractive, right? AND, it's disingenuous for the county to give away the community need for a public green by designating the not-able-to-be-built-upon wetlands as the public green space.

4) All lighting should be full, rather than partial, cutoff. The Dark Sky experience is iconic for any rural area, and residents in the Ashton-Sandy Spring Master Plan area value that highly.

5) Please consider, and compare, the proposed number of new residential units (ca. 150) to the previously approved number (ca. 75). Please consider as well that a rural village is mostly a commercial opportunity for the surrounding residential community and not a town center. Olney is our local town center, and you will recall that Olney developed into a not-so-small town as part of the non-development of the Ag Reserve. This was hard won, and Olney is prized as a town with facilities such as an outstanding hospital and easy access to the Metro and Park-and-Ride along Georgia Avenue. Ashton has zero infrastructure, and that is also by design. Let's keep our Rural Villages "rural" and concentrate new development in accordance with the wedges-and-corridors plan which has guided the county for the past several decades. The towns which developed from that plan, including Olney, are not overbuilt and the plan is not outdated.

Thank you for your consideration. Robin Ziek, 18000 Bentley Road, Sandy Spring, MD 20860 (301-570-6268)

Attachments

File Name	File Size (Bytes)	

Submitted by Amy Medd

Dear Chairman Anderson and Board Members,

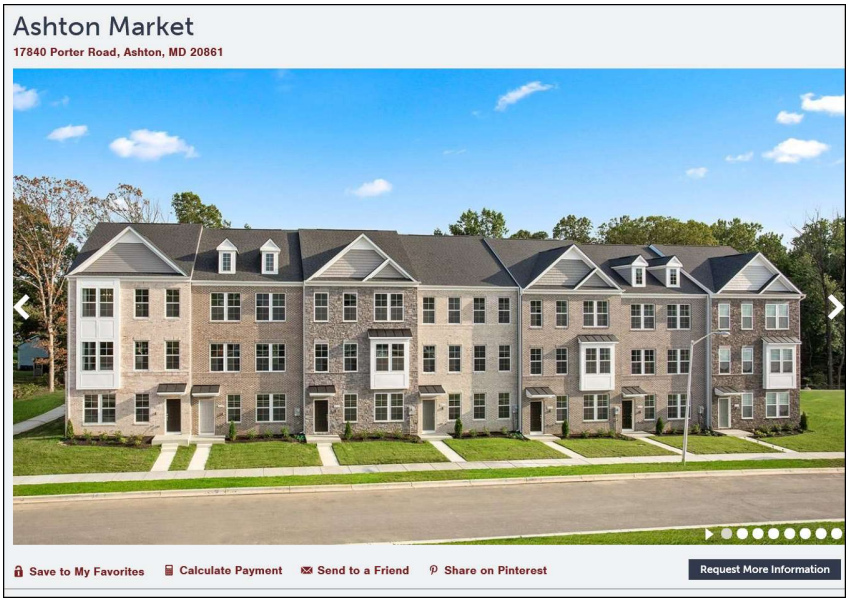
I am writing to voice my concern regarding the Ashton Village Center Sector Plan Public Hearing Draft to be presented on Sept 17, 2020. While I have a multitude of concerns, I will focus on the need to keep an overlay zone and implement an Advisory Committee that includes members of the community. This would allow a more detailed review of plans prior to finalization with the Planning Board. In past experience, master plan design guidelines are nice in concept, but they alone have not been sufficient to influence what gets built in the Sandy Spring/Ashton area.

It is important to the community that we maintain a rural village character that embraces the heritage and uniqueness of Ashton. This came out as a key theme in the very well attended Design Workshop held in Oct 2019. See slide below regarding the output on the community's definition of a rural village.[1]

The Planning Staff took this feedback into account, paired it with their own expertise and research, and have incorporated this, as well as other features into Chapter 5 of the Ashton Village Sector Plan Public Hearing Draft, which as very good to see.

My primary concern is that, while these recommendations sound enticing to the public & may garner support for the draft, it is very likely they won't be implemented in the final development of the South East Quadrant of 108/NH Ave. What will require a builder or developer to follow these guidelines? Their own good will? The overlay zone and an Advisory Committee will be essential to securing the vision of a rural village towncenter.

We already have evidence of straying from this vision in the planned townhouses for Ashton Market on Porter Road. The image below comes from the builder's own website, so I can only assume that this is what will be built.[2]



Compare this with what was presented at the Planning Board Meeting on Nov 15, 2018 for the Ashton Market Preliminary Plan, that was **approved** by the board. [3]

Figure 26 – Townhouse Façade Treatment from MD 108

The Site Plan is in substantial conformance with the recommendations of the 1998 *Sandy Spring/Ashton Master Plan*. The primary objective of the Master Plan is to preserve the rural character of the Sandy Spring/Ashton Area. The Subject Property is within the "Ashton Village Center" as designated in the Master Plan (pg.38).

I think many would agree that the stretch of townhouses from the builder's website **does not** evoke images of a rural village and it does not look anything like the figure in the document presented on Nov 15, 2018. And while Asthon Market was developed prior to the Ashton Village Center Sector plan, many of the design guidelines that have been incorporated into the Planning Draft have been highlighted by the surrounding community for years – including back during the original development plans for the SE Quadrant (once called Ashton Meeting Place) and during the plannning for Thomas Village.[4,5] The document presented at the Nov 15, 2018 Planning Board meeting **even cites** the 1998 Sandy Spring/Ashton Master Plan (as seen in the text below the image above). So these concepts are nothing

new. They existed in the 1998 plan the 2015 *Sandy Spring Rural Village Plan.* As outlined in the current Ashton Village Center Sector Planning Draft, rural village architecture includes features such as bay windows, recessed entries, shutters, stoops, porches, varied rooflines/cornice heights. The image from the builder's website has bay windows and varied rooflines, but even those without a degree in architectual design would not describe it as a rural village. It also does not match with what was presented in 2018, which is particularly concerning.

My point is not to argue the merits of the Ashton Market, as that proverbial horse is out of the barn and we'll be stuck with whatever gets built. Rather the core issue is that once rezoning and development is approved, what gets built might meet the "rules" laid out by the county and yet not at all reflect the vision of the community. Words in a Planning Draft are not enforceable. And unless there is an Advisory Committee that provides input into any final designs, we may end up with something very different that what people envisioned when reading the Planning Draft and imagining a rural village center.

Thank you for taking these comments into consideration as the choices that made now will impact future generations of Ashton.

Sincerely,

Amy Medd

Resident of the Wyndcrest neighborhood in Ashton

[1]https://montgomeryplanning.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/10/19.10.16_Design-Workshop_Summary.pdf, slide 8

[2]https://www.danryanbuilders.com/communities/maryland/ashton-market/

[3] http://montgomeryplanningboard.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/11/Ashton-Market-Report-_Final-11_15_18.pdf

[4]http://www.montgomeryplanningboard.org/agenda/2007/documents/20070628_AshtonMeetingPlace.pdf

[5]http://montgomeryplanning.org/planning/communities/area-3/sandy-springashton/, pg 52 of PDF or xii of print

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Email

Ashton Crossroads

Email

From	chazglen@gmail.com
To	<MCP-Chair MCP-Chair>; MCP-Chair #; MCP-Chair@mncppc-mc.org
Cc	
Subject	Ashton Crossroads
Date Sent	**Date Received** 9/9/2020 8:13 PM

[EXTERNAL EMAIL] Exercise caution when opening attachments, clicking links, or responding.

Dear Mr. Anderson,

I am writing to urge you to reduce the density of the development in Ashton more in keeping with its RURAL and—more important—HISTORIC character.

I have been in contact with both Jen Ruffner and Sarah Rogers with the Maryland Historical Trust and we find that the property in question (the southeast corner of 108 and New Hampshire Ave.) does indeed fall within the boundaries of the Maryland Certified Heritage Area. This is why great care must be taken to protect the aesthetics of what is planned for that parcel.

The history that Ashton embraces is unique in the county, and the teaching opportunities for all who visit are golden. Here are a few to consider ::

- **Clifton - house built - 1740**
- **Cherry Grove - house built - 1773**
- **Cloverly - house built - 1849**
- **Harewood - house built - 1793**
- **Quaker Meeting House and graveyard - 1817**
- **Woodlawn - house built - 1832**
- **The Underground Railroad**
- **Sandy Spring museum**

- **The Sandy Spring Slave Museum**

The residents do realize that there has never been a "town plan" for Ashton. Developers have been allowed to build without any regard to a cohesive design. Consequently, our town has a sort of "ransom note" look to it :: a hodge-podge of style. This is regrettable. Regrettable, but fixable. We think it is essential that there be a Neighborhood Advisory Board to help shape our community sensibly.

What the OVERWHELMING MAJORITY of Ashton/Sandy Spring citizens would like to see is a well-designed and modest RURAL VILLAGE that is more in keeping with the wonderful HISTORY that is already established here.

With the addition of the Thomas Village cluster in Sandy Spring and the new Porter Road cluster of townhouses in Ashton, we have already made a significant contribution toward "Thrive 2050"...especially since we are at the very Eastern edge of the county where dense residential projects make no sense.

Please do not allow over-development to crush Ashton and Sandy Spring's sense of history. The preliminary proposals for Ashton are totally out of character.

Sincerely,

-Charles Glendinning

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:: :: :: :: :: :: :: :: :: :: :: :: :: ::
CHARLES GLENDINNING
Ashton, Maryland USA
Mobile :: 301.980.1087
chazglen@gmail.com

Attachments

File Name	File Size (Bytes)	

There are no Attachments to show in this view. To get started, create one or more Attachments.

Email

Ashton Village Plan Public ...

Email

From Robin Ziek

To <MCP-Chair MCP-Chair>; MCP-Chair #; MCP-Chair@mncppc-mc.org

Cc

Subject Ashton Village Plan Public Hearing

Date Sent **Date Received** 9/9/2020 11:07 AM

[EXTERNAL EMAIL] Exercise caution when opening attachments, clicking links, or responding.

NEED FOR AN IMPLEMENTATION ADVISORY COMMITTEE:

I support setting up an implementation advisory committee, to allow community input and information during the entire development process. Without that, our experience is that the community has limited input, and often this occurs at the end of the process when all the decisions have already been made.

Possible areas of concern where community input will be valuable include:

1. The Southeast corner: This would provide an opportunity for the community to monitor the development as it proceeds through the design process. Similar advisory committees, with representatives from both residents and developers, have been found useful in the County, including for the Olney Town Center and Bethesda downtown.

2. There is high potential for redevelopment in the Ashton Village center, most notably at the Northeast corner; and, along Porter Road. It would be useful to the County to have community input early on in the development process, to help things move along smoothly.

3. Infrastructure is a major component of this Village Plan. An advisory committee could coordinate and provide community input with the County, State, and other entities involved in evaluating and implementing intersection improvements, crosswalks, sidewalks and side paths, green space and recreation, and trails. Since the Planning Department is also advisory for these items, it will be important to establish local community participation in planning and implementation discussions.

4.. And finally, there will be a new overlay zone for the Ashton Village planning area that will go beyond the zoning requirements. As this will provide additional requirements specific to the Plan area and will also include design guidance to help ensure compliance with Plan guidance, it will be most useful to include community comments throughout implementation and development.

Thank you for your hard work. Sincerely,

Robin Ziek, 18000 Bentley Road, Sandy Spring, MD 20860 301-570-6268

Attachments

File Name	File Size (Bytes)	

Submitted by Walt Fennell

September 9, 2020

Casey Anderson, Natali Fani-Gonzalez, Gerald R. Cincy, Tina Patterson, Partap Verma
Montgomery County Planning Board
RE: Ashton Village Plan

Planning Board Members:

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the DRAFT Ashton Village Center Plan.

As you know, Ashton is but a small village within the larger and more urban Montgomery County. The unique character of Ashton is aptly characterized within the existing plan adopted in 1988, which uses the word "rural" over 680 times within the 150 pages of that plan.

Recognizing that change is inevitable, I would ask that the Planning Board strive to help Ashton maintain is distinctiveness as a small village, existing within the urban landscape of Montgomery County. I would ask for a path forward that will prevent Ashton from being overrun with multi-story apartment buildings and towering townhomes ill-suited for our small village.

Ashton and Sandy Spring have seen, and continue to see, new development and the addition of housing stock within and around the Village Center. Reference Thomas Village, the new Mt. Olive Church being built adjacent to Sherwood High School and the housing project at Porter Road (which will in all likelihood be expanded in the near future). On a percentage basis, the amount of new housing stock currently added to the Ashton Village Center compared to existing stock in the Ashton Village Center, is significant.

As the Planning Board seeks to now finalize the DRAFT Plan, I would respectfully request the Planning Board to incorporate the following issues into the plan.

1. A clear statement that Ashton should be permitted to retain the "rural" character that has defined it since the founding of the County.

2. The establishment of an "Advisory Board" to help guide, shape, and direct any future development plans within Ashton to ensure a reasonable and pragmatic approach is followed and that the plan is consistent with the ideals outlined in the DRAFT Plan. I believe that such an Advisory Board has been used in Olney and Bethesda and in other portions of the County.

While Item 1 is perhaps a symbolic concept, Item 2 is a critical issue for the following reasons:

A. The DRAFT plan contains a reasonable, although aggressive approach, toward the development of the Ashton Village Center. However, the DRAFT Plan contains no real safeguards to ensure that future development will adhere to the concepts articulated within the DRAFT Plan. Indeed, future developers would only need to adhere to the sterile requirements of the Building Code, without following the aesthetic ideals outlined within the DRAFT Plan. An Advisory Board, similar to other Advisory Boards used throughout the County could ensure that the design aesthetics were followed as outlined by the Planning Board.

B. Several of the design concepts and elements included within the DRAFT Plan, such as roadway improvements, shared use path improvements, crosswalk improvements, public transit improvements, and green space improvements, are dependent on resources and approvals of organizations beyond the Planning Board's control (i.e., the State, public transit authorities, etc.). The creation and implementation of an Advisory Board, in conjunction with the implementation of the DRAFT Plan, could ensure that future development is actually completed in a manner consistent with the vision in the DRAFT Plan by working with those organizations outside of the Planning Board's control to implement future development.

C. The DRAFT Plan references the use of an "Overlay" zone within certain parts of Ashton. There is a concern that the Overlay Zone could be used in the future to usurp the conceptual vision outlined in the DRAFT Plan. The Advisory Board could ensure that future development in Ashton, not just within the Village Center Area, but more broadly throughout Ashton would be completed in a manner consistent with the DRAFT Plan.

Ashton is but a small portion of Montgomery County. Like all good citizens we want to contribute to the continued progress of the County. But I would respectfully request the Planning Board to allow Ashton to retain some form of

uniqueness. I would ask that the Planning Board ensure that the changes to Ashton are not so dramatic as to transform Ashton to look like any other part of the County. To manage the growth in a reasonable manner, and to allow the citizens of Ashton to have a "voice" in the future development of our small village through the creation of an Advisory Board.

Thank you for your time and consideration of this request.

Walt Fennell
17516 Hidden Garden Lane
Ashton, MD 20861
(410)443-1672
waltster65@yahoo.com

Email

Ashton Village Center Sect...

Email

From James Meehan

To <MCP-Chair MCP-Chair>; MCP-Chair #; MCP-Chair@mncppc-mc.org

Cc Jamey Pratt; jamey.pratt@montgomeryplanning.org; keepashtonrural@gmail.com

Subject Ashton Village Center Sector Plan hearing 9/17...

Date Sent **Date Received** 9/11/2020 9:17 AM

[EXTERNAL EMAIL] Exercise caution when opening attachments, clicking links, or responding.

Am out of town 9/17/2020 and cannot testify, nor will I be able to zoom/view the meeting. However, as a 23+ year Ashton resident and a 38 year educator in the Olney, Sandy Spring & Ashton corridor I do need to express concerns related to the possible future development at the present Sandy Spring Bank site...

What with at least three more entrances & exits (without lights) planned on to Rt 108 and New Hampshire Ave without the strong 2008-09 State DOT and Highway recommendations for improvements is unacceptable! Even with C-19 lower level traffic, the 7-11 parking lot is a logjam/gridlock adventure every weekday morning. The Board needs to remember there are three rush hours on 108: am, pm, & Sherwood HS's dismissal between 2:45 & 3:20. Also related to the traffic safety issue is the lack of left turn signals north on to NH Ave and left on to south NH Ave from 108. And, the daily drag races as traffic going south on NH Ave races to merge right, then pass left with cars/trucks hugging & overlapping that left turn lane on to 108 west. These current dangerous road conditions cannot handle any more traffic without major improvements to that 108/NH intersection! Yes, the speed limit on NH Ave drop to 30 is a small relief, but greater traffic flow is a major problem to any future Ashton development.

I have spoke to Mr. Platt on the need for vigorous oversite of the current developer (what with his need for "flexibility", no interest in a local Community Advisory Committee & height restrictions not followed @ Thomas Choice). I am hearten by the two Stop Work Orders at the Ashton Market/Porter Road site which I hope is a result of Board & County policies being adhered to.

Speaking of the Porter Road/Ashton Market project, how about a moratorium on ANY future Ashton development until such time as all parties (State, County, local invested residents, etc...) can see what the effects of the Ashton Market project has done to safety, traffic, and keeping Ashton as rural as was planned. We/you cannot make our village what Rt 108 and Georgia Ave has become...especially since Ashton does not have the space to expand that Olney supposedly had. Time to learn from past mistakes🤔...

Jim Meehan
327 Westlawn Dr
Ashton, Md
20861
301-570-9102h
301-356-7576c

Attachments

Submitted by Randy Nittoli on behalf of Ashton Village HOA

Members of the Planning Board:

My name is Randy Nittoli and I am the Board President for the Ashton Village Homeowners Association. I'd like to take this opportunity to thank each of you for the opportunity to testify before you today, regarding the Ashton Village Sector Plan.

Our association is made up of 59 townhomes, located at the corner of New Hampshire Avenue (MD-650) and Olney-Sandy Spring Road (MD-108). Our community is very diverse in nature and our residents have a wide range of family demographics. Ashton Village HOA is also one of the oldest associations within Ashton, and many residents in our community are original owners. Being within the center of the Ashton area, we were not surprised to be referenced in the Sector Plan, Our HOA is mentioned twice – once on Page 36 and once on page 56. It is these two pages that I would like to discuss with you today.

Members of our Board and Association have participated in all the Community Meetings throughout the planning process. Since many of us have lived in Ashton Village for many years, we recognize that the area is changing and that several updates are needed. When the draft of the Plan was published in July, my initial review of the plan was met with confusion, since the two specific areas our HOA is referenced were never discussed in any planning meetings. In addition, the language of the plan is aggressive in nature, and has caused alarm amongst Association residents. The Plan has left many in my community under the impression the County is ready to annex our land for public use.

I'd like to direct the Board to page 36 of the draft plan, which discusses our common use area that surrounds the current stormwater management pond. The plan states that "options should be explored to make this space more accessible to the public" and refers to our Declaration of Covenants and the Associations ability to dedicate or transfer this land to the County. The Ashton Village HOA is firmly against any transfer of this land for public use or for the establishment of a public park. This area is currently enjoyed by our Association residents for recreational and private use and the Association currently maintains this area for that purpose. All residents of the Association have signed a petition opposing this, as well as many

local businesses that are also opposed. I've included those petitions in the documents that have been sent to the Board.

The second portion I'd like to direct you to is page 56 of the draft plan. This section refers to our community playground that is located in the center of the Association. The plan goes on to state that this playground should "ideally be incorporated into this gathering space", again referencing the public use space I mentioned before. The Ashton Village HOA firmly objects to annexing our private playground for use in a public space, in any form. This playground was paid for by our residents and is maintained yearly through private association dues. This playground is frequently used as a selling point for new families when they look at houses within our area, and the private use of this playground is reserved for the members of our Association and their guests.

The HOA has two major concerns regarding the current plan and how it affects our Association. Parking and foot traffic. I'd direct the Board to the current slide, which shows a copy of our current property plat. Currently, the HOA roads are maintained by the County (yellow portion) and the HOA Privately (the green parking). Over the last 5 years, our community has struggled constantly with parking. The circles on the County owned portion are frequently filled, and visitors to our association have on multiple occasions not had anyplace to park. In addition, the only way to access our association on foot is through the Ashton Village Shopping Center, located in the bottom right portion of the map. Visitors to our association for use of this "common area" would flood our association with additional traffic, and likely create significant parking problems. I say this because it is already something we struggle with and adding additional traffic will not eliminate these problems. There is no doubt that this would take away from the rural feel of Ashton and our association.

While the Association does have objections to these two specific portions of the Draft Plan, we also recognize that Ashton is a very up and coming neighborhood and that changes to keep the area vibrant are necessary. As such, I have prepared recommendations for updating the language that is currently in the Draft plan. This language has been reviewed by our Association, and we feel the language to be less hostile in nature, and hopefully reflect more

accurately the intentions of the Plan. In addition, the two areas of the Plan refer to our common space in two different sizes (two acres vs. three acres), so the language has been updated to reflect the true size of this common area. That being said, the language of the Plan currently does not convey positive intentions. Instead it implies a takeover by the County of our Association common space. It is clear from the draft plan that the planning board values Ashton and its surrounding areas, and the Ashton Village HOA is grateful to everyone for their efforts. We hope that future community meetings will continue to involve our association and its residents and look forward to continuing to be a voice for Ashton improvements

Again, I would like to thank the Planning Board for allowing me the opportunity to testify before you today. Should there be any questions for me I would be happy to answer them at this time.

