

## ASHTON VILLAGE CENTER IMPLEMENTATION ADVISORY COMMITTEE – APPOINTMENT AND REAPPOINTMENT OF MEMBERS



### Description

Appointment of new committee members and reappointment of current members for the Ashton Village Center Implementation Advisory Committee (AVCIAC).

Completed: 7/2/2025

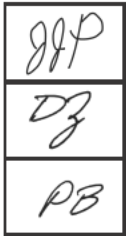
MCPB  
Item No. 1C  
7/10/2025

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[Montgomeryplanning.org](http://Montgomeryplanning.org)

Ashton Village Center Implementation Advisory Committee

## Planning Staff



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## SECTION 1 – RECOMMENDATIONS AND DETAILS

### Staff Recommendation

Approve Randy Nittoli and Martin Blackwood as members of the Ashton Village Center Implementation Advisory Committee (AVCIAC). Approve Michael Grace as the first alternate new member. Approve Valdis Lazdins as the second alternate new member. Reappoint Leianne Clements and Jessica Sidar to new terms.

### Background

The Montgomery County Council approved the 2021 *Ashton Village Center Sector Plan* through Resolution #19-904 on June 15, 2021. The approved and adopted plan includes the following recommendation to establish an advisory committee:

This Plan supports the creation of an advisory group to address its implementation. The formation of any new advisory group should be staffed by the Planning Department in close coordination with the civic/neighborhood groups within the Ashton area.

This advisory group would work in coordination with the Regional Services Center that covers the area of a project by providing specific community and redevelopment expertise. It would also serve as an interface between community members, county agencies, and developers in implementing recommendations of the Ashton Village Center Sector Plan. This new group should be structured to include representatives from the various constituencies interested in successful implementation of the Plan. Notification and participation in the development review process should occur at the earliest stage of the process.

The Planning Board appointed the initial ten members of the AVCIAC on May 5, 2022. At that time, five members were randomly assigned two-year terms and five were assigned three-year terms. All subsequent appointments are for three-year terms.

Over the past three years, several members have resigned and been replaced. Four members from the original three-year group have terms that have expired. Two of these members—Jessica Sidar and

Leianne Clements—have agreed to continue serving. The other two, Julia Roberts and Paul Mangus, have stepped down.

To fill the resulting vacancies, Montgomery Planning invited letters of interest, with a deadline of June 27, 2025. Four applications were received for the two open seats. All applicants are well qualified and bring diverse perspectives to the Committee’s work, with varying situations and experiences that could bring new voices to any discussion of projects in the Ashton Village Center.

Given the small size of the Sector Plan area, most current members and applicants reside in the broader Ashton area. One applicant, Randy Nittoli, is a resident of the plan area and was active during the 2020–2021 planning process. Staff recommends appointing Mr. Nittoli. Another applicant, Martin Blackwood, lives within the 1998 *Sandy Spring/Ashton Master Plan* area and is also recommended for appointment.

The remaining two applicants, Michael Grace and Valdis Lazdins, reside in Brinklow, within the 2005 *Olney Master Plan* area. While outside both the Sector Plan and the older Master Plan boundaries, Brinklow is closely connected to Ashton via the MD 650 (New Hampshire Avenue) corridor. Staff recommends appointing Mr. Grace and Mr. Lazdins as alternate members, eligible to fill any vacancies that arise within the next year. Mr. Grace is recommended as the first alternate, as his application was received earlier.

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#### Ashton Village Center Implementation Advisory Committee Membership

- Amy Medd (June 2024 – June 2027) (Chair)
- Nadine Masone-Mort (June 2024 – June 2027) (Secretary)
- Martin Blackwood (June 2025 – June 2028) *[pending appointment]*
- Ali Azimi Bolourian (December 2024 – December 2027)
- Leianne Clements (June 2025 – June 2028) *[pending reappointment]*
- Stephen Faehner (June 2024 – June 2027)
- Jim Meehan (June 2024 – June 2027)
- Randy Nittoli (June 2025 – June 2028) *[pending appointment]*
- Jessica Sidar (June 2025 – June 2028) *[pending reappointment]*
- Kathleen Wheeler (June 2024 – June 2027)

Note that the Vice Chair position will be filled during the next Committee elections.

