April 10, 2020

Baltimore County Department of Planning
Attn: CZMP Coordinator
Jefferson Building
105 West Chesapeake Avenue, Suite 101
Towson, MD 21204

Re: CZMP Issue 5-056

To Whom it May Concern,

I am writing on behalf of the Anneslie Community Association Board regarding the referenced CZMP issue.

This issue was raised by Councilman Marks as a means to preserve the "main street" character of the small commercial district along York Road between Overbrook Road and Dumbarton Road. The recent redevelopment of a bank building into a fast-food drive-thru restaurant at the northwest corner of York Road and Regester Avenue causes concern that further development of this nature could erode the unique qualities of the existing area that contribute to our quality of life, property values and sense of community.

Unfortunately, there does not appear to be a zoning classification that meets the needs of this area. The Planning Department noted that the proposed zoning of "Commercial Business" – the only commercial zoning category that prohibits fast-food drive-thru restaurants - would create several non-conforming uses in the area. We love our bowling alley, our yoga and fitness studios and our dance studio! We do not want a zoning classification that would drive potential tenants away because it is too restrictive. While these existing uses (bowling alley by special exception, fitness studio and dance studio by right) are allowed under BLR, so are fast-food drive-thru restaurants. The current zoning of BL allows, by right, many uses that are contrary to the character of our small commercial district, including fast-food drive-thru restaurants, automobile accessory shops, helistops, Hookah and vapor lounges, car rental agencies, and medical clinics. Additional undesirable uses are allowed by special exception in the BL zone including automotive services stations, car washes, drive-in restaurants, service garages, wireless telecommunications towers, etc. Our community should not be required to expend limited financial resources to defend against these uses through a special exception hearing process.

Therefore, we ask that the Planning Board consider what we do want when making their recommendations. Our community wants to preserve our pedestrian-oriented commercial area, which supports local businesses. We do want 2-3 story mixed-use buildings with retail on the ground floor. We do not want big box stores, cookie-cutter national chain stores or fast food restaurants with drive-thru's that will generate large amounts of traffic and put our children who walk to school in danger. Ultimately a new zoning use designation ("Main Street?") needs to be created or specially legislated zone needs to be established to protect the character of our neighborhood's commercial district.

Thank you for your consideration,

Elizabeth Miller
For the
Anneslie Community Association Board