Ashton Village Homeowners Association Testimony

Randy R. Nittoli
Ashton Village HOA
Board President

About our association

- 59 attached family townhomes
- Located on the corner of MD-650 and MD-108
- One of the original developments in the Ashton Community
- Mentioned twice in the Ashton Village Sector Plan
  - Page 36 (3.5 Community Facilities and Open Space)
  - Page 56 (4.2 Residential Edge Neighborhood)

Ashton Village Sector Plan

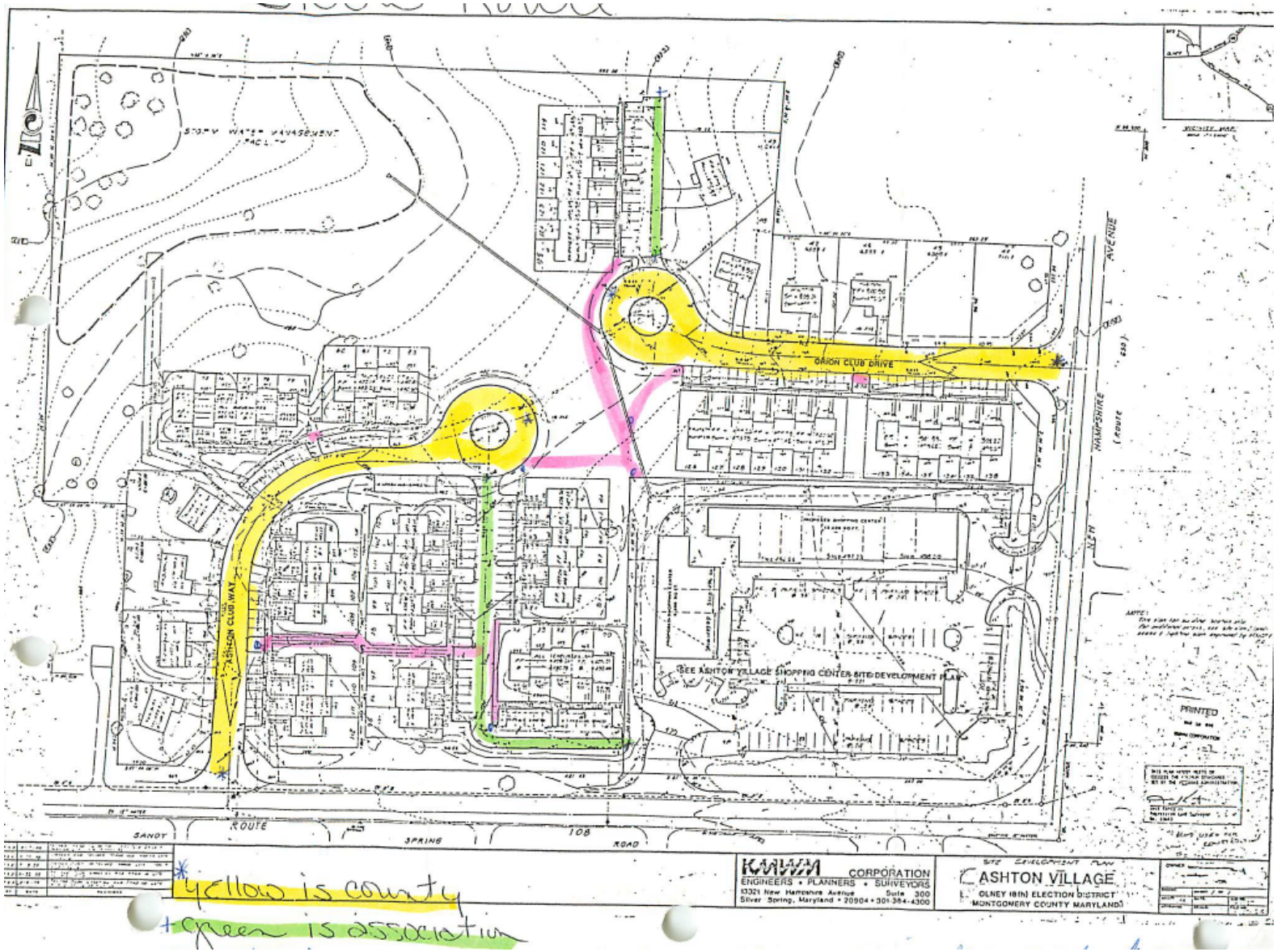
- Members of the Association have participated in all Community Meetings throughout the process
- Review of the plan shows items that were never discussed as part of any community meetings
  - Language has caused alarm amongst Association residents
  - Our common areas are frequently enjoyed by residents
- Current plan language is aggressive in nature, and reads in a fashion that makes it appear the County is prepared to take the property

Page 36 (3.5 Community Facilities and Open Space)

- References our common use area that surrounds the current storm water management pond
- Also makes reference to our Declaration of Covenants
- "Options should be explored to make this space more accessible to the public…"
- **Ashton Village HOA firmly objects to making this land a public use park**
  - All community residents have signed a petition opposing this
  - Several local business are also against this plan

Page 56 (4.2 Residential Edge Neighborhood)

- References our community playground located in the center of the Association
- "Ideally be incorporated into this gathering space"
- **Ashton Village HOA firmly objects to annexing our private playground for use in any public space**
  - Residents pay for the updating and maintenance from private association dues
  - This playground is for the enjoyment of HOA residents and their guests


ORION CLUB DRIVE
ASHTON CLUB WAY
SEE ASHTON VILLAGE SHOPPING CENTER SITE DEVELOPMENT PLAN
SANDY SPRING ROAD
ROUTE 108
ROUTE
PRINTED
KARLSEN CORPORATION
ENGINEERS • PLANNERS • SURVEYORS
8321 New Hampshire Avenue Suite 300
Silver Spring, Maryland • 20904 • 301-384-4300
SITE DEVELOPMENT PLAN
ASHTON VILLAGE
OLNEY (8th) ELECTION DISTRICT
MONTGOMERY COUNTY MARYLAND
yellow is county
green is association

Moving Forward

- Ashton Village Board of Directors has prepared a recommendation for updated language to be included in final draft of the Plan
  - Updated language changes factual inaccuracies
    - Referenced acreage is different in each section and is not accurate)
  - Updated language changes the aggressive nature of current written plan
- Board is open to future discussions regarding changes and updates to the Ashton area

Thank you for the opportunity to testify before you today

OPPOSITION TO TAKING ASHTON VILLAGE HOA PROPERTY FOR A PUBLIC PARK

We, the undersigned homeowners within Ashton Village HOA, oppose the use or taking of any portion of the HOA's common area for a public park or other public purpose. The property was created as, is and should remain green space for the benefit of the residents of Ashton Village HOA.

SIGNATURE	PRINT NAME	ADDRESS	DATE
	Chris A. Teti	17922 Ashton club way Ashton, MD 20861	8-15-20
Melanie Koehn	Melanie Koehn	17931 Ashton Club Way Ashton, MD 20861	8-15-20
	Anna Fabes	17925 Ashton Club Way Ashton, MD 20861	8-15-20
Fadi Abdullah	Fadi Abdullah	17919 Ashton club Ashton, MD	8/15/20
Mike Micka	Mike Micka	17924 ashton club way Ashton MD.	8/16/20
	Ricci Spurrier	17965 Ashton Club Way Ashton, MD 20861	8/16/20
Joon ok Lee	Joonok Lee	17961 Ashton club way Ashton MD 20861	8/16/2020
Michael Jones	Mike Jones	17939 Ashton Club way Ashton MD 20861	8-16-2020
	Melvin Winston	21 Orion Club Dr. Ashton MD 20861	8-16-2020
	michael Robinson	4 orion club Dr Ashton MD 20861	8/16/2020
	Randy Nittoli	22 orion Club Drive Ashton MD 20861	16AUG2020
	William White	414 orion Club Dr. Ashton MD 20861	8/16/2020
	Alfia Robinson	24 Orion club	8/16/2020
	Kevin Polen	28 Orion Club Dr.	8/19/2020
Evelyn S. Arillo	Evelyn P. Arillo	12 orion club Dr.	8-21-2020

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SIGNATURE	PRINT NAME	ADDRESS	DATE
	Rhonda Roberts	17934 Ashton Club Way Ashton MD 20861	8/13/2020
	Nicole Valerio	44 Orion Club Drive Ashton, MD 20861	8/13/2020
	ERIC WALL	42 ORION CLUB DRIVE ASHTON, MD 20861	8/13/2020
	Alison Jubon	40 Orion Club Dr Ashton, MD 20861	8/13/20
	Romey Mehari	38 Orion Club Dr Ashton MD. 20861	8/13/2020
	Andrea Daly	36 Orion Club Drive Ashton, MD 20861	8-13-2020
	JOHN R. DALY, JR	36 ORION CLUB DR ASHTON MD 20861	8/13/2020
	John Stevenson	17927 Ashton Club Way Ashton, MD 20861	
	Carolyn Steven	17927 Ashton Club Way Ashton, MD 20861	8/13/2020
	Shannon Cronin	16616 Connors Bay Lane Ashton, MD 20861	8/13/2020
	Doug Koehn	17931 Ashton Club Ashton MD 20861	8/13/20
	NWOKOLIE	17933 Ashton club way	8/13/20
	Julie Snavely	17947 Ashton Club Way Ashton, MD 20861	8/13/20
	Luis Trelles	17951 Ashton Club Way Ashton, MD 20861	8/13/20
	Allison Pacheco	17951 Ashton club way ashton, MD 20861	8/13/20

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SIGNATURE	PRINT NAME	ADDRESS	DATE
	Alexandra J Evans	17900 Ashton Club Way Ashton MD	8/13/2020
	Kasey Alexis	17904 Ashton Club Way Ashton, MD	8/13/2020
	Michael Alexis	17904 Ashton Club Way Ashton MD	8/13/2020
	Giselle Rosales	17908 Ashton club way Ashton md	8-13-2020
Rita Brigham	Rita Brigham	17918 Ashton Club Way Ashton Md	8/13/2020
	Rick Brigham	17918 Ashton Club Way Ashton Md	8/13/2020
Keith D. Wheeler	Keith Wheeler	17961 ASHTON club way Ashton	8/14/2020
Bonnie J Wheeler	Bonnie Wheeler	17961 Ashton Club Way Ashton, MD	8/14/2020
Kelly Meyer	Kelly Meyer	17959 Ashton Club Way	8/14/2020
Maria Boore	Maria Boore	17937 Ashton Club Way	8/14/2020
	James Boore	"	8/14/2020
Hamlet Thompson	Hamlet Thompson	17945 Ashton Clubway	8/14/2020
	Maria Guzman	26 Orion Club Dr.	8/14/2020
Elaine Offord	Elaine Offord	20 Orion Club Dr.	8-14-20
Dmitry Gendelman	Dmitry Gendelman	17916 Ashton Club Way	8/14/2020

OPPOSITION TO TAKING ASHTON VILLAGE HOA PROPERTY FOR A PUBLIC PARK

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SIGNATURE	PRINT NAME	ADDRESS	DATE
Monica Gendelman	Monica Gendelman	17916 Ashton Club Way Ashton, MD 20861	8/14/2020
	Mark Burch	17912 Ashton Club Way Ashton MD 20861	8/14/2020
Adrilly Martins	Adrilly Martins	17912 Ashton Club Way Ashton, MD 20861	8/14/2020
Lisa Burch	Lisa Burch	17912 Ashton Club Way Ashton, MD 20861	8/14/2020
	Ana Rosals	17908 Ashton Club way Ashton, MD 20861	8/14/2020
	Elmer F. Giron	17917 Ashton Club way Ashton MD 20861	8/15/2020
Evelyn Herrador	Evelyn Herrador	17917 Ashton Club Way Ashton MD 20861	8/15/2020
Fernando Giron	Fernando Giron	17917 Ashton Club way	8/15/2020
Christopher Della	Christopher Della	17936 Ashton club way	8/15/2020
	Josue Melgar	17903 Ashton Club way Ashton, MD. 20861	8/15/2020
	Walter melgar	17903 Ashton club way Ashton MD 20861	8/15/2020
	Milagro Alpiro	17903 Ashton Club Way Ashton MD 20861	8/15/2020
Dolores D. Hester	Dolores D. Hester	17901 Ashton Club Way Ashton, MD 20861	8/15/2020
	Yemi Stock	17920 Ashton club way MD 20861	8/15/2020
Brittney Macauley	Brittney Macauley	17926 Ashton Club Way	8/15/2020

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SIGNATURE	PRINT NAME	ADDRESS	DATE
	Sun Song (Sophie)	17930 Ashton Club Way Ashton, MD 20861	8/17/20
Vern Beat	Vern Beat	17932 Ashton Club Ashton MD 20861	8/24/20
Renee Grove	Renee Grove	17932 Ashton Club Ashton MD 20861	8/24/20
	Antonio Nittoli	10 Orion Club Dr Ashton, MD 20861	8/25/20
Victoria Falter	Victoria Falter	10 ORION CLUB DRIVE Ashton, MD 20861	8/25/20
	Nicole Nittoli	22 ORION Club Drive Ashton, MD 20861	8/25/20

To: Casey Anderson
14th Floor
2425 Reedie Drive
Wheaton, MD 20902

Sept. 10, 2020

re: Ashton Village Center Sector Plan, Sept 17, 2020 Meeting

IN LIEU OF BEING ABLE TO MEET WITH YOU ABOUT 321 OLNEY SPRING ROAD ASHTON MD 20861 I AM WRITING THIS LETTER TO YOU FORWITH.

I HAVE OWNED THIS PROPERTY, 11.71 ACRES & A 4000 SQ FT. OLD BRICK HOME WITH A MACHINE SHOP & GARAGE ALSO A 36'x48' BARN, SINCE 1976, OCT.

WHEN I BOUGHT IT THE CONDITION WAS BAD & THE PRICE A BIT HIGH, BUT IT HAD SEVERAL THINGS I WANTED. TO WIT, LAND FOR MY WIFE'S HORSES, PROXIMATE TO BANK, SHOPPING, P.O., CLEANERS, HARDWARE ETC WALKING DISTANCE ALL. IT HAD A COW SHED I COULD TURN INTO A SHOP & GARAGE, A PLACE TO BUILD A BARN, ALSO PROXIMATY TO CLIENTS IN MONTGOMERY COUNTY WITH WHOM I DID BUSINESS,

STARTING IN SEPT, 1976 I HAD THE PLACE FENCED, BLUE CHIPPED THE 1000 FOOT DRIVEWAY, PUT IN A NEW FURNACE, NEW WELL PUMP & FOOTVALVE, PAINTED THE WHOLE INSIDE, PUT ON A NEW ROOF BOTH HOUSE & OUTBUILDING, STORM DOORS, & REDECKED THE FRONT & BACK PORCHES, & MOVED MY MACHINE SHOP IN,

AT THE TIME I DID ALL THIS THE LAND WAS ZONED STRAIGHT AGRICULTURAL & THE HOUSE WAS NOT ON THE HISTORIC REGISTER

IN THE INTERVENING YEARS SOME GOVERNMENT AGENCY, WITHOUT MY KNOWLEDGE OR CONSENT, CHANGED MY ZONING SPEC TO 5 ACRE CLUSTER & PUT MY HOUSE INTO THE REGISTER.
THE ONLY HINT I HAD THAT THIS MIGHT BE DONE IS WHEN IN THE YEAR 2000 WHEN ON A MILD SPRING DAY I CAME BACK FROM DOING SOME ERRANDS & FOUND A LITTLE BLUE CAR IN THE TURN AROUND & A YOUNG MAN STANDING ON MY FRONT LAWN TAKING PICTURES OF THE HOUSE.
"WHAT THE HELL DO YOU THINK YOURE DOING"
"I'M JUST TAKING PICTURES FOR THE REGISTRY." AT THE TIME I THOUGHT HE WAS REFERRING TO SOME MAGAZINE LIKE POWERS REGISTRY OF OLD CARS.
"I DON'T WANT TO BE PART OF ANY REGISTRY" I SAID. "PLEASE GET OFF THE PROPERTY."
"IF YOU DON'T WANT TO BE ON THE REGISTRY YOU HAVE TO WRITE A LETTER TO PARR & PLANNING."
A LIGHT WENT OFF & I SAID "ILL DO THAT, JUST LEAVE"

SHORTLY THERE AFTER I DID JUST THAT. I GOT NO RESPONSE AT ALL & I ASSUMED THE MATTER WAS FINISHED, I FORMED FOR AWHILE THE INVASIVENESS OF IT & FORGOT ABOUT IT.

I DIDN'T FIND OUT ABOUT IT TIL 2019 BUT SOMEBODY NAMED MICHELLE WILLIAMS PUT MY HOUSE ON THE HISTORIC REGISTER IN 2002. WELL.

AS TO THE ZONING CHANGE FROM STRAIGHT AGRICULTURAL TO 5 ACRE CLUSTERS IN 1978 I WAS PAID A VISIT BY THE ZONING INSPECTOR FOR FARM ZONE. I WAS ON THE TURN AROUND WASHING A CAR & WATCHED HIM SLOWLY WALK UP THE DRIVEWAY (1000 FEET) & WHEN HE GOT TO WHERE I WAS STANDING HE STUCK OUT HIS HAND & OFFERED ME A CARD STATING THAT HE WAS CHIEF INSPECTOR FOR FARM ZONING IN THE AREA. AFTER AMENITIES:

"THOSE YOUR HORSES AREDOSAL?"

"THOSE ARE MY KNIVES* I'M MORE OF A MACHINERY TYPE OF GUY"

AND WE PASSED THE TIME TALKING OF THIS & THAT, FEET UP ON A FENCE RAIL LOOKING AT THE HORSES, CHEWING GRASS. THEM " YOU KNOW YOU HAVE FULL AGRICULTURAL

ZONE HERE AREDSALL, I REALLY WANT TO SEE SOME COWS ON YOUR PLACE;" ANOTHER LIGHT WENT OFF IN MY HEAD & I SAID "YES SIR"; WITHIN A MONTH I HAD A HALF DOZEN HEATFERS IN THE NOW FENCED IN FIELDS ALONG WITH THE HORSES.

SOME TIME IN THE EIGHTIES OR NINETIES GOVERNMENT CHANGED MY ZONING TO 5 ACRE WITH NO NOTIFICATION TO ME, LETTER, PHONE, OR KNOCK ON THE DOOR TO ASK ME IF I WOULD BE AMENABLE TO A ZONING CHANGE.

ALL OF THIS CAME TO A HEAD WHEN I WAS SHOWN A MAP OF THE TOWNSHIP PLANNED FOR ASHTON BY SOMEONE LIVING IN FRIENDS HOUSE. THAT'S WHEN I FOUND ALL THE TALK OF SPECIAL STUDIES AREA & HISTORY WASN'T JUST A PLAN BUT WAS BEING ENGRAVEN IN STONE, AND I WAS IN THE DARK, LEFT OUT OF THE LOOP, SO TO SPEAK. ON THE STRENGTH OF THIS I ATTENDED SOME CIVIC ASSOCIATION MEETING AT THE FIRE HOUSE IN SANDY SPRING & AT THE ROSS BODDY SCHOOL ABOVE SAM'S CORNER ON BROOK ROAD.

I'M NOW 88 YRS OLD & FAILING. LIVED & OWNED THIS PLACE FOR 44 YEARS. I'VE MADE A BONA FIDE EFFORT TO SELL THE FARM 6 YEARS RUNNING WITH 6 BROKERS WITH EXCELLENT REPUTATIONS & GOT NO OFFERS BUT ONE $300 000 UNDER THE ASKING PRICE OF 1'500 000 & TO ACCEPT THAT I WOULD HAVE TO VACATE IN ONE MONTH'S TIME. IMPOSSIBLE. ANOTHER, AN INDIAN GENTLEMAN WHO OWNED A SPICE IMPORT COMPANY WHO WANTED TO BUILD ANOTHER HOUSE ON THE PROPERTY FOR HIS MOTHER. HE SAID HE HAD TO CHECK WITH THE AUTHORITIES. HE NEVER CALLED BACK. THERE MAY HAVE BEEN OTHERS BUT THEY ALL JUST DISAPPEARED.

IF YOU'RE THINKING I WAS JUST ASKING TOO MUCH, I WAS OFFERED 1.5 MILLION BY JOHN CARTER IN ABOUT 1998 WHEN HE WAS CONNECTED CLOSELY WITH THE MUSEUM, BUT I HAD MY BUSINESS GOING HALF THROTTLE & WAS TAKING CARE OF MY OLD (95) MOTHER WITH MY WIFE DOING YOEMAN DUTY & I HAD TO DECLINE. HE SHOOK MY HAND & SAID HE UNDERSTOOD & [redacted] HE WANTED THE RIGHT FOR FIRST REFUSAL - I SAID OF COURSE & HE LEFT.

AT THE FIRST MEET IN 2020 AT THE FIRE HOUSE WORK SESSION I HAD A BRIEF DISCUSSION WITH RICH WEAVER WHERE I SUGGESTED A WARM, INVITING BAVARIAN VILLAGE IN APPEARANCE LOOKING DEVELOPMENT ON MY ALMOST TWELVE ACRES & HIS RESPONSE WAS "THAT SOUNDS LIKE A GOOD IDEA" & WE TALKED FURTHER ABOUT PROXIMATY TO PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION, SHOPPING, SCHOOLS, PO & BANKS, ~~I LEFT THE MEETING A LITTLE~~ TO SAY NOTHING OF INCREASED TAX BASE & EASING THE HOUSING DEARTH. I LEFT THE MEETING A LITTLE MORE OPTIMISTIC. BUT THE FUTURE OF MY PLACE STILL SEEMS TO BE IN A STATE OF FLUX. A LARGE TRACT OF LAND SURROUNDED BY A NECKLACE OF 1/2 TO 2 ACRE LOTS, ABOUT 10 CONTIGUOUS.