## CONCLUSION

Staff recommends appointment of Mr. Nittoli and Mr. Blackwood and reappointment of Ms. Clements and Ms. Sidar as members of the Ashton Village Center Implementation Advisory Committee. Staff recommends Mr. Grace as the first alternate member, and Mr. Lazdins as the second alternate member.

## Attachments

- Application letters from applicants

**From:** [Randy Nittoli](#)  
**To:** [Pratt, Jamey](#)  
**Subject:** Letter of Interest - Ashton Village Center Advisory Committee  
**Date:** Thursday, June 26, 2025 2:39:00 PM

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

Dear Mr. Pratt,

I hope this message finds you well. I am writing to formally express my interest in serving on the Ashton Village Center Advisory Committee. As a long-time resident of Ashton and a former President of the Ashton Village Homeowners Association, I am deeply committed to the thoughtful development and preservation of our community's character.

I have lived in Ashton for over a decade and served as HOA President for eight years. In 2021, I worked with the Planning Committee to review and provide feedback on the initial draft of the Ashton Village Sector Plan. I bring a unique dual perspective—as both a resident and a local business owner—and I am eager to support initiatives that reflect the needs and values of our community.

Professionally, I am a former U.S. diplomat with experience managing projects and coordinating with stakeholders at the international, federal, state, and local levels. I hold a Master's degree in Emergency Management and have led training development, public speaking efforts, and collaborative planning across diverse sectors.

As I continue to grow my business within Ashton, I am motivated to contribute more directly to local decision-making processes and community development efforts. I would welcome the opportunity to serve on the Advisory Committee and offer my time, experience, and perspective in support of its important work.

Thank you for your time and consideration. Please don't hesitate to reach out if additional information is needed.

Kind regards,

Randy Nittoli

Randy R. Nittoli, M.S.  
[REDACTED] Mobile

**From:** [Cathy and Marty Blackwood](#)  
**To:** [Pratt, Jamey](#)  
**Subject:** Ashton Village Center advisory committee  
**Date:** Wednesday, June 18, 2025 12:22:20 PM

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

Dear Mr. Pratt,

My family and I moved to Ashton in 1998 and immediately fell in love with the community.

I am a licensed architect, registered in New York and I have over fifteen years experience working for a number of real estate developers doing retail and mixed use projects. I have also served on the board of our HOA for many years, as has my wife.

My mobility is not what it used to be, but I would like to help out in any capacity that you might need assistance with.

Martin J. Blackwood  
[REDACTED] Pond Road  
Ashton, MD 20861  
[REDACTED]



**From:** [Michael Grace](#)  
**To:** [Pratt, Jamey](#)  
**Subject:** Ashton Village Center Implementation Advisory Committee  
**Date:** Wednesday, June 4, 2025 5:03:34 PM

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

Sir:

I am interested in serving on the above Advisory Committee. My wife, Laura, and I live at [REDACTED] Brighton Knolls Drive, approximately three miles from the Rt. 108-NH Ave. intersection. We have lived at this address for 46 years and have seen many changes at this intersection over the decades. Both my wife and I commuted south on New Hampshire Ave. for more than 30 years. New Hampshire Ave. is the only convenient route south for us and our neighbors. We have a great interest in how the construction and implementation of the rezoning plan will proceed. I have previous experience serving on other MOCO citizens' committees, including the Cable Advisory Committee and the MOCO cable Public Access Board of Directors. Thank you for your consideration of this application.

Michael Grace

H-[REDACTED]  
C-[REDACTED]

**From:** [Valdis Lazdins](#)  
**To:** [Pratt, Jamey](#)  
**Subject:** Ashton Advisory Committee  
**Date:** Wednesday, June 18, 2025 9:52:22 AM  
**Attachments:** [Val Lazdins Resume 1 8 21.doc](#)

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

Hi Jamey:

I'm interested in serving on the advisory committee for Ashton. I live in nearby Brinklow and am the former Maryland assistant planning secretary. Previous to that, I was the Howard County planning director and a chief at the MNCPPC, in Montgomery County. I have also been a consultant, in leadership roles, for over 25 years; working on a variety of private sector development and public sector planning and design projects across the country. Including many at the scale of Ashton Village Center.

Given my design and planning background, I believe I could provide significant input and guidance on this committee. I'm attaching my resume, which should give you a better sense of my background and experience. Please let me know if I can assist.

Best, Valdis Lazdins