PARK & PLANNING FINALLY CALLED ME TO INVITE MY WIFE & I TO A MEETING AT THEIR OFFICES AT 8787 GEORGIA AVE THERE WERE ABOUT 9 STAFF PEOPLE AROUND THE LARGE TABLE ON THE SECOND FLOOR, INCLUDING REBECCA BALLO, CHRIS VAN ALSTYNE & RICH WEAVER & OTHERS. THE ATMOSPHERE WAS COOL BUT POLITE. NOBODY SAID MUCH BUT REMINDED ME OF THE SPECIAL STUDIES

AREA, A STREAM (6" WIDE) AT THE BOTTOM OF THE PROPERTY, SET BACK FROM THAT & THAT THE BACK OF THE PROPERTY FRONTED ONTO BENTLEY ROAD & OTHER MINOR COMMENTS. THEN CAME THE PERRY MASON MOMENT, MS. BALLD SLID A WHITE SHEET OF PAPER ACROSS THE TABLE & ASKED "DO YOU REMEMBER SIGNING THIS." & I LOOKED AT IT, IMMEDIATELY RECOGNIZING IT AS THE LETTER I HAD SENT TO THEM IN 2000 I SAID "OF COURSE, THAT'S A BIG "NO". I NEVER HEARD FROM YOU PEOPLE AFTER THAT." & RICH WEAVER, WHO HAD HIS FEET UP ON SOMETHING, DROPPED THEM TO THE FLOOR & GOT UP IN EXASPERATION WITH SOME EPITHET & LEFT THE ROOM. MY LETTER OF DECLINING TO BE INCLUDED IN THE REGISTER WAS EVIDENTLY TAKEN AS NOTIFICATION OF INCLUSION. THEY NEVER TOLD ME AT THE TIME. THE MEETING BROKE UP.

I GUESS I HAVE TO ADMIT THEY PUT ONE OVER ON ME BUT I WOULD LIKE TO SALVAGE SOMETHING FROM ALL THIS BY GETTING SOME DEVELOPMENT RIGHTS FOR SOME HOUSES OR TOWN HOUSES WITH A EUROPEAN FLAVOR THIN R TYROL, TUSCANY

8

FLANDERS, BAVARIA OR THE LAKE DISTRICT IN ENGLAND. ARRANGED & LANDSCAPED TO CREATE A COHESIVE, APPEALING, WARM & INVITING ATMOSPHERE ON LAND PLOTS MANAGEABLE BY THE OWNERS WITH HOMES THAT ARE DISSIMILAR BUT SHARE A CERTAIN CHARACTER. THINK WILLIAMSBURG IN OLNEY OR HIDDEN GARDEN WAY IN ASHTON

THANK YOU FOR YOUR CONSIDERATION N. GOSALL

P. O. Box 88
321 Olney Sandy Spring Rd.
Ashton, MD 20861-0088
301-938-6611

cc: Jamey Pratt

9-11-2020

To Casey Anderson,

Additionally, and as I am on the deed, I would inform you that Dick's 1st wife, Gwen, had the horses.

I have lived here over 35 years. I did leave for a bit when our marriage fell apart, as so often happens to those of us shunned by family and friends for ~~having~~ the sin of care-giving the previous generation. My mother-in-law died @ age 95. I took care of her, along with my husband, for eleven years of a ten-year marriage.

However, we were soon reunited and have been through thick and thin together ever since. -Orig-

Since my husband initially invested heavily in this property, and moreso in the interim between then and now, I believe it is only fair to hear his side of the story; and his commitment to this house and property outweighs my own (even though I also have made investment).

I fully support what Richard Edsall has written, even with minor mistakes made. He is, afterall, 88 1/2 yrs old and deserves respect as a longtime resident, local business owner, and senior citizen of the Ashton-Sandy Spring community. He has also been kind and good to his neighbors over the years. I would know. I have stories of my own.

Thank you,

Tina Brown

cc: Jamey Pratt

From:	Chris Milner
To:	Pratt, Jamey
Cc:	Charlotte Milner; Susan Milner
Subject:	Suggestion for Ashton Village Center Sector Plan: Maintain Master Plan"s vision for equestrian trails
Date:	Tuesday, September 15, 2020 10:21:36 PM

Hello Mr. Pratt,

I reside at 17800 Marden Lane, a mile or so to the west of the proposed Ashton Village Center Sector Plan modifications to the Sandy Spring/Ashton Master Plan. I write to offer a suggestion to the Ashton Village Center Sector Plan for the Project Team's consideration.

I and my family keep horses at our home, and we are members of a vibrant community of equestrians in the Sandy Spring/Ashton area. Sandy Spring is well known in the equestrian community for its extensive network of horse trails. The trails are used by residents of the area and by other equestrians who come here to ride the trails.

When developing the Sandy Spring/Ashton area, it's important to not forget about the equestrian trials in the planning process. The Master Plan provides for the many people who ride horses through this area by protecting existing regional and local routes, and by creating new local connections. The Master Plan explains:

> *As might be expected in a rural area, many residents own horses. As a result, equestrian trails contribute to the rural character of the community. Therefore, this Plan recommends the following: Ensure an equestrian trail system through easements to equestrians at the time of subdivision review or through the dedication of parkland. Accommodate equestrian use of the Rural Legacy Trail and Northwest Branch Trail.*

To ensure that the Master Plan's vision of building connections among the community and contributing to the rural character of the community through equestrian trails, I suggest incorporation of the following language into the Ashton Village Center Sector Plan:

- The Sector Plan incorporates and reiterates the Master Plan's recommendations of ensuring an equestrian trail system through easements to equestrians at the time of subdivision review or through the dedication of parkland.
- To the extent that the trails in the Master Plan's "Plan of Existing and Proposed Equestrian Trials" (depicted in Exhibit 28 of the Master Plan) are within the Ashton Village Center Sector Plan, the Sector Plan incorporates the Master Plan's intention and desire to maintain existing and establish those new trails in the Rural Buffer Neighborhood.
- Ensure that multiuse trails are appropriately designed for equestrian use (including natural surface components).

Thank you for your consideration. Please feel free to reach out, via email or via phone at 240-731-

1881, if you have any questions.

Regards,

Chris Milner
17800 Marden Lane
Sandy Spring, MD 20860

Email

Ashton Village Center Sect...

Email

From nadine.mort@gmail.com

To <MCP-Chair MCP-Chair>; MCP-Chair #; MCP-Chair@mncppc-mc.org

Cc

Subject Ashton Village Center Sector Plan

Date Sent **Date Received** 9/14/2020 4:10 PM

[EXTERNAL EMAIL] Exercise caution when opening attachments, clicking links, or responding.

September 14, 2020

Dear Mr. Anderson and Members of the Planning Board and Staff,

I am writing in regard to the Ashton Village Center Sector Plan. After careful review, I am pleased that it contains many of the suggestions the community offered at the related workshops, meetings, and Zoom calls. Clearly the members of the design team have worked hard and the proposed drawings attempt to follow the guidance of the Master Plan that the intersection echoes a rural character.

My primary concern is that a Citizens Advisory Committee as recommended by the Planning Staff in Section 6.5 must be established as we move forward.

> **~According to Planning Staff, if implemented, "it would also serve as an interface between developers and County agencies in implementing recommendations of the Ashton Village Center Sector Plan".**

As you have heard, many members of the community feel that their concerns were not acknowledged and or ignored in the past. In addition, building design images presented to the community and Planning Board during the initial and preliminary approval stages are very different from the final results. To be specific, the number of stories, roof heights, and rural design elements do not appear in the final construction. This has lead to oversized suburban-style developments such as Thomas Village and the enormous Alloway office building that must use a neighboring parking lot to accommodate client cars. It should be acknowledged that the designs initially submitted are often replaced with cookie-cutter components that fail to complement the rural character as stated in the Master Plan. A Citizen Advisory Committee would help avoid such pitfalls and ensure that the community continues to have a voice in monitoring the agreed-upon designs.

Another concern is the environmental impact overbuilding will have on the Southwest corner. At a time when our air quality is dangerously poor and the number of children with Asthma is skyrocketing paving over one of the few green open spaces in the area seems counterproductive and environmentally irresponsible. The proposed housing units versus open space currently shown in the Ashton Village Center Sector Plan appears to be out of balance and out of touch with concerns for Global Warming. Currently, the southeast corner hosts a large number of old-growth trees that would be destroyed under the proposed plan. Please recall that the Planning Board permitted ALL the trees on the Ashton Market and Thomas Village properties to be cut down without consideration to their environmental and aesthetic value.

Traffic at this intersection is another serious worry. If the projected housing density is allowed the traffic will overwhelm the crossroads and drivers will reroute to Tucker Lane, a winding roller coaster of a road. The Porter Road Development will become another short cut as a means to avoid the commuter snarl that will result from overbuilding.

The Ashton Village Center Sector has the potential to be a welcoming rural village crossroads featuring an environmentally responsible green space. Please recognize the wishes and needs of the community and promote the rural design characteristics that honor the historic nature of our community.

Kindly share this letter with all members of the Planning Board and enter it into the record for the Ashton Village Center Sector Plan.

Thank you for your time and attention.

Nadine R. Mort

320 Ashton Road

Ashton, Maryland 20861

"She stood in the storm, and when the wind did not blow her away, she adjusted her sails" Elizabeth Edwards

Attachments

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HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION

Marc Elrich
County Executive

Sandra I. Heiler
Chairman

September 15, 2020

Mr. Casey Anderson
Chair, Montgomery County Planning Board
2425 Reedie Drive, 14th Floor
Wheaton, MD 20902

RE: Historic Preservation Commission Comments on Ashton Village Center Sector Plan

Dear Chairman Anderson and Members of the Planning Board:

The Historic Preservation Commission (HPC) received a briefing from Planning Department staff on the Ashton Village Center Sector Plan Public Hearing Draft at our regularly scheduled September 9, 2020 public hearing.

The HPC is supportive of this Plan and finds that it balances the need for expanded housing and community amenities, including increased bikeability and walkability, with the preservation of Ashton's rural and historic character. While the Plan boundary includes only one designated historic resource, the greater area is rich with cultural resources and historic sites designated to the county's Master Plan for Historic Preservation. By connecting residents and visitors to these nearby resources, this Plan builds on Ashton's history as a rural crossroads community. We support the Plan's emphasis on the preservation of the village's rural buffer, a hallmark of Ashton's unique character.

Finally, we support the recommended inclusion of interpretive signage, historic markers, or public art as future development and redevelopment occurs near the crossroads. These measures offer an opportunity to commemorate Ashton's Quaker and African American heritage even where historic structures have been lost. Thank you for working with us and the community to preserve our local history.

Very Sincerely,

Sandra I. Heiler
Chair, Historic Preservation Commission

Submitted by Kathleen Wheeler

This testimony is submitted on behalf of the Spring Lawn Farm Homeowners' Association. Spring Lawn Farm is on the west side of New Hampshire Avenue just south of the intersection of New Hampshire Avenue and Route 108. Our development is about 30 years old and consists of approximately 60 single family homes. Residents range in age from less than a year to over 90 years old. We have residents who are the original owners of their homes as well as three young families who moved in since the first of the year.

Most of us came from others parts of Montgomery County. We came because Ashton was different than other places in the County. We love the small town feel that is hard to find in the Washington area, as well as nearby working farms and historic Sandy Spring.

Today, Ashton is at a crossroads—both literally and figuratively. The implementation of the Ashton Village Sector Plan will determine the future for our community. Will it preserve Ashton's uniques rural and historic character or will Ashton become just one more suburban community? Will the intersection of Route 108 and New Hampshire Avenue finally get improved or will it just be further clogged and unsafe as a result of intense development on its southeast corner?

While the Plan before you has many good things we support, there are also areas of concern.

First, the provisions that we support.

- An implementation advisory committee
- Safe sidewalks and sidepaths where they are missing.
- Crosswalks and pedestrian signals across all parts of the intersection of Route 108 and New Hampshire at the village center.
- Intersection improvements, including moving the pole at the corner of New Hampshire Avenue and Route 108, without expanding the overall size of the intersection.
- Expansion of the hiking and biking network in the area.
- Provision of signage that connects the village center to historic and cultural resources of the greater Ashton community.

Each of these provisions are critical and long overdue. While the Spring Lawn Farm neighborhood is within close proximity to the bank, post office, and various businesses in Ashton, there is no sidewalk or sidepath or crosswalks with signals that enable us to walk there safely.

The biggest concern that we have with the Plan is the development on the southeast corner because of its proximity to our neighborhood. The entrance to our neighborhood is less than one tenth of a mile from the southern edge of the property to be developed on the southeast corner. Some of the homes in our HOA back to a row of houses directly across New Hampshire Avenue from the southeast corner property. We will be directly impacted by the traffic, noise, and light pollution generated by this development.

Development on the southeast corner of the intersection of New Hampshire Avenue and Route 108 has been an issue dating back to prior to the development of the 1998 Sandy Spring Ashton

Master Plan. That Plan included language that specifically prohibited townhouses on the parcels at that corner. Subsequent to its adoption, plans for the mixed-use Ashton Meeting development were approved in 2008 and included six single family homes and commercial space. With the zoning recommended in the draft Plan under consideration, the potential number of units could be 20-25 times the number approved in 2008 with height limits that exceed those of the surrounding development on adjacent corners of the intersection as well as single family homes that border the property. This level of development will overrun the already overtaxed infrastructure in Ashton.

Traffic backs up on Route 108 and New Hampshire Avenue during the morning and evening rush hours, as well as when Sherwood High School dismisses students in the afternoon. Being just south of this intersection, cars back up past the entrance to our neighborhood as far as you can see south on New Hampshire Avenue. While it can take less than ten minutes to get to or from Olney during non-rush hours, it can take well over 20 minutes in the afternoon when traffic can back up almost into Olney. In the morning when school is in session, it can take two to three lights cycles to turn left from New Hampshire Avenue to go west on Route 108 towards Olney.

The Plan suggests that dependence on cars for residents of the new development could be mitigated by expansion of RideOn or Metrobus routes. Earlier this year, the Washington Area Metropolitan Transit Authority proposed as part of its 2021 budget the elimination of several bus routes, including the single bus route that serves Ashton only at rush hours during the week. This proposal was not included in the final 2021 budget due to efforts of the County Council and the State Delegation. Given the current state of ridership on RideOn busses and the County resources, expansion of RideOn bus service is highly unlikely in the near future. As a result, new residents will be primarily dependent on cars for transportation.

Most households in this area have at least two cars and in our neighborhood, about one-third of the homes have more than two. Given the proposed addition of up to 150 new housing units, we are not only alarmed by the significant amount of additional traffic, we are also very concerned that there will be insufficient onsite parking to accommodate the cars for residents and visitors. Given the proximity to our neighborhood, this could result in overflow parking on our streets. Any overflow parking not accommodated on site would require crossing New Hampshire Avenue or Route 108 and would not be safe.

Because of these issues, we strongly. support the implementation advisory committee because it would provide an opportunity to monitor and ensure implementation of all the provisions within the Plan. Nearly all of the provisions that we support require coordination and funding from entities outside the Planning Department and would benefit from community input and engagement. We believe it would be a much needed communication and oversight tool, bringing together the community, developers, and Planning staff. The advisory committee could provide focus and community support for the necessary funding and coordination needed from the various entities within the County and State. Similar advisory committees have been set up elsewhere in the County, including for the Olney Town Center and Bethesda downtown.

While development on the southeast corner is the focal point of development and community concern, the focus of the advisory committee would be broader than just that. There are rumors that the owner of the Ashton Village Shopping Center may redevelop the shopping center once it is clearer what will happen to the southeast corner. There are also rumors that there is interest in redeveloping the remainder of the properties on Porter Road. It would be helpful to have a group with specific responsibility for advising on the implementation of the Plan as it pertains to all the properties covered by the Plan

.

There are other aspects of the Plan where having an advisory committee focused on its implementation would be very helpful. The provisions for intersection improvements, crosswalks, sidewalks and side paths, green space and recreation, and trails rely on entities not under the purview of the Planning Department. An advisory committee could coordinate and provide community input with the County, State, and other entities involved in implementing these provisions.

As the Ashton Village Center Sector Plan is finalized, we ask that consideration be given to the real impact of future development. A famous line from testimony given at the public hearing on the 1998 Sandy Spring Ashton Master Plan still rings true today. A resident of of the Avenshire subdivision stated, "Ashton isn't close to anything, and we like it that way!" That is the essence of rural, along with being small.

Thank you for this opportunity to provide testimony on the Plan. We appreciate the efforts of staff, especially Jamey Pratt and Roberto Duke, in their efforts to engage the community. As the Plan is finalized, we hope that you will address the concerns that we have raised along with others in the community.

Email

Re: Planning Board 9/17/2...

Email

From Jason Allnutt

To <MCP-Chair MCP-Chair>; MCP-Chair #; MCP-Chair@mncppc-mc.org

Cc Dominique Neam; Dominique Neam; Shannon Olson; shannon.olson@mncppc-mc.org

Subject Re: Planning Board 9/17/20 Meeting- Item 8 (Ashton Village Center Sector Plan Public Hearing)

Date Sent **Date Received** 9/17/2020 4:02 PM

[EXTERNAL EMAIL] Exercise caution when opening attachments, clicking links, or responding.

Dear Catherine and team, I will no longer be testifying. My HOA president, Randy N. will be testifying on behalf of the HOA and I fully support everything he has to say. I do not wish to delay the proceedings or confuse the commission. If at all possible please let the commission know that I have elected to not take up any further time and am in full support of Rancy's testimony. Jason Allnutt, 40 Orion Club Dr, Ashton, MD 20861. Thank you.
-Jason

On Wed, Sep 16, 2020 at 5:18 PM MCP-Chair <mcp-chair@mncppc-mc.org> wrote:

> Good afternoon,
>
> Thank you for signing up to testify about Item 8: Ashton Village Center Sector Plan Public Hearing, before the Montgomery County Planning Board on Thursday, September 17, 2020. The Planning Board meeting will be conducted virtually. The Board is scheduled to receive testimony for this item at approximately 6pm. The phone number you will call to provide testimony is: **+1 443-961-1463**. When prompted for a conference ID, enter: 202 466 012#. **Please plan to call in at 5:40pm**, prior to the scheduled start of the agenda item for set up, from the phone number provided in your sign-up to testify form.
>
> Once you call in, you will remain in a virtual lobby until an organizer admits you. There will be others on the call. Please note, agenda items may take longer than their scheduled times. Please be prepared to wait on the line until your agenda item is before the Planning Board. We appreciate your patience and apologize for any inconveniences this may cause.
>
> Please mute yourself when joining the call. If you fail to mute yourself, an organizer may mute you. You will hear an audio recording that you have been muted and will need to press *6 to unmute yourself when it is your turn to speak. We recommend that you instead mute yourself using the button on your phone.
>
> Currently, the order of presentations are as follows: staff will present first, followed by public testimony, then, if applicable, the Applicant will present/provide comments. To watch the staff presentation, please visit the Planning Board website at: www.montgomeryplanningboard.org. **Please note that there is a 30-45 second delay in the live stream.** Please make sure to mute or turn off the livestream before you are called on to testify to avoid audio feedback.

Once Chair Anderson announces that it's your turn to testify, please make sure you are unmuted, announce your name, and begin your testimony. When three minutes are up, we ask that you mute yourself again so the next person can provide testimony. Once all testimony is complete, you can hang up and continue watching and listening live via the Planning Board website.

Please note the following additional information:

Please do not forward the call-in information. We will not accept callers into the virtual meeting who did not sign up to testify.

Speakers are given 3 minutes to testify. Testimony will not get cut off when three minutes are up, but we kindly ask that comments are kept as succinct as possible.
Only one individual may serve as the representative of a group. Others speaking in support of a group's position are allotted time to speak in an individual capacity. If represented by a lawyer who is also testifying, then the individual's testimony cannot cover the same ground.
If you signed up to testify for multiple items in the same meeting date, please note the conference ID number is unique to each agenda item.

If you have any questions, please reply to this e-mail or leave a message at 301-495-4605 and a staff member in the Planning Board Chair's office will return your call.

Thank you,

Catherine Coello, ***Administrative Assistant***

The Maryland-National Park and Planning Commission

Montgomery County Chair's Office

2425 Reedie Drive, Wheaton, MD 20902

Main: 301-495-4605 | Direct: 301-495-4608 | Fax: 301-495-1320

www.MontgomeryPlanningBoard.org

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From: Paula Glendinning
To: MCP-Chair
Cc: Pratt, Jamey
Subject: Re the Sector Plan for the Ashton Village Center
Date: Thursday, September 17, 2020 8:46:10 PM

Dear Planning Board Members,

I've lived in Ashton for almost 29 years, and I'm grateful that the people who built Sandy Spring and Ashton cared about improving life and making this a strong community. There have been so many meetings for so many years to talk about the potential development at the Ashton Village intersection. You may be wondering why our community doesn't just give up. We are going to be living here with the results of what you decide to let the developers do, and it will change Ashton for generations.

The people and the history of this community are linked together more than you can see when you drive by. The attached map of Sandy Spring and Ashton shows the Montgomery County Heritage Area. There are hidden gems in Ashton/Sandy Spring that were important in Women's History, Abolitionist History, in the progress of civil rights, and in world history. Ashton Road is the gateway to this important Heritage Area, and the Ashton intersection is crucial. Just on the edge of my neighborhood is a home called Cherry Grove, which was part of the Underground Railroad network, as were many other homes in our area in the 19th century. Just across from Sherwood High School is a home that used to be called Sherwood, and now called Cloverly, that was the meeting place for possibly the oldest women's association in the US that is still meeting. Minutes of the Mutual Improvement Association are available from 1857 to today. That same house was used as a recuperation center for nurses during the Civil War. Harewood in Sandy Spring was the home of Dean Acheson while he was contributing to the founding of NATO. This has been an important community for centuries, and it's worth our time to get the current decisions right.

Thirteen years ago, many of us were attending hearings about the same piece of land in Ashton, because the developer wanted to put more commercial buildings and paved parking space than the Master Plan allowed at the time. After a long process, the community, the Planning Board, and the developer, Mr. Nichols, came to an agreement to allow 7 single-family homes, plus a group of small to medium shops that fit the village concept. When the economic crash hit in 2008, the building plans and the promised safety improvements to the intersection were all put on hold. We still don't have crosswalks at that dangerous intersection near Sherwood High School, and no time at all ever when the lights stop traffic for pedestrians.

Now, twelve years later, after many more meetings, the draft plan being presented allows for up to 150 homes on this small piece of land, which is more than a modest bump from the 2007-8 plan, and not my idea of a rural village. It's a huge increase from 7 homes. The developer wants to convince you that even that is not enough homes or enough pavement. He and his colleagues talk about building affordable housing, but in every development in this area, his focus has been on asking for regulations that allow him to build bigger, taller townhouses that he can sell for more money. We need the Planning Board to put some strong

design regulations in place for Ashton to protect us from profit for the builders being the priority for future development.

When we started this new round of meetings in 2019, the rooms were filled for the first meeting at the Sandy Spring Museum in May, the work sessions at the museum in October, and the meeting at the Sandy Spring Fire Hall in January. Fred Boyd and Roberto Duke held office hours at the Sandy Spring Museum, and every time I went up to talk to them there, members of the community were asking questions about how much development was going to be allowed. This year, Jamey Pratt has been available to speak with our community about our questions. At all of these meetings, the overwhelming community request was to preserve the rural character of Ashton and keep the density of building that the Master Plans have always promised us.

In January, when the draft plan was shown, every single speaker in the full room spoke against it, and the planning board staff assured us they were listening. The most important change I can see that was made to the plan since then is the addition of an advisory group, and I hope you make that happen. The only other significant change I could see was to remove the drawings showing how many buildings could be allowed with an F.A.R. of 0.5 across the property.

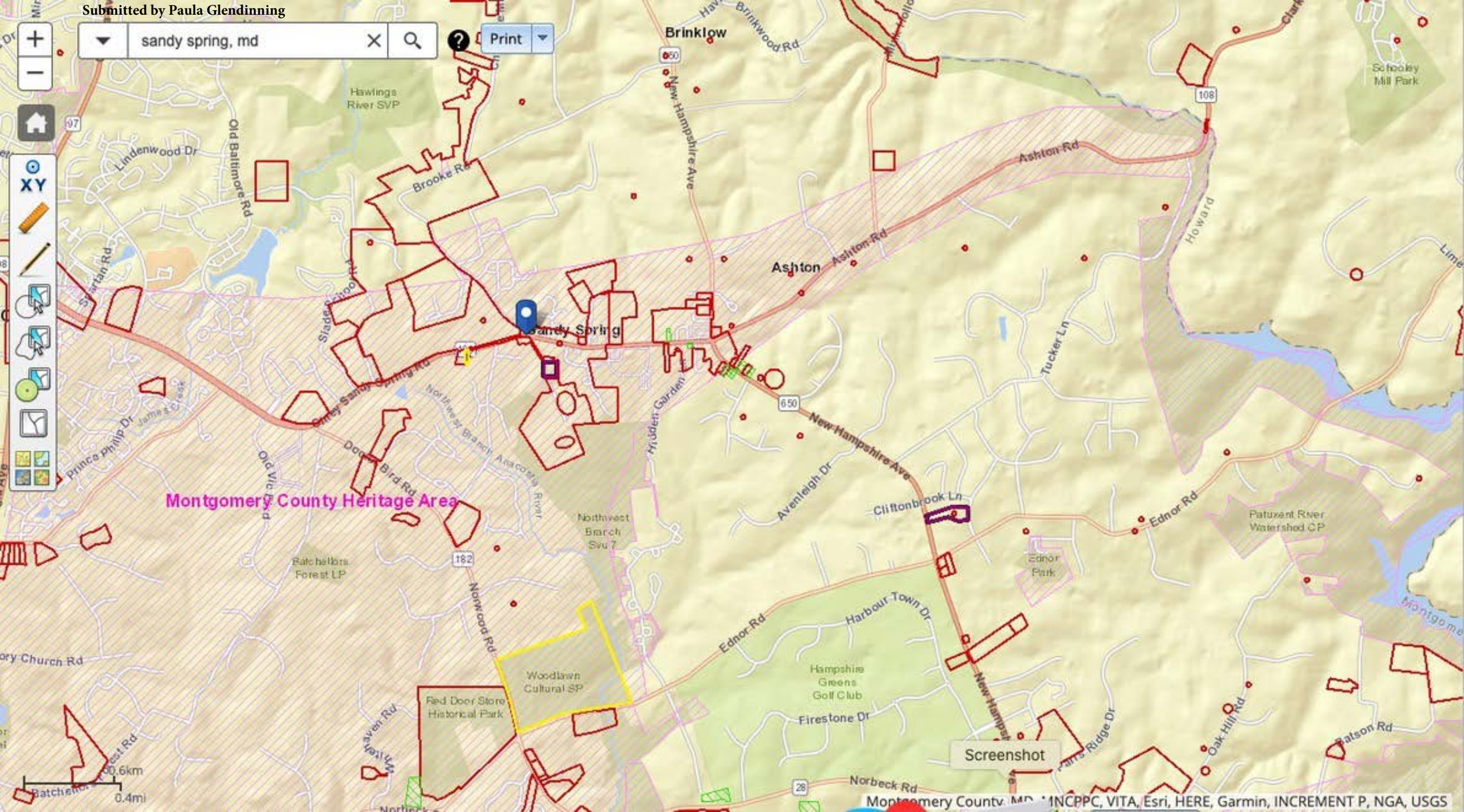
I understand that you're doing the best you can to adapt to the public health crisis, but these virtual hearings are a big obstacle to many people in our community. For example, people with hearing impairments may not be able to participate fully. The closed caption option on Microsoft Teams does not work when watching the meeting in full screen. You have to keep the meeting screen small, meaning that the text on presentations is too small to read. The closed captions don't work at all when you are in the group testifying. Your IT staff is exceptionally kind and helpful, and I hope they might be able to advise on other software possibilities.

It has always been clear for hundreds of years that the communities of Ashton and Sandy Spring care about their neighborhood, and the public meetings last year and in January of 2020 were very well attended. The meeting on September 17 was in conflict with Back-to-School Night for local public and private schools. September is always a challenge for families with the beginning of school, but this year is off the charts for them because of online schooling issues and everything else about the pandemic.

Please take the time you need to think carefully about the decisions you're about to make, and what the priorities are for the people who want to cut down more trees, pave more, and build more. We need the protection you can give us to keep Ashton from losing something that we can't get back.

Sincerely,
Paula Glendinning

Submitted by Paula Glendinning



Proposal for a Rural Village Center in Ashton

Presentation to Montgomery County Planning Board
September 17, 2020
Item-8

SSARPC
Douglas Farquhar
1601 Olney Sandy Spring Road
Sandy Spring, Maryland 20860

SSARPC Supports:

- Implementation Advisory Committee
- Less dense zoning at the edges of the SE Quadrant
- Overlay zone with specific design requirements

Public Hearing Draft Language is good, but it has no teeth…

SSARPC agrees with the following:

Vision:

The Ashton Village Center is a compact, walkable and bikeable rural village with varied housing opportunities, safe and complete streets, and inviting gathering places that foster a sense of community.

Purpose:

Make land use, zoning, design, transportation and environmental recommendations appropriate for a rural village.

Increase bikeability and walkability and meet Vision Zero objectives.

Raise awareness of the County's rich array of cultural and historic resources.

Design:

Ensure a variety of building widths, building heights and the number of building floors to achieve compatibility with existing surrounding residential development and maintenance of the rural village character.

Problem: Would Sector Plan as Proposed Prevent This?

Ashton Market Promotional Illustration by Builder

- Monolithic building masses that do not reflect a Rural Village

https://www.danryanbuilders.com/communities/maryland/ashton-market/

Problem:
This was what was shown at Ashton Market Site Plan Review

Figure 26 – Townhouse Façade Treatment from MD 108

The Site Plan is in substantial conformance with the recommendations of the 1998 *Sandy Spring/Ashton Master Plan*. The primary objective of the Master Plan is to preserve the rural character of the Sandy Spring/Ashton Area. The Subject Property is within the "Ashton Village Center" as designated in the Master Plan (pg.38).

Presented at the Planning Board Meeting on Nov 15, 2018 for the Ashton Market Preliminary Plan

http://montgomeryplanningboard.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/11/Ashton-Market-Report-_Final-11_15_18.pdf

The Future of Ashton is at Stake

The vision and design guidance in the text of the Public Hearing Draft plan express an appropriately designed Rural Village Center, but we are concerned they are not mandatory.

The Sandy Spring Village Center Plan and ensuing development there (Thomas Village) gave us reason to be skeptical.

We believe that only through clear design requirements in the zoning (e.g., varying building heights with specific percentages at lower heights), can we be assured that the developments will adhere to the Plan's vision.

We therefore propose language be added to the revised Overlay Zone to make the design elements required, not optional, and that an Advisory Committee be implemented.

Solution: Insert Design Language into Overlay Zone

- Mixed use buildings with dwellings above commercial
- Activating architecture with porches, varying setbacks, stoops, front gardens, sidewalks and a village green
- Rural village elements such as brickwork, arched windows, dormers, significant variations in building height

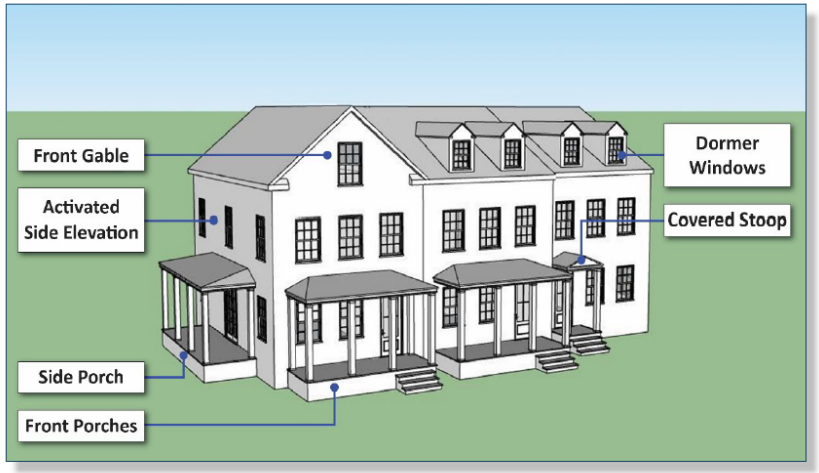


Figure 3. Architectural embellishments provide visual interest to building massing.

Community should work with staff to build this language into the Overlay Zone

Solution: Implementation Advisory Committee

- Would include members that provide specific community and redevelopment expertise
- Would serve as an interface between developers and County agencies in implementing recommendations
- Would ensure that community stay abreast of final development plans and changes
- Would include representatives of all key stakeholder groups

What We Don’t Want

Thomas Village in Sandy Spring (FAR of .63)

Key Issues:

- Monolithic building masses that are vehicle-centric when viewed from major thoroughfares, and tower over adjacent neighborhoods
- Small strips of grass or tree boxes that offer minimal respite from concrete and asphalt expanse
- Limited green spaces when viewed from major thoroughfares, or from homes

No Apartment Buildings

Apartment buildings would not be compatible with Ashton and surrounding neighborhoods:

- There are no apartment buildings within miles of Ashton, except in Olney.
- Community and planners have been united in objective of ensuring that Ashton is different from Olney, and should not become Olney.
- Ashton is a town that has a rich agricultural history and connection. There are still at least two active livestock farms in Ashton, several horse farms, and many preserved meadows and agricultural fields in the area.
- Apartment buildings (as opposed to accessory apartments, apartments in stacked flats, and apartments above commercial spaces) are massive structures, and would rarely, if ever, have been located in rural towns.

Achieve a Rural Village through Zoning

For all properties within the Village Core:

- Overlay Zone to include clear requirements for a variety of building widths, heights, types, and architectural features such as bay windows, and balconies.

For 4.5 acres at SE Quadrant, currently zoned CRT, with commercial FAR of .75 and residential FAR of .25:

- CRN with FAR to .5

For remaining parcels located at eastern and southern edges of Southeast Corner (about 4.5 acres) currently zoned R-60 and Rural Cluster:

- CRN with FAR .25, effectively limiting residential square footage to about 50,000 square feet

Single-Family Homes at Edges (approaching intersection from Howard County on Rte. 108, approaching from south on New Hampshire Ave.)

Wyndcrest Subdivision, Ashton

Key elements:

- Porches facing streets
- Varied heights, styles, orientation of gables
- Brick chimneys
- Significant setbacks in front and side yards
- Each home with uniform exterior siding materials

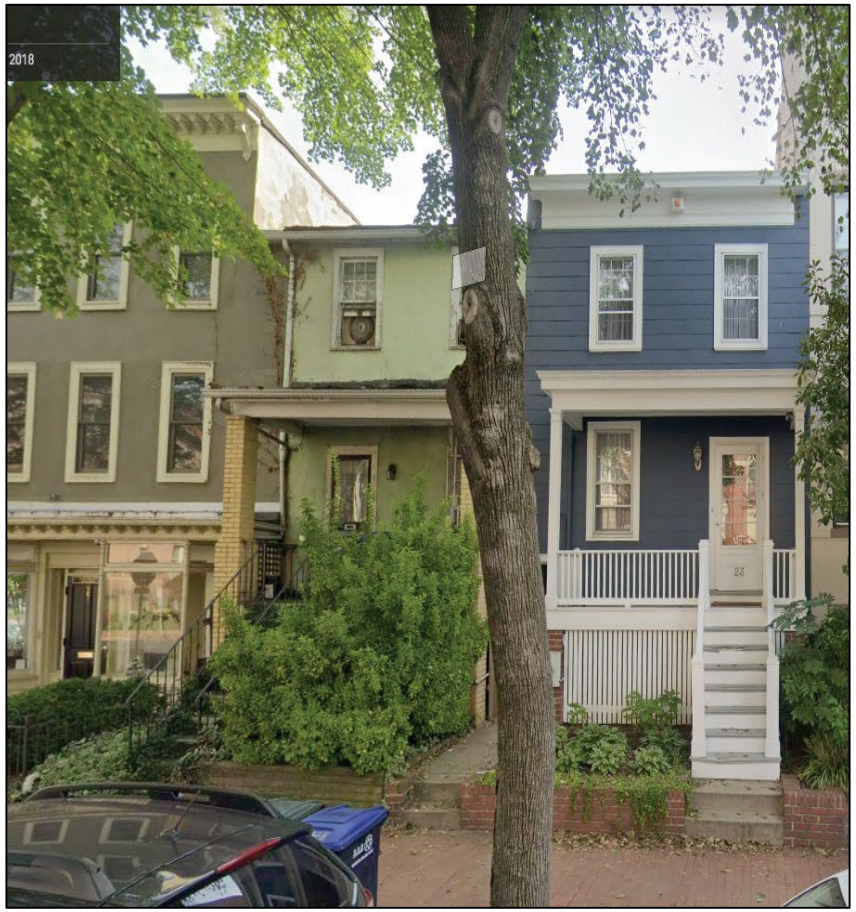
Medium-Density Units Closer to Crossroads

Stacked Flats (facing streets, closer to commercial buildings)

Key Elements:

- Designed to look like duplexes
- Ample porches and small front yards
- Broad stairways leading to side-by-side doorways to each apartment (could almost be mistaken as double door to traditional attached single-family home)

Townhouses



Key Elements:

- Face streets and have small front yards (but bigger than those in Thomas Village facing Route 108)
- Varying and limited heights
- Variety of architecture: some with entrances reached by stairway up to porch, others with entrances at sidewalk level
- Staggered facades
- Variety of colors

Commercial Spaces Near Crossroads

Key Elements:

- Residential over commercial space
- All signs lit by gooseneck overhead lights, some hanging signs projecting from storefronts
- Varying building heights, exterior colors, and styles
- Varying design elements: canopies, pediments on top of facades, size and number of street-facing windows

To ensure that we preserve the unique character of Ashton, it will be important to:

- Implement an Advisory Committee
- Ensure less dense zoning at the edges of the SE Quadrant
- Implement an overlay zone with specific design requirements

Email

Ashton Village Master Plan...

Email

From Susan Gray

To <MCP-Chair MCP-Chair>; MCP-Chair #; MCP-Chair@mncppc-mc.org

Cc susan@campsusan.com

Subject Ashton Village Master Plan revisions-keep Ashton equine friendly!

Date Sent **Date Received** 9/17/2020 10:46 AM

[EXTERNAL EMAIL] Exercise caution when opening attachments, clicking links, or responding.

Planning Board members: please modify the draft Ashton Village Master Plan to add "equestrian" to text referencing non-vehicle travel, so that the document specifies that trails and the area in general, remain equestrian friendly. As one who worked with Park and Planning for many years to get an amazing network of multi-use, equine friendly trails preserved from west of Olney through Ashton, it is important that the Master Plan acknowledge these trails and state they are to be protected and expanded, if at all possible.

The trails provide a remarkable link between prized Montgomery County environmental, recreational and cultural resources: Rachael Carson Park, Hawlings River Stream Valley, and the Sandy Spring. This area was a center for the underground railroad. To this day, (with many thanks to MNCPPC for preserving the open space and trails), it is a sobering experience to ride though this beautiful area, pondering its history. The ability to do this needs to remain.

Keeping this area horse friendly also helps support agriculture in the area, something which is beneficial in protecting the drinking water supply in the Patuxent Reservoirs Watershed.

Thank you for the ability to comment on this draft. I'm keeping my fingers crossed that Montgomery County will continue its historic policies and practices of protecting this area and its resources.

Susan Gray
Highland, Maryland

Attachments

File Name	File Size (Bytes)	
0 - 0 of 0 (0 selected)		Page 1

From: Elizabeth Al
To: Pratt, Jamey
Cc: CMilner@theoakleafgroup.com; Charles F. Mess
Subject: Equestrian Trails in the Ashton Village Center Sector Plan!
Date: Friday, September 18, 2020 11:01:03 AM

Dear Mr. Pratt,

My name is Elizabeth Alcoba and I am a member of the wonderful, vibrant and active equestrian community of Ashton/Sandy Spring/Olney. For many years I have enjoyed our trail system here in this area, as a member of Reddemeade, Windsor Manor Stables and now Brooke Grove Farm where my horse is stabled. Though some trail sections over the years have been lost to development we can still count on enough trails for much enjoyment of our sport. Therefore, I am writing to you in hopes that our equestrian trail system will not be overlooked or discounted in the Ashton Village Center Sector Plan.

Please note that the Master Plan already provides for the many individuals of all ages who ride horses by protecting existing regional and local routes, and even by providing for the creation of new local connections. Here The Master Plan states:

> *As might be expected in a rural area, many residents own horses. As a result, equestrian trails contribute to the rural character of the community. Therefore, this Plan recommends the following: Ensure an equestrian trail system through easements to equestrians at the time of subdivision review or through the dedication of parkland. Accommodate equestrian use of the Rural Legacy Trail and Northwest Branch Trail.*

In order to ensure that the Master Plan's vision of building connections among the community and contributing to the rural character of the community through equestrian trails, I suggest incorporation of the following language into the Ashton Village Center Sector Plan:

- The Sector Plan incorporates and reiterates the Master Plan's recommendations of ensuring an equestrian trail system through easements to equestrians at the time of subdivision review or through the dedication of parkland.
- To the extent that the trails in the Master Plan's "Plan of Existing and Proposed Equestrian Trials" (depicted in Exhibit 28 of the Master Plan) are within the Ashton Village Center Sector Plan, the Sector Plan incorporates the Master Plan's intention and desire to maintain existing and establish those new trails in the Rural Buffer Neighborhood.
- Ensure that multi use trails are appropriately designed for equestrian use (including natural surface components).

Thank you for your consideration. Please feel free to respond to this email with comment or questions!

Thank you for your time and consideration of this most important issue! As our community continues to grow and develop, let us not lose the appealing rural character and lifestyle which it has known for generations.

Sincerely,

Elizabeth C. Alcoba

17137 Thorntondale Ct. Olney, MD 20832

--

"Men have forgotten this truth," said the fox. "But you must not forget it. You become responsible, forever, for what you have tamed."
Antoine de Saint-Exupéry

Email

\Ashton Village Center Sec...

Email

From Brandi Tippery

To <MCP-Chair MCP-Chair>; MCP-Chair #; MCP-Chair@mncppc-mc.org

Cc mail4thewheelers@verizon.net

Subject \Ashton Village Center Sector Plan Public Hearing

Date Sent **Date Received** 9/19/2020 11:21 AM

[EXTERNAL EMAIL] Exercise caution when opening attachments, clicking links, or responding.

Hello,

Thank you for making the public hearing for the Ashton Village Center Sector available online, as I was not able to attend live due to Back to School Night.

I truly appreciate all of the speakers who presented their concerns and suggestions. I would like to provide my support to keeping the Ashton area as rural as possible and echo the idea that a Community Advisor Committee be utilized to ensure that we don't have another issue like the one with the horrible looking townhomes that will be built on the Ashton Marketplace site.

I have lived in the Spring Lawn Farm community for 14 years and plan to be here for many years to come.

While I am fully supportive of advancing our community through well thought out development plans, I was very dismayed to see the final designs of the townhouses for Ashton Market. Our community was misled in the initial plans for that development and it seems that the county allowed for commercialism to override the rural feel of the community. Given that, how can our community trust any plans set forth by the Planning Board? How did the county allow this to happen? It was definitely the proverbial Bait and Switch. As a result of this bait and switch, I completely agree with the need for a Community Advisory Committee. I also believe that the county should step in and require the builder to change the plans of the townhouses that have yet to be built in the Ashton Market. I appreciate Douglas Farquhar's, of the SSARPC (Sandy Spring/Ashton Rural Preservation Consortium), presentation and walking through the elements that the plan should include. I fully agree with what he has proposed. I truly believe that a Community Advisory Committee would open the communication lines between the planning board and the Committee to discuss these items and agree upon the best path forward.

Now, the planning board is proposing development to the only large open space remaining in the intersection of 108 and New Hampshire Avenue. There is no way that our community and roads can handle an influx of hundreds of new residents and their vehicles. The plans to build 150 residences will totally overwhelm our community. Kathleen Wheeler, the President of the Spring Lawn Farm HOA testified that, in our neighborhood, homeowners have at least 2 cars per home, and many more in some cases. Assuming that there are 150 residences in the Ashton Village plan, that equates to a minimum of 300 vehicles, and well over 300 people. That alone will overwhelm the community and the roads.

In considering the recent pandemic, if we add over 300 residents to our small community, one can only imagine the large increase in foot traffic as people feel the need to leave their homes to take advantage of the outdoors and open spaces.

In listening to the testimony from the representative of the Nichols company, I heard commercialism and selfishness of a business whose only goal is to make as much revenue as they can, even to the detriment of the community that they have supported and helped to build over the years. Furthermore, in listening to the testimony from Jeff Schwartz the owner of Ashton Manor Environmental, I heard even more commercialism from a long-term resident of the area whose testimony was again tied to his goal of making revenue. He further went on to point a finger to the residents of the area in that we don't want low cost housing in this area. What we want is to ensure that any development doesn't lead to overgrowth and adding more people that will completely change the environment and add to the pollution and overuse of the land in this area. There is no way that you can add 150 residences to this small area and it not affect the flow of traffic and not affect the environment.

Nadine Mort and Kathleen Wheeler spoke a lot about traffic, which is a huge concern in this area, especially during the morning and evening rush hours. When my kids were physically attending school (Sherwood HS and Farquhar MS), if we left the house later than 7:15am, it would take two to three times as long to travel to both destinations. I cannot even imagine what adding 300+ residents and vehicles to the area would do. The short cut that vehicles use to turn on to Route 108 is to go straight on New Hampshire Avenue, turn left into the shopping center, drive through the shopping center and then make a right on route 108. I fear that there would be an increase in this activity, thereby endangering the lives of people who are in the shopping center patronizing those businesses; as it could lead to vehicular accidents involving both pedestrians and other vehicles in that small parking lot.

In conclusion, I believe in a well planned expansion of the area that adds in safe multiple use pathways to connect all of the residents of Ashton to the commercial center of Ashton. Unfortunately, in seeing the final drawings of the Ashton Marketplace townhomes, how can the community trust that the county planning board has the best intentions in supporting the development of the Ashton Village Center? To that end, I agree that it is of utmost importance to have a Community Advisory Committee who does have the best intentions for the development of our community in mind.

Regards,

Brandi Tippery

Attachments

File Name	File Size (Bytes)	

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Email

Ashton Village Center Sect...

Email

From MARY VAN DENK

To <MCP-Chair MCP-Chair>; MCP-Chair #; MCP-Chair@mncppc-mc.org

Cc

Subject Ashton Village Center Sector Plan

Date Sent **Date Received** 9/19/2020 2:38 PM

[EXTERNAL EMAIL] Exercise caution when opening attachments, clicking links, or responding.

I live at 110 Country View CT., Ashton, MD. I have lived in this community since 1992. I have witnessed a lot of homes being built in our community.

Aside from wanting to keep Ashton rural, I am very concerned about the potential traffic situation which will be unsafe because of the two lane roads. Also, the roads were not built to accommodate such high volume of traffic which poses a safety risk due to all these New homes.

Thank you for your consideration.

Mary Van Denk

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Email

Opposition to Ashton Villa...

Email

From Steven Hursh

To <MCP-Chair MCP-Chair>; MCP-Chair #; MCP-Chair@mncppc-mc.org

Cc jody-hollyhill@msn.com; shursh@ibrinc.org

Subject Opposition to Ashton Village Plan

Date Sent **Date Received** 9/20/2020 3:28 PM

[EXTERNAL EMAIL] Exercise caution when opening attachments, clicking links, or responding.

We are writing to express our strong opposition to the Ashton Village Plan to add 150+ residents at the intersection of 108 and New Hampshire Ave. We live 2 miles from this location and transit through that intersection to get to most other locations in the county.

Reasons:
A development is already underway on the opposite corner with undetermined impact.

The road network is 2 lanes in all directions and is already congested in the morning and evening, especially when vehicles are entering and leaving Sherwood High School near by.

This is an area planned to remain rural, and retains it's rural charm and atmosphere that is threatened by these unnecessary developments.

Developers purchase these plots of land with an eye toward huge profits and without regard for the impact on residents who chose to live here because of the rural surroundings. We should not be forced to loose our lovely neighborhood just so they can develop and profit from their land purchase.

With the inadequate road system to support the 300+ new vehicles at this location, all the current residents will experience a huge impact on the quality of our life. It is the responsibility of the planning board to protect us from undesirable impacts.

There is no need to locate this development in an area that is not equipped to support it. We fervently request that you reject this development as an undesirable intrusion on the rural nature of Ashton.

Respectfully,
Steve and Jody

_____
Steven & Jody Hursh
41 Haviland Mill Road
Brookeville, MD 20833

Attachments

File Name	File Size (Bytes)

From:	Walshe, Elizabeth
To:	Pratt, Jamey
Subject:	Suggestion for Ashton Village Center Sector Plan: Maintain Master Plan"s vision for equestrian trails
Date:	Monday, September 21, 2020 9:10:01 AM

Hello Mr. Pratt,

I reside at 18365 Leman Lake Drive in Olney Md, a few miles by horse trails west of the proposed Ashton Village Center Sector Plan modifications to the Sandy Spring/Ashton Master Plan. I write to offer a suggestion to the Ashton Village Center Sector Plan for the Project Team's consideration.

I keep my horse at Brooke Grove Farm in Olney, MD and I use the trails in the Sandy Spring/Ashton area. Sandy Spring is well known in the equestrian community for its extensive network of horse trails. The trails are used by residents of the area and by equestrians who keep their horses at Brooke Grove Farm.

When developing the Sandy Spring/Ashton area, it's important to not forget about the equestrian trials in the planning process. The Master Plan provides for the many people who ride horses through this area by protecting existing regional and local routes, and by creating new local connections. The Master Plan explains:

> *As might be expected in a rural area, many residents own horses. As a result, equestrian trails contribute to the rural character of the community. Therefore, this Plan recommends the following: Ensure an equestrian trail system through easements to equestrians at the time of subdivision review or through the dedication of parkland. Accommodate equestrian use of the Rural Legacy Trail and Northwest Branch Trail.*

To ensure that the Master Plan's vision of building connections among the community and contributing to the rural character of the community through equestrian trails, I suggest incorporation of the following language into the Ashton Village Center Sector Plan:

- The Sector Plan incorporates and reiterates the Master Plan's recommendations of ensuring an equestrian trail system through easements to equestrians at the time of subdivision review or through the dedication of parkland.
- To the extent that the trails in the Master Plan's "Plan of Existing and Proposed Equestrian Trials" (depicted in Exhibit 28 of the Master Plan) are within the Ashton Village Center Sector Plan, the Sector Plan incorporates the Master Plan's intention and desire to maintain existing and establish those new trails in the Rural Buffer Neighborhood.
- Ensure that multiuse trails are appropriately designed for equestrian use (including natural surface components).

Thank you for your consideration. Please feel free to reach out, via email, if you have any questions.

Regards,

Beth Walshe
Sr. Manager, HR Data Management
10400 Fernwood Road, Bethesda, MD 20817
301-380-2079 (O)

Marriott INTERNATIONAL | GLOBAL HUMAN RESOURCES

MARRIOTT BONVOY

From:	Catherine F. Moy
To:	Pratt, Jamey
Cc:	Chris Milner
Subject:	equestrian trails in Ashton Village Sector Plan
Date:	Monday, September 21, 2020 9:13:45 AM

[EXTERNAL EMAIL] Exercise caution when opening attachments, clicking links, or responding.

Good morning Mr. Pratt,

I hope you had a nice weekend.

I live in Sandy Spring at 17420 Doctor Bird Road near the intersection of 108 and Dr. Bird Rd. Our family owns horses and utilizes the many equestrian trails available to us on a frequent basis. I have been in communication with neighbors about the Ashton Village Sector Plan and would like to share our hopes that the Ashton Village Sector plan will continue to incorporate equestrian trails in the plan. I would also like to suggest the following language be incorporated into the plan:

- The Sector Plan incorporates and reiterates the Master Plan's recommendations of ensuring an equestrian trail system through easements to equestrians at the time of subdivision review or through the dedication of parkland.
- To the extent that the trails in the Master Plan's "Plan of Existing and Proposed Equestrian Trials" (depicted in Exhibit 28 of the Master Plan) are within the Ashton Village Center Sector Plan, the Sector Plan incorporates the Master Plan's intention and desire to maintain existing and establish those new trails in the Rural Buffer Neighborhood.
- Ensure that multi use trails are appropriately designed for equestrian use (including natural surface components).

Thank you for your consideration,

--

Best,
Catherine
http://birdhousefarm.weebly.com/

Email

Ashton Village Plan testim...

Email

From Eric Lynch

To <MCP-Chair MCP-Chair>; MCP-Chair #; MCP-Chair@mncppc-mc.org

Cc

Subject Ashton Village Plan testimony

Date Sent **Date Received** 9/21/2020 10:34 AM

[EXTERNAL EMAIL] Exercise caution when opening attachments, clicking links, or responding.

Good morning

I am writing as a resident of Spring Lawn Farm development which is located just south on New Hampshire Ave to the proposed Ashton Village development. The lot that is proposed to be developed is in direct visual view from the top of our neighborhood. Just in case there is the belief that it is only the "older" population who lived in Ashton for 20+ years that are opposed to any development, I am a 40 year old and the father of a young family who moved to Ashton specifically for the "small town" feel and space that makes this community so appealing. It is not just the feeling of "legacy" Ashton residents to maintain the rural nature of the community, but residents of all ages.

I, as well as many others in our neighborhood, have significant concerns regarding the proposed development plan of that southeast corner in Ashton Village center. We are not opposed to progress, but within that progress the communities desire to maintain a rural feel to the town should be reflected. The rendering of proposed town home units are sterile, provide no character that is rural in nature, and frankly have the appearance of low income housing that would cram many new residents into an already crowded intersection. I submit that we are opposed to structures that reflect the proposal. Our request would be to limit the number of town homes as to reduce the congestion of an already overcrowded intersection, and maximize the number of single family homes. Any new construction should provide design elements that convey the "small town", rural nature that is important to the community and not the sterile concrete buildings that have been proposed.

As another point to be considered, the intersection of 108 and New Hampshire Ave has become congested and a point of traffic during peak commuter times. The development will add a significant number of additional residents further exacerbating this problem and making the access to our neighborhood difficult and potentially unsafe.

Again, we are not opposed to progress and development.. but that development should be consistent with the vision and wishes of the many families who call Ashton home today. This board needs to consider the values, and priorities of current residents that call Ashton home, and not concerned with paving the way towards maximizing profits for developers.

Attachments

File Name	File Size (Bytes)	
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Email

Feedback for Ashton Mark...

Email

From Gchytakh

To <MCP-Chair MCP-Chair>; MCP-Chair #; MCP-Chair@mncppc-mc.org

Cc

Subject Feedback for Ashton Marketplace Townhomes

Date Sent **Date Received** 9/22/2020 10:05 PM

[EXTERNAL EMAIL] Exercise caution when opening attachments, clicking links, or responding.

Hello,

I would like to provide feedback to Ashton Marketplace Townhomes presentation and development of the new neighborhood.

I don't think Ashton is ready handle this many more town homes. From what I understand there are plans for over 150 units and this is too much. Traffic congestion is already too high for such a small neighborhood. I think traffic patterns should be considered before developing new community. As a resident of Sandy Spring / Ashton I see benefits of bringing new retail but I think the plans for 150 units should be reconsidered.

Thank you,
Gene

Attachments

File Name	File Size (Bytes)	

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Email

Southeast corner of Ashton

Email

From andrew austin

To <MCP-Chair MCP-Chair>; MCP-Chair #; MCP-Chair@mncppc-mc.org

Cc

Subject Southeast corner of Ashton

Date Sent **Date Received** 9/23/2020 8:03 PM

[EXTERNAL EMAIL] Exercise caution when opening attachments, clicking links, or responding.

Dear Chairman Casey Anderson:

I live one mile north of Rt. 108 on New Hampshire Ave. I have worked at home since 1984 as a blacksmith/shepherd. My folks bought the farm in 1953 and although I've had stints elsewhere in younger days, this is where I've raised my family and it's the only home I've ever known. I am very concerned about the future of Ashton.

As I watched the testimonies at the hearing last week regarding the proposed development of the southeast corner of Ashton it struck me that there were 2 camps. On one side there were community members who were concerned with quality of life and wanted to protect what made the Ashton/Sandy Spring area unique. Time and time again they said they were not against development but wanted to preserve the rural nature of the area and that did not include apartment buildings and shoe-horning in as many housing units as possible. No one had motives other than protecting a neighborhood and guiding its path to a future the residents wouldn't regret.

On the other side, the motives were to maximize profit and proceed with no restraints, no oversight, and no consequences for lying and misleading. Anyone applauding the Nichols' Plan who was not in the employment of Fred Nichols I suspect was one of his toadies or a friend somehow obligated to back him up with spurious arguments that left me gasping in disbelief.

Pardon me for being cynical but Nichols offers the County & State more taxes in return for you to let him run roughshod over the community and retire in Florida with a pot full of money.

I've watched Fred Nichols abuse the neighborhood with lies and subterfuge with his Thomas Village in Sandy Spring and Ashton Market in Ashton. While a competent builder, he has proven that he is not to be trusted and needs to be restrained and monitored. A government's duty is to protect and serve. Do your job.

Sincerely,
A.Peter Austin
POB 187
Ashton, MD 20861

Attachments

File Name	File Size (Bytes)	

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From:	Bob Taylor
To:	MCP-Chair; Pratt, Jamey
Subject:	Comments on the Ashton Village Center Sector Plan Sept 17 Version
Date:	Wednesday, September 23, 2020 2:08:21 PM

[EXTERNAL EMAIL] Exercise caution when opening attachments, clicking links, or responding.

Dear MNCPPC Colleagues;

My family lives on Maryland Hwy 650, about 3 miles north of the Ashton 108-650 crossroad, which we pass through multiple times a day. We have enjoyed the rural character of our orchard and surrounding areas for years. I have attended all of the major meetings last year and this year concerning the Ashton Village Sector Plan, including the virtual meetings, and followed its development closely, together with neighbors and community friends.

I, and everyone I have talked to who lives in the Ashton community, am strong opposed to the proposed change in zoning for the SE corner of the crossroad, which, according to MNCPPC staff's calculations, would allow the developer to build 150 new residential units on his roughly 8 acre set of lots. This density of new residential development in the heart of our town will destroy the rural village character of our historic heritage town, especially as a large townhouse development is also now being constructed directly across the street. As MNCPPC staff know from both the Oct 2019 design workshop and especially the well-attended community briefing of January 29, 2020, when the new zoning recommendation was first presented, the Ashton community (aside from the developer and his associates) is overwhelmingly opposed to the density of residential development proposed for that SE corner. Why does MNCPPC ignore the opinion of the affected community in this most important aspect of its Sector Plan? This makes a mockery of the many statements made by MNCPPC to Ashton residents that "this is our plan." Instead, it is something we do not want being forced on us by MNCPPC.

We have been told by some MNCPPC staff that every community must host increasing new residential development for the county to accommodate population projections of an additional 200,000 inhabitants. While I do not dispute the projections, I know that our County Government seeks to encourage such development in areas with walking distance to shopping, work and easy public transportation—eg. more urban areas. That makes sense. Building dense clusters of new residential development in essential rural areas, with virtually no easy public transportation, and hence certain automobile commutes, makes no sense, spatially, in terms of needed infrastructure and especially in terms of transportation planning. Note that our one sporadic Metro bus line is proposed by MWATA for elimination. In addition, dense residential development in rural areas flies in the face of our County's policy to reduce greenhouse gas emissions aggressively by 2025 and beyond, by adding medium-long distance automobile commuting. Why undertake such dense development in an essentially rural area when it also is opposed by those living there?

If we must have more dense residential development in our Ashton, it is essential that detailed design criteria are stipulated in the Sector Plan to ensure that the developer at least designs the development with some concern for the rural character of the setting. We have seen this particular developer ignore plans and schematics presented in Master Plans and site plants in final design, both at Thomas Village and now in promotional materials for the new Aston Village townhouse development. The community must at least have some input in the specifics, and help ensure that design criteria are met, through an Implementation Advisory Committee. These are minimum requirements!

Sincerely,

Robert Taylor
19050 New Hampshire Ave
Brinklow MD 20862

Elizabeth G. Osterman
Avenshire Homeowners Association
Board President

September 21, 2020

Re: Ashton Village Center, Sector Plan

Dear Chair Casey Anderson:

I appreciate the opportunity to provide comments on the Ashton Village Center Sector Plan (Plan) for the Ashton Village Center (Ashton).

I am president of the Avenshire Home Owners Association, which is a community of 44 single family homes located on Avenleigh Drive, approximately one half mile south of the intersection of Route 108 and New Hampshire Ave. Our community will be directly impacted by the development of the Ashton Village Center, as we are just south of the boundary of the area covered by the Plan.

I have read the Plan and listened with interest to the public hearing held on September 17, 2020. I have the following comments and concerns, many of which I share with persons testifying at the public hearing.

<u>Proposed crosswalks, bike lanes and sidewalks.</u>

I strongly support the Plan's proposed development of better safety measures that will protect all traffic, including motor vehicle, bicycle and pedestrian, moving through and around Ashton. Crosswalks, bike lanes and sidewalks will enhance the community while also serving an important safety function.

I recommend that the board not stop with the Ashton Sector, however, but that the Plan be expanded to include the addition of sidewalks and/or bike lanes to connect Ashton to the sidewalk starting at Ednor Rd. Many bicyclists, including me, enjoy biking in and around Ashton. Bike travel along New Hampshire Ave., however, is extremely unsafe. This is not only because the shoulders are inadequate in width, but those same shoulders are frequently inaccessible to bicyclists and pedestrians because of tree limbs and other debris that litter them.

Although I applaud moving the stop line back on the south-bound lanes of New Hampshire Ave. to allow west-bound traffic on Route 108 to make safer turns north onto New Hampshire Ave., I also strongly recommend implementing changes that will improve traffic flow at the Route 108 and New Hampshire Ave. intersection and address the poor and dangerous placement of the so-called "million-dollar pole" at the north-east corner of that intersection. Moving the stop line is only a stop-gap measure that will not stand the test of time. Many drivers inadvertently miss the stop line or they simply creep up to the intersection to try to make a safe, and legal,

right hand turn from New Hampshire Ave. This not only is not safe for pedestrians, but also minimizes the positive impact of the new line.

Residential and retail development.

Like others, I am not opposed to development in Ashton. However, any development should be dictated by the long-standing intent of Montgomery County to maintain Ashton as a rural community. Ashton Marketplace already will increase residential and retail density in Ashton and, as later discussed, further burden already heavily traveled existing roads. Adding the proposed over 150 residential units at the south-east corner of the intersection of Route 108 and New Hampshire Ave. would further increase the residential density of Ashton so that it no longer is a rural community. In addition, once such an increase in density is achieved, the farms and larger properties in the areas surrounding Ashton will inevitably be open for similar development, further diminishing the rural nature of Ashton and surrounding areas.

I echo the points raised by Mr. Farquhar, Ms. Wheeler and others raising concerns about the Plan, including relating to the size and placement of buildings and the design elements proposed by the developer in the September hearing and incorporate them by reference in my comments.

I also strongly support concerns raised by Ms. Wheeler about the increase in traffic that the proposed development will cause. Rush hour and school day traffic already causes traffic build-up in Ashton. The development of the Ashton Marketplace will further exacerbate this problem. Rush hour and school day traffic also causes traffic back-ups between Ashton and Ednor Rd., below the Avenshire development in which I live, making it time-consuming and difficult to enter and exit our community. The increase in traffic will only make this worse. As well, although the Plan suggests, and county representatives have indicated, that there is no intent to expand existing roads, the increase in traffic caused by the development may very well require such action. Ultimately, these changes will cause Ashton and the surrounding area to become just yet another suburban community, which is counter to the long-standing intent that Ashton and the surrounding areas remain a rural community.

Further, drivers will begin to avoid Ashton when driving between Olney and Columbia by using Tucker Road. Tucker is a rural road not intended for heavy traffic. It is windy and extremely narrow. Nevertheless, bikers and pedestrian use it. Increasing the traffic along it would be extraordinarily dangerous, erode the road surface quickly, and also pose environmental hazards to the waterways along the road. Similarly, Ednor Road will be increasingly used as an alternate route, with the same problems.

Implementation Advisory Committee.

I am in full support of an Implementation Advisory Committee that includes members of the Ashton community.

I believe that the 1998 plan, proposing a much smaller development for the south-east corner of the intersection, would be much more in keeping with the intent to maintain Ashton as a rural community. Nevertheless, I support a larger development for that corner if it is developed with meaningful involvement by the Implementation Advisory Committee recommended in the Plan and supported by an overwhelming majority of persons testifying at the September hearing.

In addition, development of Ashton should be required to take reasonable suggestions by such a committee into account. Moreover, any final plan should include enforcement measures designed to ensure that any development, and developers, follow the design elements included in that plan.

I know that it is difficult to decide on a plan that balances all interests, but I believe that working to develop a plan that truly recognizes the rural nature of Ashton and results in a design that echoes that rural character will benefit Montgomery County in the long run without hindering strong development in the county.

Thank you for your consideration of my comments and your work to ensure that Ashton will be developed in keeping with its intended rural nature.

Sincerely,
Elizabeth G. Osterman
President, Avenshire Homeowners Association

Email

Input on the proposed dev...

Email

From Kevin O'Neil

To <MCP-Chair MCP-Chair>; MCP-Chair #; MCP-Chair@mncppc-mc.org

Cc

Subject Input on the proposed development in Ashton, MD

Date Sent **Date Received** 9/23/2020 10:00 PM

[EXTERNAL EMAIL] Exercise caution when opening attachments, clicking links, or responding.

Chair,

May this email serve as our voice of opposition to vehemently reject the 150 residences proposed for the southeast corner of New Hampshire Avenue and MD Route 108. This proposal goes against the rural Ashton master plan, which has been highly appealing and a reason for our relocation here in 2007. Any change to the master plan betrays the original intent and agreement between the county and residents.

The potential addition of more than 150 residences, 300 new residents, and 300 more vehicles creates an oversized demand and congestion on our small intersection. As of this writing, the intersection already does not handle the current volume well at morning and evening rush hour, with backups at the light in either direction. MD route 108 is also already at volume capacity with this east-west route experiencing travel delays at current vehicle usage patterns. The recent construction of a similar size townhouse community in Sandy Spring on Route 108 has added to congestion, as would the development under consideration for Ashton.

The proposed residences do not solve an existing problem for the Ashton community, yet would immediately introduce a new problem and exacerbate our existing rush hour congestion. Additionally, the proposed development would certainly decrease the livability of our community.

Dense growth in a rural master plan could not be considered smart growth by any measure.

Kevin and Anne O'Neil
313 Westlawn Drive
Ashton, MD 20861

Attachments

File Name	File Size (Bytes)	

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Email

Ashton Village Center Sect...

Email

From nadine.mort@gmail.com

To <MCP-Chair MCP-Chair>; MCP-Chair #; MCP-Chair@mncppc-mc.org

Cc

Subject Ashton Village Center Sector Plan

Date Sent **Date Received** 9/23/2020 9:34 PM

September 23, 2020

Please send an email confirmation that this letter was received by the Planning Board Chair and Staff.
Thank you, Nadine Mort

Dear Chair and Planning Staff,

Thank you again for your efforts on the Ashton Village Center Sector Plan. I enjoyed taking part in the September 17, 2020, virtual meeting as well as the community workshops and gatherings over this past year.

While I have sincere respect for the members of the Planning staff I feel I must mention the following incident as it has been cited by a number of other participants. Prior to the beginning of the meeting, the video captured several members of the planning staff greeting their former colleague Francoise Carrier. It was clearly a warm interchange among friends. Several staff members thanked Ms. Carrier for her role as their former chair and boss for facilitating the building of their new Park and Planning headquarters. I am aware that Ms. Carrier served on the Planning board with dignity and deserves this heartfelt reception, but perhaps at another time in another setting. I, as well as others, felt extremely uncomfortable and somewhat disconcerted observing this exchange. After all, I was preparing to present opposing views to Ms. Carriers and this conversation made me feel that somehow Ms. Carrier's testimony might hold more weight than mine or anyone else with differing views.

This incident highlights the need for the Asthon Village Center Sector plan to have a Citizens Advisory Committee. Builders, architects, and their representatives such as Ms. Carrier frequent the Planning Board on a regular basis as part of their jobs providing them the opportunity to establish face-to-face contact and open lines of communication with staff. It only seems fair that the residents of Ashton have the same opportunity. The planning staff specifically endorsed the need for such a community participation vehicle. I heard many voices supporting a Citizens Advisory Committee at all the community meetings including on September 17th.

Of further concern was Ms. Carrier's frequent use of the word "viable" in reference to the developers need for increased sizes in not one but all areas of the proposed development. Perhaps it was an attempt to make these over-the-top requests seem reasonable or appropriate.

For example:

The developer expressed a "need" to build commercial properties as well as 150+ three and four-story townhouses ignoring the rural character of Ashton, this densely trafficked intersection and without regard for the adjacent environmentally fragile wetlands.

The developer requested a higher density of CRN 0.75 again pushing for an extreme while using the term "viable". A CRN 0.75 suggests a suburban-style development rather than a rural village crossroads with green spaces for community gatherings.

The current zoning for building heights is 35 feet. The developer is requesting heights of 45 feet. Again, reflecting towering suburban-style townhouses with cookie-cutter block buildings rather than design and height variations as he constructed in Thomas Village.

Also, the Planning staffs proposed plan has limits on the lengths of buildings; 80 feet along main roads, 120 feet for buildings elsewhere on site. The developer is ignoring the staff as well as the community's suggestions. He is proposing to increase the limits on the lengths of buildings to 90 feet for residential along the main road, 120 feet for mixed-use along the main road, and 150 feet for buildings elsewhere on site. This maximizes the developer's profits while sacrificing Ashton's rural character.

Lastly, I must again reinforce that implementing a Community Advisory Committee would allow multiple key stakeholder groups to weigh in on this and future building projects allowing the community to see plans before they are implemented. Sadly, as stated by Ms. Carrier, the developer disagrees. Clearly he believes it his to his benefit to limit contact with the community, which has been his practice with past projects.

Again, thank you to the Planning staff for their outstanding and creative efforts. It has been a pleasure to witness the Ashton Village Center Sector Plan staff and the Ashton community join together in good faith for over a year to design a welcoming and environmentally sound rural village crossroads. I believe everyone who has participated looks forward to welcoming and sharing the natural beauty of Ashton with new neighbors and friends.

Sincerely,
Nadine Mort

Nadine Mort
320 Ashton Road
Ashton, MD 20861

"She stood in the storm, and when the wind did not blow her away, she adjusted her sails" Elizabeth Edwards

Attachments

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From: Anne Marie Steppling
To: MCP-Chair
Cc: Pratt, Jamey
Subject: Ashton Village Center Sector Plan
Date: Thursday, September 24, 2020 11:07:20 PM

Good Evening,

Thank you for hosting the public hearing for the Ashton Village Sector last week. I am in support of the advisory committee to ensure that the developer continues with the community to maintain the historic rural feel of Ashton. Even if there is only one developer, there is only one Ashton, and I believe the community should work together to reach a shared goal.

During the hearing I was alarmed to see the TownHomes being built on Porter Road. After attending a meeting at the Sandy Spring Museum in October of 2019 I was confident that the builder would maintain the consistency of other neighborhoods as shown in the previous development plans and presentations (dormers, gables, bay windows, covered stoops/porches). Now I am hearing the number of up to 150 homes/dwelling units, a lack of infrastructure support, and concerns about green space.

I am a current resident of Spring Lawn Farm and I chose to move to the Ashton area after growing up in White Oak, moving to Gaithersbugh and teaching in Rockville. Ashton is far enough away from large crowds, and shopping centers, but close enough to get into Baltimore and DC in under an hour. I chose Ashton because while I knew that I could not afford a large amount of property in MoCo this area afforded me access to agriculture, history, and county parks and trails.

Montgomery County is known for its smart growth communities that bring a small town community feel to the Kentlands as well as downtown Silver Spring. I think an advisory committee would be a great support as Ashton Market is developed.

Sincerely,
Anne Marie Steppling

--
Anne Marie Steppling

Email

Ashton Village Plan

Email

From Cassandra Heagy

To <MCP-Chair MCP-Chair>; MCP-Chair #; MCP-Chair@mncppc-mc.org

Cc

Subject Ashton Village Plan

Date Sent **Date Received** 9/24/2020 8:41 AM

[EXTERNAL EMAIL] Exercise caution when opening attachments, clicking links, or responding.

To whom it may concern:
I am writing in regards to the Ashton Village Center Sector Plan. I live in the Spring Lawn Farm neighborhood, which is just south of the intersection of New Hampshire Avenue and Route 108, and less than .1 of a mile from the boundary of the proposed Ashton Village Center site. My family moved to Ashton in 2008, seeking a community that had a rural, country feel, while still being adjacent to the greater Washtington-Baltimore area. We have watched our community gradually grow in the last 12 years, and need to express our thoughts on the proposed Ashton Village Center Sector Plan.

The changes proposed at the September 17, 2020, meeting for the Ashton Village Center Sector Plan are of great concern, as they are contrary to the Ashton Sandy Spring Master Plan. Representatives of the Montgomery County Planning Department have recommended that zoning at the Ashton crossroads be changed to permit an increase in the amount of building allowed. Under the proposal, more than 150 dwelling units could be constructed on the Southeast Corner (the corner where the Ashton branch of the Sandy Spring Bank is located). A representative of the developer asked for even more latitude to build more apartments and commercial space, and asked that the height limit be set at a level that would permit five-story buildings at the site. This would grant the developer the flexibility to build as many as 240 new homes.

While I do not oppose development of the Ashton Village Center, **I do oppose the size of the project as proposed.** The Ashton Sandy Spring Master Plan and the Ashton Village Center Sector Plan both state they will maintain Ashton's rural character. The AVC plan, as proposed, does not do this. Current zoning for the Ashton Village Center property allows for a maximum of about 23 homes; please adhere to this number. Our community cannot absorb the added traffic that a development of this size would create. Currently, we have frequent back-ups on New Hampshire Avenue northbound, making it difficult to both turn left out of my neighborhood. Additionally, the light to turn west onto Route 108 from New Hampshire Avenue is frequently backed up, taking multiple light cycles to make the turn. Beyond these concerns, even if improvements are made to the roadways, the proposed size of this development would still be contrary to the rural nature of Ashton.

More moderate development than what was proposed is necessary, with focus on making Ashton safer for the community, while still protecting our rural atmosphere.This includes adding sidewalks and side paths where they are missing, and crosswalks and pedestrian signals across all parts of the intersection of Route 108 and New Hampshire. While we have a Post Office, bank, and other stores within .5 miles of my home, there is not a sidewalk or crosswalks to safely allow my family pedestrian access to these community resources.

Thank you for your consideration on this matter. We appreciate all the efforts made by the County for this project, and hope that the concerns expressed by the community are taken into consideration.

Thank you,

Cassandra Heagy

121 Crystal Spring Dr
Ashton, MD 20861

Attachments

File Name	File Size (Bytes)	

There are no Attachments to show in this view. To get started, create one or more Attachments.

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Email

Ashton Crossroads

Email

From chazglen@gmail.com

To <MCP-Chair MCP-Chair>; MCP-Chair #; MCP-Chair@mncppc-mc.org

Cc

Subject Ashton Crossroads

Date Sent **Date Received** 9/24/2020 4:53 PM

[EXTERNAL EMAIL] Exercise caution when opening attachments, clicking links, or responding.

Dear Mr. Anderson...
I will keep this brief :: 1. Because I'm sure you've heard all the arguments pro and con over the issue of OVERDEVELOPING the SE quadrant multiple times; and 2. I'm typing this on an iPhone and I have fat thumbs.

We have fought other developments in our area and Nichols just gets what he wants. Are we discouraged? Yes and no. A bit discouraged in the process, but as residents with a vision, we will NEVER stop fighting for sensible, attractive development.

Notwithstanding the accolades improperly showered on Francoise at the beginning of the Zoom meeting by members of the Board, we hope and believe that you will see the preposterous expansion of the Planning Staff's recommendations she presented for what it was :: a tactic. (I worked for a Union for 35 years).

More than that, the overwhelming majority of the community see that 159 dwelling units for this FAR eastern part of the county (an area whose public transportation is sparse to none at most hours of the day) is BAD PLANNING.

If Metro expands, it will be along Georgia Ave. NOT New Hampshire Ave. That should be the major focus to fulfill the "dream" of Thrive 2050.

Finally... many took GREAT exception to the comment of "NIMBY" by one of the call-ins. I mention this purposely after my previous observation concerning proper and sensible planning. We actually WANT a more diverse population, but from Nichols' previous building projects, we don't find homes that cost well over half a million dollars to be establishing a proper "back yard" to attract THE VERY PEOPLE the community wants to see.

1. Put a sensible cap on dwelling units. 159 is not sensible.

2. Put a height limit of 45 ft. for the ONE SINGLE BUILDING (the anchor building of the site) and a cap of 35 ft for the rest of the site.

Thank you,

Charles Glendinning
103 Country View Ct.
Ashton, MD. 20861
Sent from my iPhone

Attachments

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There are no Attachments to show in this view. To get started, create one or more Attachments.

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Email

Ashton Village Center Sect...

Email

From Daniel Bachenheimer

To <MCP-Chair MCP-Chair>; MCP-Chair #; MCP-Chair@mncppc-mc.org

Cc

Subject Ashton Village Center Sector Plan – July 2020

Date Sent **Date Received** 9/24/2020 7:36 PM

[EXTERNAL EMAIL] Exercise caution when opening attachments, clicking links, or responding.

Hello,

After reviewing the Ashton Village Center Sector Plan, dated July 2020, I would like say that I feel the rural nature of Ashton Village will be lost. There are simply too many residences allowed which would both contribute to the existing traffic issues and undermine Ashton Village's rural feel.

-Daniel Bachenheimer
1700 Gamewell Road
Silver Spring, MD 20905

Attachments

File Name	File Size (Bytes)	

There are no Attachments to show in this view. To get started, create one or more Attachments.

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Email

Ashton Village Center Sect...

Email

From donna_selden@verizon.net

To <MCP-Chair MCP-Chair>; MCP-Chair #; MCP-Chair@mncppc-mc.org

Cc

Subject Ashton Village Center Sector Plan

Date Sent **Date Received** 9/24/2020 11:18 PM

[EXTERNAL EMAIL] Exercise caution when opening attachments, clicking links, or responding.

Chairman Anderson,

We are strongly opposed to massive building on the southeast corner of NH Avenue and Rt108 in Ashton, and wish to keep the rural historic feel of our community. The idea that one hundred or more living units could be considered at this location is unimaginable!

Instead we would support development that includes:
Buildings under 35ft, with active fronts, set back from the street
A pedestrian friendly layout with side walks and green space
Gathering spaces for the community, with benches and possibly a bandstand
Architectural details that blend in with the surrounding area, including porches, dormers and traditional materials/siding
A bare minimum of light pollution, using downward pointing lights and no bright or neon signs
No structured parking
A village style, with no long buildings lining NH or Rt108
Ashton has a special history that should be respected, and reflected in sector and master plans that contain strong, enforceable language and guidelines.

Your consideration and support for these ideals is much appreciated,

Donna Selden
Chuck Selden
1805 Gamewell Rd
Silver Spring, MD. 20905

Attachments

File Name	File Size (Bytes)	
0 - 0 of 0 (0 selected)		Page 1

Email

Ashton Village Center plans

Email

From John and Elaine Gillen

To <MCP-Chair MCP-Chair>; MCP-Chair #; MCP-Chair@mncppc-mc.org

Cc

Subject Ashton Village Center plans

Date Sent **Date Received** 9/24/2020 10:23 AM

My husband and I have lived in Ashton for 27 years. I previously wrote to you regarding our concerns with the proposed Ashton Village Center plans - traffic, increased residency density, building sizes, and the loss of the rural feel of this area. I watched the planning committee meeting held last week and after listening to all the speakers who presented their concerns and suggestions, I would like to say I still have all of my concerns. I would like to keep the Ashton area as rural as possible and echo the idea that a Community Advisor Committee be utilized to ensure the citizens of Ashton have a say in the development. We don't want to have another issue like the one with the townhomes that will be built on the Ashton Marketplace site. We were very saddened to see the final designs of the townhouses for Ashton Market- in both size and style of the townhomes. Those townhomes do not have a rural appeal to them. Our community was misled in the initial plans (pictures of what the townhomes proposed are very different from what is going to be built) for that development. The county allowed for commercialism/builders profit to override the rural feel of the community?? Given that, how can our community believe any plans set forth by the Planning Board? Therefore, I completely agree with the need for a Community Advisory Committee. I believe that a Community Advisory Committee would open the communication lines between the planning board and the Committee to discuss these items and agree upon the best path forward. It is important to have a Community Advisory Committee who does have the best intentions for the development of our community in mind.

Sincerely,
Elaine Gillen

Attachments

File Name	File Size (Bytes)	

There are no Attachments to show in this view. To get started, create one or more Attachments.

From: Elizabeth Comisarow Taylor
To: MCP-Chair; Pratt, Jamey
Subject: Ashton Village Sector Plan comments
Date: Thursday, September 24, 2020 7:57:24 AM

Dear MNCPPC Colleagues,

I live with my husband in an older home, just north of the Ashton crossroads of Maryland Routes 108 & 650. We each grew up in Montgomery County, and I have lived and worked in the county much of my life. I understand the anticipated future growth of the county, but strongly believe that Ashton, as a rural community, is not a logical location for a large number of additional homes clustered around an already overly crowded intersection, with no effective public transportation system for more than several miles.

When I lived in Silver Spring, I happily and daily used the public transportation, and did not require a car for work or shopping. Over the years, I have bragged about the Ride-ON services in this county that transverse the higher populated areas of our county. Places like much of downtown Silver Spring, such as where you each work at the Commission, are appropriate for additional homes with public access to all other amenities one might require. Wheaton, Rockville, Bethesda, and other routes along the subway line, with multiple bus routes lend themselves to higher development without the need for an automobile.

From the crossroads in Ashton the closest grocery store is over 3 miles away in either Cloverly or Olney, MD. Sidewalks are incomplete, where any exist at all, along the extremely high traffic roads of either MD Rt. 108 or 650. One must travel by car to Olney or Cloverly, (or Clarksville, MD), for libraries, and most shopping needs, restaurants, medical services aside from one convenience store, three restaurants and the Post Office in the eight store front Ashton Village Center on the northwest corner of the cross roads— a small shopping plaza at best.

We have attended all of the various planning meetings you've held regarding the development of the Ashton area, which gave us hope that someone was listening to the community needs and desires to preserve the rural character of this area. Based on his past projects, we have concerns that the current developer of the southeast quadrant will both over build the property if allowed to in the proposed zoning, *and* over size the buildings well beyond the rural character of this area. There is so much history in this area, which was one of the aspects that influenced our choice to move into our older home— to blend with the community already established, not be part of the ever increasing traffic problem, or part of the development that was out of character--that will only worsen with both of the new dense developments on the south side of the Ashton intersection.

I find it hard to believe that anyone can possibly think Ashton is the place to develop a large community with no concern as to how residents will access the needs of daily living, except by long, congested rides in a required car. Please remember that the single sporadic Metro Bus line is slated to soon be discontinued completely.

I am concerned that if the zoning proposed in your current sector plan draft for the southeast crossroads quadrant is approved, the ensuing development and inevitable traffic increase will destroy the rural character of our historic town. If the zoning which allows 150 densely packed new homes unfortunately remains your recommendation, at least please, please ensure that the proposed Implementation Advisory Committee remains strongly in place, as you suggest, to ensure that design criteria for our area are adhered to.

It is imperative that the development of that property be more in accordance with the rural character of the area in order to continue the preservation of the long, living history so important to rural Montgomery County which is being rapidly over developed daily. Some areas in Montgomery County have found ways to reflect the heritage of the area in which they were developed. Please assure any development on Ashton's southeast corner reflect the rich and rural history of this part of our county, that would cause those that come to live here, or merely pass through, to pause and question what Ashton is all about— a town obviously long steeped in history since the early 1700's local development in this area of Montgomery County, Maryland.

Thank you for any, and all, considerations.

Sincerely,

Elizabeth Comisarow Taylor
19050 New Hampshire Ave
Brinklow, MD 20862

Email

Ashton Village center sect...

Email

From betsyhosler@gmail.com

To <MCP-Chair MCP-Chair>; MCP-Chair #; MCP-Chair@mncppc-mc.org

Cc

Subject Ashton Village center sector plan

Date Sent **Date Received** 9/24/2020 7:46 PM

[EXTERNAL EMAIL] Exercise caution when opening attachments, clicking links, or responding.

Subject: Ashton Village center sector plan

Hello - I live near Ashton Maryland. I believe the Ashton Village center plan will create too much density around 108 and 650. The roads there are already heavily used. And Ashton is a rural community. The development plan is inconsistent with that rural nature.
Thank you,
Elizabeth Gregory-Hosler
1621 Gamewell Road
Silver Spring, MD

Sent from my iPhone

Attachments

File Name	File Size (Bytes)	

There are no Attachments to show in this view. To get started, create one or more Attachments.

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From:	elizabeth thornton
To:	MCP-Chair
Cc:	Pratt, Jamey; Kevin Kris Gannon; Steve Faehner; dgpopham@yahoo.com; elynch91@gmail.com; Duke, Roberto
Subject:	Ashton Village Center Sector Plan Public Hearing
Date:	Thursday, September 24, 2020 6:41:53 PM

[EXTERNAL EMAIL] Exercise caution when opening attachments, clicking links, or responding.

Dear Planning Board members,
I know this is the last moment, as I know that there are many other people who share my concerns but will never get around to sending something to you, (only be gravely disappointed when the building starts). The planning staff did a great job, i thought, of seeking input from the community and presenting some good ideas for development of the southeast corner of the intersection of 108 and New Hampshire Ave. I live about a mile north of there on a farm and have been here for more than 40 years. The development of the whole area has been enormous in that time and seems to be accelerating. The recommendations offered at the hearing last week are much too dense and tall to retain a rural character and are worrisome since they don't at all reflect the thoughtful, care full ideas of the majority of community input. 150 or more dwellings would be FAR TOO MANY for such a small area in an already congested intersection. In these pandemic times, things look calmer, but when school is once again in session, people return to work, and the townhouses and businesses on Porter Road are inhabited things will be back to a very busy normal with regular traffic back-ups. We don't have much public transportation in the area and are unlikely to get more anytime soon. We have not yet seen the worst of the economic fallout of the pandemic, and county and state coffers will be low for some time to come. All the things most important to the community that would mitigate some of the transportation problems are in part reliant on other entities like state highway, and are unlikely to happen in the foreseeable future because of lack of revenue. The highly desired safe, walkable, bikeable community- friendly town center, with greenspace and services people need and want are not represented in the current plan.

We have regularly been misled and disappointed by developers who present one thing and build another, and who make significant changes for the worse and apply for permission after the fact. Who don't seem to listen or be willing to compromise. Thomas Village, Ashton Marketplace (from what we can tell from the Ryan website), and the CVS are all recent examples. When we went on the bus tour to see some examples of what could be built we saw some charming architecture, what good plantings can do for an area, and fantastic public/private collaboration to create parks, education and recreation for residents. All of those examples, however, were in urban/dense suburban neighborhoods. We have an historic community with a rural village center designation. We would like to maintain that. There are already three townhouse developments in the immediate area, a fourth under construction and a fifth just down the road in Sandy Spring. That seems like enough for a rural area. How about some green space and businesses with housing above, single family and duplexes? No, they wouldn't bring in as much profit or taxes, but is that the only purpose of land use in our county? Make it dense where people can use Metro or the bus services. We don't feel heard or respected and find the Master Plan only a dream — why do we spend so much time and resources creating it, only to ignore it when the building happens. It would be funny if it weren't so sad to see a proposal that designate the bench on the corner of the CVS a green space. I thought that Ms. Carrier's testimony was particularly far from anything that considered community input.

I very much support strong language in the zoning to help prevent such disappointments. I strongly support the advisory committee creation to help maintain some voice in the process as it goes along.

Yours sincerely,
elizabeth thornton

From:	James Meehan
To:	MCP-Chair
Cc:	keepashtonrural@gmail.com; Pratt, Jamey
Subject:	9/17/2020 Presentations...
Date:	Friday, September 25, 2020 9:15:47 AM

After listening to the September 17th testimony regarding future Ashton development four items/concerns continue to alarm me and should alarm you: 1... "Walkability" will not be possible without major improvements to that 108/New Hampshire intersection, even with designated crosswalks unless there are lighted stop/go pedestrian signals &/or skywalks over both 108 & NH Ave; with the former creating even more traffic congestion. The Sherwood HS students will continue to cross where/when convenient! 2...The State DOT/SHA was on record back in 2008 that NO development could take place at that Sandy Spring Bank site without those major road improvements. Rt 108 continues to be among the most dangerous roads in Maryland! Why has this not been addressed? 3... After 2+ years of Planning Board meeting, presentations, testimony, etc...the developer is still looking for "flexibility"? Believe he used flexibility when not adhering to the height requirements @ Thomas Village! The Planning Board cannot open the door for this developer to create his own guidelines while construction is underway. 4... It is not at all surprising that this developer as no interest in a Advisory Committee as it would hinder him from cutting corners, getting forgiveness before permission, compiling with standards/policies/guidelines and being held accountable.

I am not against development to that SE site, as I would very much like to see a upscale restaurant, another bank, pizza carryout, barber shop, some "missing middle housing", a classy sports bar/tavern/pub (talk about a community gathering spot), and housing fitting our rural setting. But not by creating a more congested and unsafe traffic situation. What with my residence on Westlawn Dr, not having me to cross 108 or NH Ave, I have the "walkability" three other quadrants of Ashton lack, even without a sidewalk along my side of NH Ave.

Am sure you all are aware that making a left north on to NH & south on to NH from 108 (without a turn signal) is already a dangerous situation. With more entrances/exits due to present development on to Rt108, I again purpose a delay to future Ashton projects until impact of the Porter Rd/Market Place project can be evaluated with respect to safety & traffic in the "downtown" Ashton area. You/we simply cannot have plans that create traffic back ups to Mink Hollow Rd/Ednor/Sherwood Elem/Brinklow...

Jim Meehan
327 Westlawn Dr
Ashton

301-570-9102h
301-356-7576c

Email

Ashton Village Center Hear...

Email

From J Hart

To <MCP-Chair MCP-Chair>; MCP-Chair #; MCP-Chair@mncppc-mc.org

Cc

Subject Ashton Village Center Hearing September 17, 2020

Date Sent **Date Received** 9/24/2020 2:25 PM

mcp-chair@mncppc-mc.org

Dear Mr. Chairman, fellow Board Members, and Staff:

I've lived in the Ashton Sandy Spring Community for 29 years. I've served as President of the Ashton-Sandy Spring Civic Association and along with a number of others in the Ashton Community, was actively involved in shaping the 1998 Ashton-Sandy Spring Master Plan. That endeavor took a few years, it was a challenge made achievable by the thoughtful commitment of the MNCPP, their staff, developers, associations, and individual residents. After engaging the Ashton-Sandy Spring community, and listening to each other's views through Charets and advisory groups, and MNCPP hearings, the MNCPP was able to draft a plan that incorporated many of the key elements that both residents and developers had desired. There was broad agreement between the principals of the '98 Plan. Yet, maybe three years after its adoption, a developer pops up, thumbed his nose at the the '98 Plan, the MNCPP, County Council, and the residents of Ashton and Sandy Spring and built an office building in middle of Ashton that ignored the height limitations in the '98 Plan, he simply choose to do what he wanted. Now he's back and he likes things big. Like real big. And loud. What's the saying? Fool me once…

In my eyes, the disregard for the '98 Plan in 2001, as it relates to this discussion is quite significant. It shows the masterplan has no teeth. After all that work to come to a consensus and develop a plan intended to protect the "rural" character of the planning area entryway into Ashton. Yet what happens? The very first guy that builds in the Ashton village center under the new Masterplan just ignores it. Does this matter? Based on the current design renderings, building and zoning recommendations, and developer's requests, the answer can't be anything but, "you're damn right it does." Even more than it did in 1998.

After a tremendous amount of time and effort, the architects of '98 Plan found agreement, concluding that preserving the rural nature of the roads, and maintaining the community's lower skylines, or "viewsheds," were a critical component for protecting the openness that both defines and provides the "rural" character of Ashton. The gift of the laid back easy-going-openness of the viewshed in the Ashton Village Center exists only because of its lower rooflines. Eliminating, even reducing these viewsheds threatens any sense of "openness" associated with "rural." We are talking about the epicenter of Ashton, its openness is it's uniqueness, it's what sets us apart from the Olneys' and Clarksvilles'. Yet, all this is now imperiled by an aggressive proposal that ignores the guiding principles in the '98 Plan as well as the negotiated density increases achieved in 2008. To be clear, the changes we are being asked to swallow in this instance, are not about providing flexibility around the masterplan to a developer, this is a complete rewrite of the Masterplan and its vision for the village center. The proposed zoning changes are excessive, an insensitive slap in the face to the residents of Ashton and all those who faithfully and honorably authored and shaped the 1998 Masterplan, and the 2008 "negotiated accords."

That neither the '98 Plan, nor the zoning changes renegotiated in 2008, are good enough for this developer, is insulting and yet, it gets worse. He wants even more than additional increases in density, he also wants to make them higher and longer, than would

otherwise be allowed. Having seen the artist renderings of what he hopes to build in the Ashton Village Center I am horrified. These units are overwhelming monolithic monstrosities that create higher skylines, a significant reduction of the entryway's viewshed to east and to the north, and for sure will darken the intersection of our town center. In sum, any significant increase in density will be a devastating blow to the rural ubiquity envisioned by the 1998 Masterplan.

An easy prediction to make, should the developer be successful and get his increases in density, height and length, together with the support of the County Council and the MNCPP, they will have succeeded only by ignoring the values of the '98 Plan, effectively destroying any reason to talk about the concepts of "rural" having a place in our planning area in the future - and that masterplan conversation, happens to be right around the corner. So, how do we have that conversation respectfully if the masterplan never really means anything?

The 2015 public hearing draft for the Ashton Village Center says that there are adequate facilities and infrastructure to accommodate the density increases sought by the developer, but their saying so, doesn't mean it's entirely true. If you live close to this intersection, you know it isn't true. It's not true unless all the items included in the proposal's wishlist, which the MNCPP cannot fully guarantee, come to fruition. Even then, it still might not be true. While necessary, it is also not true, that moving a telephone pole will achieve any "true" transportation tranquility. It is certainly not true, without a major reconstruct of the intersection and further widening of the two crossroads entering the Ashton village center. Of course, should that happen, that too further erodes any notion of our being rural or unique. Unless that is the actual goal. For this reason alone, densities should not be increased.

This plan will have a detrimental impact on the quality of life in Ashton with the most obvious being significantly increased congestion during peak traffic times and will make the intersection of Rt 108 and New Hampshire Ave a dangerous logistical nightmare for vehicles and pedestrians. Development or no, I strongly support creating a pedestrian friendly environment and encourage doing what needs to be done to make Ashton and Sandy Spring safe by completing the long overdue sidewalks in the community and installing adequate crosswalks where needed, including at the intersection of Rt. 108 and New Hampshire Ave.

I embrace the hearing comments made by several of Ashton's community members who testified at the September 17th hearing, Doug Farquhar, Kathleen Wheeler, Amy Medd, Paula and Charlie Glendinning, and Nadine Mort.

I want to underscore the strong need for implementation of the Advisory Committee in the draft plan. As a small "rural" community with a tremendous amount of history we want to, and should continue to be involved in the processes that result in changes to master plans altering our neighborhoods, and meeting places.

I couldn't disagree more with comments made by Jeff Schwartz who doesn't like that Ashton and Sandy Spring have any value outside of being an economic engine for more development. Nor his finger pointing at his neighbors who have been actively engaged for years, some for decades, in shaping the future of Ashton and Sandy Spring only to be called NIMBY's. The idea of creating a 10 acre footprint of nonpoint-source pollution run-off with mitigation would be beneficial for the Hawlings Watershed tells me all I need to know about his own values.

I want to clarify that Dan Snyder's comments supporting the proposed plan in its current form as does his neighbors, may reflect some of his neighbors but it's not an accurate reflection of his neighborhood. I do know that I do not feel as he does, and I know a number other of his neighbors do not feel that way either.

I encourage the MNCPP to require that those of us who provide testimony in the future, either in writing or by verbal declaration at the point of testifying, declare whether they are an investor, or have any financial or other vested interest in the development or proposed plans that they are testifying on. It would go a long way toward providing integrity and transparency to the process and avoid ethical lapses in those instances where someone might be both a resident and an investor.

Yes, this is a difficult time in the middle of a pandemic, but in this current age of zoom-meetings, I am asking that we be careful to not undermine the integrity of the planning processes when it comes to citizen participation. The value of direct human interaction in instances such as these cannot be understated nor taken for granted. These opportunities are a personal reflection of the communities we live in being conveyed to decision-makers who may be less familiar with the people, needs, and challenges facing these planning areas. Eye-to-eye contact, and other interpersonal communication skills are an essential element for protecting our democracy and ensuring that we have open transparency in government.

In closing, when I was fortunate enough to testify before the County Council on the '98 Plan, I characterized our community in a story about a young boy who was intrigued with a bright shiny silver dollar he received for his birthday. He eagerly and proudly showed it off to all his friends who too were intrigued, and all sought to somehow have it for themselves. Eventually, in a moment of feeble mindedness he traded his bright shiny silver dollar for a handful of shiny pennies. I heard some of that same sentiment echoed by my community in the hearing testimony last week. On behalf of those in my community please do not trade away our silver dollar for a handful of pennies.

Sincerely,

Joe Hart
Ashton, MD

Email

Olney Resident - Opposed ...

Email

From Justin Fishbein

To <MCP-Chair MCP-Chair>; MCP-Chair #; MCP-Chair@mncppc-mc.org

Cc

Subject Olney Resident - Opposed - to Proposed Ashton Redevelopment plans

Date Sent **Date Received** 9/24/2020 11:44 PM

Dear MNCPPC,

As a resident of Olney, Maryland I wish to express my opposition to the proposed redevelopments taking place in Ashton, Maryland along Route 108 - in Sandy Spring and Ashton, Maryland.

I am familiar with this area, my father lived in White Oak, graduated from Springbrook. I lived in Olney, and am a graduate of Sherwood High School. I've traveled through Ashton many times, I am familiar with the character of the towns of Sandy Spring and Ashton, and I am perfectly at ease with the character of the town as it is currently.

I have looked at your plans and I have seen the big hole in the earth where the former Sole D'Italia restaurant once stood. You've certainly allowed your developer friends create quite a huge mess in such a tiny little area. I for one am tired of driving by it and seeing what a disaster you have allowed them to make it into.

I think it is travesty that you are going to permit these people to build thousands upon thousands of new commercial space along a choked rural roadway that many people in Olney and Sandy Spring rely upon to get to Baltimore, Columbia, or other various points where JOBS can be found to the East of here.

This new commercial development is simply a way to line your developer pals pockets without regard to the rural nature of the community, or the dependence upon this roadway (MD 108) to reach points East, without worrying about congestive commercial traffic struggling how to enter and exit a commercial space already packed in with residential and rural community home developments.

You should all be ashamed of yourselves - Sell outs!

Justin Fishbein

Email

Ashton Village Center Sect...

Email

From mail4thewheelers@verizon.net

To <MCP-Chair MCP-Chair>; MCP-Chair #; MCP-Chair@mncppc-mc.org

Cc dgpopham@yahoo.com; Eric Lynch; Jamey Pratt; jamey.pratt@montgomeryplanning.org; kw.gannon@verizon.net; Roberto Duke; sfaehner@awf.com

Subject Ashton Village Center Sector Plan Public Hearing

Date Sent **Date Received** 9/24/2020 3:34 PM

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on behalf of the Spring Lawn Farm Homeowners Association at the Public Hearing for the Ashton Village Center Sector Plan held on September 17, 2010. I am submitting additional comments in response to testimony that was presented at the hearing.

As stated in my testimony, our homeowners' association is concerned about the level of development that would be allowed by the proposed zoning changes that are currently included in the draft plan for the development on the southeast corner of the intersection of New Hampshire Avenue (MD Route 650) and MD Route 108. Development on this corner has been the subject of previous master plans and an approved development plan in 2008.

During consideration of the 1998 Sandy Spring Ashton Master Plan, members of the community were clear about their concern about what would happen at that intersection. As it pertains to the southeast corner, the 1998 Plan stated: "Limit residential development in the southeast quadrant to single-family detached homes only, rather than townhouses. The existing zoning should be confirmed." No one envisioned that today we would be discussing the level of density that is proposed for that corner. Instead what was envisioned both then and now is some moderate office and retail, with a small amount of transitional housing. In other words, the plan that was approved in 2008 and strongly supported by the community. This is still an appropriate plan for this site.

However, as a compromise, we support the proposal laid out in Douglas Farquhar's testimony on behalf of the Sandy Spring Ashton Rural Preservation Consortium. This would achieve a better transition from the more dense development at the intersection and center of the village to the less dense single family homes at the edges of the property. These parcels have separate ownership and can be zoned differently than the parcels currently owned by the bank. This pattern of development conforms to the elements of good town planning and would address some of the concerns raised by the community. Even this compromise goes well beyond what most in the community envision for Ashton.

We also do not support increasing the height limits on the southeast corner to 45 feet as proposed by Ms. Carrier in her testimony. Rather, we support maintaining them at the 35 foot level, consistent with the height levels on the other corners of the intersection. The additional height and the increase in the number of units proposed by the change in zoning is inconsistent with the scale and scope of existing built development in Ashton and that of a rural village.

What was proposed by the developer and rejected in 2008 and appears to being proposed again by the developer is a long stretch of unbroken buildings along New Hampshire Avenue and Route 108. We urge the Planning Board to not increase the proposed length of the mixed used buildings as proposed in Ms. Carrier's testimony.

Ms. Carrier also testified against the need for an implementation advisory committee. We continue to support this provision as an important element in achieving the provisions of this Plan. While the argument has been made that there is no need for such a committee because there is only one developer, we believe that the provisions of the Plan are broader and the community would benefit greatly from the communication that would be provided by such a committee. The Ashton area is not well served by media sources and to date, the developer has not been forthcoming on plans for his other developments in Sandy Spring and Ashton. This leads to confusion and suspicion which could be avoided with a formal channel of communication.

But, as I previously testified, there are other areas of Plan implementation that would also benefit from the implementation advisory committee. These include the intersection improvements, pedestrian crosswalks and signaling, sidewalks and multi-use paths, signage, and other environmental and trail provisions.

The objective for the village center as stated in the 1998 Plan was: "Maintain the existing scale of Ashton village center and encourage improvements to its character." Based on the testimony at the September 17 hearing and the community response to the draft Ashton Village Center Sector Plan, this is still very much the desire of the community.

We agree with the testimony supporting good design elements for whatever development occurs. However, we do not agree that the level of development proposed or an increase above that level or allowing "greater flexibility" in implementing design criteria will necessarily result in a more "viable and vibrant" village center. Ashton currently enjoys a viable commercial area with the Ashton Village shopping center. Most of the shops and restaurants have been there for a number of years. On the other hand, the recently built CVS does not have a significant level of customers. Some of us were perplexed by the request for additional commercial zoning when the argument for more residential zoning was the reduction in demand for commercial space.

There appears to be a notion that Ashton somehow needs to be "fixed" and that adding additional residential and commercial development will somehow make it "better." Most of us moved here because we liked it the way it is—small. The potential number of units that could be built under the proposed zoning changes is about three times that of any of Ashton's other neighborhoods, with the exception of Hampshire Greens which was previously part of Cloverly.

Members of our HOA were active in the process for the 1998 Plan, the plan that was approved for the southeast corner in 2008, and have been actively involved in the current Ashton Village Center Sector Plan. Because we have been actively engaged in each of these efforts, many of the members of the Spring Lawn Farm HOA feel that the agreements and compromises that we have made at each of the 1998 Plan and the 2008 approved southeast corner plan have not been honored.

Without any development on that corner, we have seen traffic increase because of development approved elsewhere. Mass transit is unlikely to be enhanced to support additional development in

Ashton any time in the near future. Therefore, any development—residential or commercial—is likely to increase the already heavily congested roadways. The level of traffic we see now is not usually associated with rural villages and detracts from the quality of life of current and any future residents.

We ask that you consider carefully the views expressed by the community and incorporate them into the final draft.

Kathleen Wheeler
President, Spring Lawn Farm HOA

Kathleen

Attachments

File Name	File Size (Bytes)	

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Email

Ashton Village Sector Plan

Email

From Kristine Gannon

To <MCP-Chair MCP-Chair>; MCP-Chair #; MCP-Chair@mncppc-mc.org

Cc

Subject Ashton Village Sector Plan

Date Sent **Date Received** 9/24/2020 3:32 PM

[EXTERNAL EMAIL] Exercise caution when opening attachments, clicking links, or responding.

As residents of Springlawn Farm HOA, for over thirty years, we stand with our community to protest the overdevelopment of Ashton.
We oppose your plan that seems to ignore:
Stricter Height Limits
Traffic increase
Less density overall.

We feel our voices have gone unheard.
Kristine and Kevin Gannon

Sent from my iPhone

Attachments

File Name	File Size (Bytes)	

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Email

Comment Ashton Village S...

Email

From lsmoorephd@gmail.com

To <MCP-Chair MCP-Chair>; MCP-Chair #; MCP-Chair@mncppc-mc.org

Cc

Subject Comment Ashton Village Sector Plan

Date Sent **Date Received** 9/24/2020 2:51 PM

Chairman Casey Anderson,

My husband and I are residents of Ashton, MD. We choose this area because of the rural and historic ambiance of the area. While we support the creation of an Advisory Committee for the development of the SE Corner of the Rt 650/Rt108 intersection, this letter is to register strong opposition to the MC Planning Board's proposed zoning changes for that SE corner.

To that end, we strongly support honoring the original Master Plan intent to have the intersection at New Hampshire and Rt 108 serve as a transition from rural spaces into the village center. Parcels which serve as a transition to the village center should be protected by a FAR of .25 on the outlying parcels (with a maximum height of 35'), allowing for a "modest increase" (goal stated in MNCPPC staff proposal) increase from 23 units to 38 units in housing relative to existing zoning.

In contrast, the proposed plan would permit more than triple that many units to be constructed based on the amount of land in those parcels, and all at a height of 40' would destroy the rural village character of historic Ashton.

Community residents have expressed overwhelming opposition to the density of residential development proposed for that SE corner.

If MNCPPC persist in ignoring the views of the Ashton community, existing zoning and their own statements to the Ashton community, confidence in county government will be eroded. Ashton needs detailed and enforceable stipulations regarding specific design criteria in the Sector Plan to ensure the developer designs the development with attention to the rural character of the setting. Further, a detailed and realistic plan for traffic and mass transportation needs to be included. The Staff's proposed plan is wrong headed and appears destined to create expensive and intractable problems for MoCo, greater than any problems it purports to solve.

Respectfully submitted,

Dr. Linda Smoling Moore

Linda Smoling Moore, Ph.D.
16602 Doral Hill Court
Ashton, MD 20861
Cell: 301-661-2276

Attachments

File Name	File Size (Bytes)	

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Email

Concern over zoning

Email

From Mona Zhe

To <MCP-Chair MCP-Chair>; MCP-Chair #; MCP-Chair@mncppc-mc.org

Cc

Subject Concern over zoning

Date Sent **Date Received** 9/24/2020 9:52 PM

[EXTERNAL EMAIL] Exercise caution when opening attachments, clicking links, or responding.

Dear Casey Anderson,

After reviewing the proposed plan for south east corner for 108 and New Hampshire Ave, I am very concerned that this is going to add an unreasonable number of new homes/residences in the area. This could greatly burden an already congested area. Moreover, it will decrease the property value of our area, which finds its value in its rural, peaceful nature. In light of the pandemic and how home buyers are once again seeking rural communities that offer large lots like our community, the proposed plan runs contrary to what most families are looking for.

Therefore, I propose that we reevaluate the plan.

Thanks for your time,
Mona

Attachments

File Name	File Size (Bytes)	

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Submitted by Robin Ziek

Source: https://montgomeryplanning.org/resources/growth-tiers-map/

The Maryland General Assembly approved the Sustainable Growth & Agricultural Preservation Act of 2012 (Senate Bill 236), also known as the septics bill, during the 2012 General Assembly session.

Growth Tiers Map

The Growth Tiers Map shows the location of the four Tiers in the County.

- Tier I: Areas currently served by sewer
- Tier II: Future Growth Areas planned for sewer
- Tier III: Large Lot Development and "Rural Villages" on septic systems
- Tier IV: Preservation and Conservation Areas. No Major subdivisions on septics except by exemption Montgomery County has been approved by the Maryland Department of Planning to allow major subdivisions on septic systems.

Source: Damascus Master Plan, p. 103

Etchison, Browningsville, Purdum (near Damascus)

Implement the Rural Village Center Overlay Zone – The Rural Village Center Overlay Zone, with appropriate types of uses and levels of intensity, is recommended for Etchison, Browningsville, and Purdum. A zone of this type was initially recommended in the Preservation of Agriculture and Rural Open Space Master Plan (1980). This zone will protect these village areas from inappropriate uses that are allowed in the commercial, residential, and industrial zones found in some of these villages in the County. The zone will limit development potential, yet allow a wide variety of uses at a scale appropriate in a rural setting. This zone should be amended to prohibit larger auto-oriented commercial uses. The rehabilitation or replacement of dilapidated structures in these communities should be encouraged, and they should be allowed to evolve with some additional residential, institutional, and commercial uses.

Source: Complete Communities, under Thrive Montgomery 2050

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https://montgomeryplanning.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/08/Ashton-Village-Center-Sector-Plan-Technical-Appendix-Draft. P. 44

September 24, 2020

Dear Chairman Anderson,

Thank you for providing a video-on-demand of the Public Hearing for the Ashton Village Sector Plan Draft, under review. Given this Covid Climate, it is most helpful for the wider community to have this access. I listened to all the comments, and would like to convey a few thoughts of my own, as I was unable to participate in the Public Hearing on September 17, 2020.

1) Ashton is a Rural Village.
   This should not have to be debated once again. The Technical Appendix H of the most recent Master Plan efforts for Ashton includes the discussion and recommendations for the Ashton Rural Village Overlay zone. Many residents have participated in multiple planning efforts for Ashton, even as far back as the 1980 Master Plan. We shouldn't have to rethink everything all over again.

   And as recently as the development of the new countywide plan, *Thrive Montgomery 2050*, there is an acknowledgement that there are rural villages in the County, and these are quite distinct from other communities ("While complete communities in urban centers look and feel different from those in suburban neighborhoods or rural villages, each complete community shares defined features that contribute to a high quality of daily life, regardless of location.")

   It therefore appears that the County has given much thought to a Rural Village; that Ashton is a Rural Village; and that the community should not have to fight for or defend, once again, this clear identification. Rural is not subjective! As supported by the testimony of Ms. Nadine Morte, if you want rural - sheep, horses, chickens, goats, open fields, and farming activities - Sandy Spring/Ashton, from the Hawlings River to the Olney Theatre, has it all.

2) Sandy Spring/Ashton is already diverse and the wider community embraces this. The statistics of population diversity for Sherwood High School is the quickest way to see this (with numbers rounded off): 50% White; 18% Hispanic; 16% Black; 11% Asian; 5% Bi-racial. Any accusations of NIMBY - not wanting diversity; not wanting new residents – is just false.

3) The limitations on development for a Rural Village are definitely about size and on use (commercial v residential). In fact, this is the point. A Rural Village is the commercial node for residential development in the rural landscape. There are examples of good design all over the County (see Kentlands, Wyndcrest in Ashton) which draw on rural America for design inspiration. The Ashton community has continually pointed designers in that direction. But size, scale and density matter; it's not all about "good" design. Ashton (rural village) should not compete with Olney (new town) for density. Rural villages are permeable, and Ashton development should reflect this.

Thank you for your hard work and consideration of my comments.

Yours truly,

Robin Ziek, 18000 Bentley Road, Sandy Spring MD 20860

Email

Change of Plans?

Email

From Sharon Vandegriff

To <MCP-Chair MCP-Chair>; MCP-Chair #; MCP-Chair@mncppc-mc.org

Cc

Subject Change of Plans?

Date Sent **Date Received** 9/24/2020 2:46 PM

[EXTERNAL EMAIL] Exercise caution when opening attachments, clicking links, or responding.

Dear Chairman Anderson, Director Wright, Supervisor Berbert, Plan Lead Pratt, and Designer Duke,

Since the link to the video of the 17 September 2020 meeting was not working when I tried to view it, I read the comments of people who had viewed it. From the comments, it looked as though the builder was asking to build 150 new dwellings. Further, I heard this: "a representative of the developer asked for even more latitude to build more apartments and commercial space, and asked that the height limit be set at a level that would permit five-story buildings at the site. This would grant the developer the flexibility to build as many as 240 new homes!" It sounds as though the "Plan" for Ashton Village Sector (intersection of Routes 650 & 108) continues to be non-rural-centric even though the original plan called for minimal development.

The Executive Summary, @ http://montgomeryplanningboard.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/11/Ashton-Market-Report-_Final-11_15_18.pdf , in contrast, paints the rural feel: "The following Staff Report is for a joint Preliminary and Site Plan application for 20 townhouses and a multi-use building with a restaurant or retail, and 3 multi-family dwelling units, located on the south side of Olney-Sandy Spring Road (MD 108) in the Ashton Village Center."

Do you want to know what the community wants? If so, go to the following link: https://montgomeryplanning.org/planning/communities/area-3/ashton-village-center-sector-plan/ The hyperlink "design scenarios handout" on page one, the bottom left drawing, shows more what people in the community want for the southeast corner of the intersection. Could we use the "Community Presented Scenario" or a compromise that leans heavily toward it? The other scenarios would overwhelm the scope of that intersection -- this is not Georgia Avenue + Randolph Road!

Please stick as close to the original plan as possible, like you would do in your own communities. Thank you.

Sharon Vandegriff
Ashton, MD

Attachments

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Submitted by Stephen Faehner

Dear Montgomery County,

My family moved from Laurel to Brinklow (just 2 miles North of Ashton off Rt. 650) when I was 10 in 1980. My parents were looking for life in the country and Brighton Knolls Estate was the perfect picture of peace and tranquility. For the next 8 years I drove every day down Rt. 650 – New Hampshire Avenue - to either Beltsville or Takoma Park where my elementary and high schools were located. I watched as the cattle grazed at Spring Lawn Farm and the WSSC spread something that stinks (bio-solids) all over what is now Hampshire Greens.

I watched as they expanded New Hampshire Avenue from White Oak to Colesville, then from Colesville to Spencerville. I spent 100's of days every year in traffic going South in the morning and North in the afternoons. I'm not sure expanding the roads made things better or just convinced more people to move to the area and create more sprawl. What I'm sure of that if there were 100+ more homes in Ashton the traffic would be unbearable.

I left Maryland for College in Michigan and returned to my roots in Laurel with my wife to an apartment at Russet Place next to Sam's Club. In 1998 we realized we needed our own home and bought a house in Columbia. We were blessed with three boys and outgrew our Columbia house, so we moved to Spencerville. In 2010 when that house proved too crowded we looked for options nearby. A very specific requirement was a house south of the Rt. 650 & Rt. 108 intersection since traffic during rush hours was already a major problem. We found the perfect match in Spring Lawn Farms – the very same Farm that I watched cattle graze 30 years before.

The Spring Lawn Farm community encompasses about 60 single family homes, most on ½ acres. We are on the west side of Rt. 650 just south of the intersection with Route 108. Residents range in age from infants to over 90 years old. We have residents who are the original owners of their homes as well as three young families who moved in since the first of the year. Most of us came from others parts of Maryland. We came because Ashton has that hard to find small town country feel. We love the feel as well as nearby working farms and the historic Sandy Spring.

Today, Ashton is at a crossroads—both literally and figuratively. The implementation of the Ashton Village Sector Plan will determine the future for our community. Will it preserve Ashton's unique rural and historic character or will Ashton become just one more suburban community? Will the intersection of Rt. 650 & Route 108 finally get improved or will it just be further clogged and unsafe as a result of intense development on its southeast corner?

While the Plan before you has many good things we support, there are major areas of concern.

First, the provisions that we support.

- An implementation advisory committee
- Safe sidewalks and sidepaths where they are missing.
- Crosswalks and pedestrian signals across all parts of the intersection of Route 108 and New Hampshire at the village center.
- Intersection improvements, including moving the pole at the corner of New Hampshire Avenue and Route 108, without expanding the overall size of the intersection.

- Expansion of the hiking and biking network in the area.
- Provision of signage that connects the village center to historic and cultural resources of the greater Ashton community.

Each of these provisions are critical and long overdue. While the Spring Lawn Farm neighborhood is within close proximity to the bank, post office, and various businesses in Ashton, there is no sidewalk or sidepath or crosswalks with signals that enable us to walk there safely.

Next, the provisions we DON'T support.

- Traffic – Traffic - Traffic
- 150 Units of Housing are 125 Too Many
- Losing the Country / Rural Feel of Ashton
- Fear of Inadequate Infrastructure (see CVS Pharmacy Road/Culvert/Storm Water Mgmt)
- Lack of Public Transportation Options
- Changing Height Restrictions above 35'

The biggest concern that we have with the Plan is the development on the southeast corner because of its proximity to our neighborhood. The entrance to our neighborhood is less 500' from the southern edge of the property to be developed on the southeast corner. Some of the homes in our HOA back to a row of houses directly across New Hampshire Avenue from the southeast corner property. We will be directly impacted by the traffic, noise, and light pollution generated by this development.

Development on the southeast corner of the intersection of New Hampshire Avenue and Route 108 has been an issue dating back to prior to the development of the 1998 Sandy Spring Ashton Master Plan. That Plan included language that specifically prohibited townhouses on the parcels at that corner. Subsequent to its adoption, plans for the mixed-use Ashton Meeting development were approved in 2008 and included six single family homes and commercial space. With the zoning recommended in the draft Plan under consideration, the potential number of units could be 20-25 times the number approved in 2008 with height limits that exceed those of the surrounding development on adjacent corners of the intersection as well as single family homes that border the property. This level of development will overrun the already overtaxed infrastructure in Ashton.

Traffic backs up on Route 108 and New Hampshire Avenue during the morning and evening rush hours, as well as when Sherwood High School dismisses students in the afternoon. Being just south of this intersection, cars back up past the entrance to our neighborhood as far as you can see south on New Hampshire Avenue. While it can take less than ten minutes to get to or from Olney during non-rush hours, it can take well over 20 minutes in the afternoon when traffic can back up almost into Olney. In the morning when school is in session, it can take two to three lights cycles to turn left from New Hampshire Avenue to go west on Route 108 towards Olney.

The Plan suggests that dependence on cars for residents of the new development could be mitigated by expansion of RideOn or Metrobus routes. Earlier this year, the Washington Area

Metropolitan Transit Authority proposed as part of its 2021 budget the elimination of several bus routes, including the single bus route that serves Ashton only at rush hours during the week. This proposal was not included in the final 2021 budget due to efforts of the County Council and the State Delegation. Given the current state of ridership on RideOn busses and the County resources, expansion of RideOn bus service is highly unlikely in the near future. As a result, new residents will be primarily dependent on cars for transportation.

Most households in this area have at least two cars and in our neighborhood, about one-third of the homes have more than two. Given the proposed addition of up to 150 new housing units, we are not only alarmed by the significant amount of additional traffic, we are also very concerned that there will be insufficient onsite parking to accommodate the cars for residents and visitors. Given the proximity to our neighborhood, this could result in overflow parking on our streets. Any overflow parking not accommodated on site would require crossing New Hampshire Avenue or Route 108 and would not be safe.

Because of these issues, we strongly. support the implementation advisory committee because it would provide an opportunity to monitor and ensure implementation of all the provisions within the Plan. Nearly all of the provisions that we support require coordination and funding from entities outside the Planning Department and would benefit from community input and engagement. We believe it would be a much needed communication and oversight tool, bringing together the community, developers, and Planning staff. The advisory committee could provide focus and community support for the necessary funding and coordination needed from the various entities within the County and State. Similar advisory committees have been set up elsewhere in the County, including for the Olney Town Center and Bethesda downtown.

While development on the southeast corner is the focal point of development and community concern, the focus of the advisory committee would be broader than just that. There are rumors that the owner of the Ashton Village Shopping Center may redevelop the shopping center once it is clearer what will happen to the southeast corner. There are also rumors that there is interest in redeveloping the remainder of the properties on Porter Road. It would be helpful to have a group with specific responsibility for advising on the implementation of the Plan as it pertains to all the properties covered by the Plan

.

There are other aspects of the Plan where having an advisory committee focused on its implementation would be very helpful. The provisions for intersection improvements, crosswalks, sidewalks and side paths, green space and recreation, and trails rely on entities not under the purview of the Planning Department. An advisory committee could coordinate and provide community input with the County, State, and other entities involved in implementing these provisions.

As the Ashton Village Center Sector Plan is finalized, we ask that consideration be given to the real impact of future development. A famous line from testimony given at the public hearing on the 1998 Sandy Spring Ashton Master Plan still rings true today. A resident of

the Avenshire subdivision stated, “Ashton isn’t close to anything, and we like it that way!” That is the essence of rural, along with being small.

Thank you for this opportunity to provide comments to the Ashton Village Center Sector Working Draft. We appreciate the efforts of the staff, especially Jamey Pratt and Roberto Duke, in their efforts to engage the community. As the Plan is finalized, we hope that you will address the concerns that we have raised along with others in the community.

Best Regards,

Stephen, Hollie, Owen, Jack & Sam
17504 Country View Way
Ashton, Maryland 20861
C 301-535-8450

Submitted by Walt Fennell

September 24, 2020

Montgomery Planning Board
All Members

RE: Ashton Village Center Sector Plan

After listening to the testimony provide the Planning Board on September 17th, I appreciate the opportunity to provide additional input to the DRAFT Ashton Village Center Plan.

Legal Counsel for Nichols Development Company offered her perspective and requested the several changes to the DRAFT Plan. Specifically, Counsel recommended some *modest and or slight* changes to building sizes (length and height) and changes to the proposed FAR Zoning.

At first glance, these might appear to be modest changes, but when you take the time study the proposed changes, it becomes apparent that the changes are in fact NOT modest, but are actually significant changes to the recommendations put forward in the DRAFT Plan.

Building Lengths

Item for Reconsideration	DRAFT Plan Recommendation	Nichols Development Recommendation	Percentage Increase
Residential Building Length (along main road)	80 Feet	90 Feet	12.5% increase
Mixed Use Building Length (along main road)	80 Feet	120 Feet	50.0% increase
Mixed Use Building Length (elsewhere on the site)	120 Feet	150 Feet	25.0% increase

Building Heights

Item for Reconsideration	DRAFT Plan Recommendation	Nichols Development Recommendation	Percentage Increase
Building Heights in Village Center	40 Feet	45 Feet	12.5% Increase**

** Please note that the current Ashton Village Plan limits the height of buildings to 30 feet, therefore the DRAFT Plan already provides a building height increase of 33.3%. Adopting the Nichols Development proposal would increase the building heights by

50.0% over the heights recommended in the current Master Plan.

Zoning++

Item for Reconsideration	Draft Plan Recommendation and Number of New Dwelling Units	Nichols Development Recommendation and Number of New Dwelling Units	Increase in Residential Dwelling Units
CRN within the Village Center – Combined Development Yield	CRN-0.5; C-0.5; R-0.5; H-40 280 Units	CRN-0.75; C-0.5; R-0.5; H-45 453 Units	173 Unit or 62%
CRN outside of the Village Center (Porter Road)	CRN-0.5; C-0.5; R-0.5; H-35 3 Units	CRN-0.75; C-0.75; R-0. 25; H-35 9 Units	6 Units or 200%

++ Change in Dwelling Units is based on information in the DRAFT Ashton Village Center Sector Plan, Technical Appendix, Appendix K – Density Calculations. The DRAFT Technical Appendix does not outline the EXACT type of recommendation outlined by Nichols Development. The amounts referenced here are from the "Combined FAR" columns in Tables I-5 and I-6.

As you can see, the changes proposed by Nichols Development are not modest nor are they slight. For context, a retirement plans or stock portfolios with returns of 3%-6% are typically viewed as modest. A portfolio with a return of 12.5% is considered to be significant and a portfolio with a return of 25%, 50%, 60%, or 200% would be far from modest.

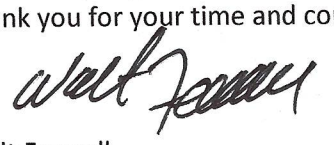
I believe the majority of those testifying on September 17th acknowledged that change is inevitable and that development within Ashton cannot, nor should it be stopped. The Ashton residents have not adopted a NIMBY attitude toward development. Rather most residents of Ashton (old and new) are seeking reasonable development, which is proportional to our small, rural village. The larger buildings which may be appropriate within an urban setting are simply out of place in our small village, and completely inconsistent with the smaller, historic, cottage style homes typically associated with Ashton.

The DRAFT Plan outlines specific building design concepts and building type limitations. The inclusion of these building design concepts and building type limitations was added by the Planning Staff as a direct result of community outreach efforts. The building design and limitations will ensure that Ashton is permitted to maintain the look and feel of a small, rural village.

I would respectfully, request that the Planning Board reject the requested changes offered by Nichols Development and that the Planning Board adopt the building size and zoning recommendations outlined in the DRAFT Plan.

Furthermore, I would also respectfully request that the Planning Board adopt the recommendation to establish an Advisory Board to help oversee and guide the development of Ashton Village. The Advisory Board is an important feature of the DRAFT Plan to ensure that the completion of future development aligns with the design concepts in the DRAFT Plan. The residents of Ashton are passionate about our little part of Montgomery County. This was evidenced at the January 29, 2020 community meeting, and I believe it was evidenced during the September 17, 2020 Planning Board meeting. The residents do not oppose growth. What is opposed, and I hope the Planning Board agrees, are growth concepts that are antithetical not just to the rural past but also to the very unique present state of Ashton.

Thank you for your time and consideration of this request.



Walt Fennell
17513 Hidden Garden Lane
Ashton, MD 20861
(410)443-1672
waltster65@yahoo.com

Email

Fwd: Ashton Village Center...

Email

From wetate@verizon.net

To <MCP-Chair MCP-Chair>; MCP-Chair #; MCP-Chair@mncppc-mc.org

Cc

Subject Fwd: Ashton Village Center Sector Plan - Village core density

Date Sent **Date Received** 9/24/2020 9:22 PM

[EXTERNAL EMAIL] Exercise caution when opening attachments, clicking links, or responding.

From: wetate <wetate@verizon.net>
Date: Thursday, September 24, 2020
Subject: Ashton Village Center Sector Plan - Village core density
To: mcp-chair <mcp-chair@mncpp-MC.org>

Proposed density of 150 dus on the SE corner of Rt. 108 and NH Ave represents a threat to the desired goal of the small town feeling we hope for in Ashton's future. This density is in conflict with the increasing traffic. The resulting number cars and their parking requirements will convert a landscape to a carscape since 300 plus vehicles will litter the limited open space. Such is not our goal for the new Ashton. Regards, William Tate

William Tate
1704 Gamewell Road
Silver Spring, Md. 20905

Attachments

File Name	File Size (Bytes)	
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