



Howard County Government News Release

Office of Public Information
3430 Courthouse Drive
Ellicott City, Maryland 21043

410-313-2022 / FAX 410-313-3390 / www.howardcountymd.gov

Scott Peterson
Director of Communications
speterson@howardcountymd.gov

April 6, 2020

Media Contact:

Scott Peterson, Director of Communications, Office of Public Information, 202-277-9412

County Executive Ball Provides Update on Ellicott City Progress

Proposed capital and state funds, 10 buildings on lower Main officially acquired, federal section 106 process

ELLICOTT CITY, MD – County Executive Calvin Ball today provided updates on Ellicott City progress. He highlighted the \$20.2 million in his proposed capital budget for FY21, announced the final acquisition of the 10 properties on lower Main Street, provided updates on the federal section 106 process, and lower Main Street stabilization and preservation efforts.

“In the midst of these challenging times we continue to move our Ellicott City Safe and Sound plan forward, ensuring our historic town will thrive for years to come,” said Howard County Executive Calvin Ball. “We’ve committed capital funds, including anticipated State aid, for flood mitigation efforts – and completed the final acquisition of the lower Main properties allowing us to begin taking the next steps in preservation and flood mitigation. These are tough times for all our small businesses, and we will continue to work with all the residents and business owners through our Ellicott City Safe and Sound Plan as we make sure Ellicott City is protected and preserved.”

[Ball announced the Ellicott City Safe and Sound Plan](#) on December 28, 2018. The final plan selected last May will reduce flood waters on Main Street to less than a foot in a 100-year storm and approximately three feet in a storm the scale of the July 2016 flood.

FY2021 Capital Budget

Last week, Ball released his [proposed capital budget for fiscal year 2021](#), proposing \$20.2 million, including anticipated State aid, for flood mitigation efforts in Ellicott City and Valley Mede. This funding includes \$8.25 million secured by Senator Katie Fry Hester and Delegate Courtney Watson during the recent session of the Maryland General Assembly.

“The main street business owners and residents of Ellicott City are full of passion and determination,” said Senator Katie Fry Hester. “I took that energy with me into every meeting

County Executive Ball Provides Update on Ellicott City Progress *(continued)*

and opportunity to influence, find, secure and defend resources in the state budget for Ellicott City. It was a true team effort with state and local partners to ensure we protect the lives and livelihoods of these resilient people.”

“We fought hard for funding at the state level,” said Delegate Courtney Watson. “It was a priority for Speaker Jones who came to visit the town last summer and now, the county can put the pedal to the metal and get many of these projects underway.”

The funding appropriated by County Executive Ball in the FY2021 capital budget will move several important Ellicott City projects forward, including the Maryland Avenue Culverts, the Quaker Mill Pond, sidewalk repair, and renovation of the county-owned buildings on lower Main Street.

Lower Main Street Building Acquisition

Howard County announced today the process for [acquiring the Phoenix Emporium building](#) is now complete. All 10 buildings the county intended to obtain on lower Main Street have been purchased. Six of these buildings that were previously scheduled for demolition will now have portions preserved. The next step is partial removal of the sections of the buildings over the stream channel. To complete this and subsequent renovation of these buildings, the county needs to complete the federal Section 106 process to assess the historical impacts.

Federal Section 106 Process

The County has been addressing the Federal Section 106 process as part of the larger Joint Permit process through the Army Corps of Engineers and Maryland Department of the Environment since September 2019. The next step in the process is a public hearing, which was anticipated to take place this spring. In the wake of the current global COVID-19 pandemic, that meeting has been postponed while relevant agencies evaluate options for holding the meeting virtually.

Lower Main Street Stabilization and Clean Out Work

Since December 2018, the county has been acquiring properties on lower Main Street as part of the Ellicott City Safe and Sound plan. All of the properties acquired by the county were initially assessed for structural integrity. Most buildings have also undergone some degree of clean out and/or repair activities.

New doors or windows were installed at 8081 Main Street (Tea on the Tiber), 8085 Main Street (Portalli's), 8095 Main Street (Shoemaker Country) and 8111-8113 Main Street. Façade repairs and shadowboxes were also completed at 8085 Main Street, 8095 Main Street, and

County Executive Ball Provides Update on Ellicott City Progress *(continued)*

8111-8113 Main Street. Several buildings, including the former Caplan's Department Store at 8125 Main Street had basements filled in to further ensure structural integrity.

Moving forward, the six county-owned buildings previously proposed for demolition that are now being preserved will have the sections over the stream channel partially demolished, with front sections slated for dry-floodproofing and full renovation.

U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Report

Last month, Howard County and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers held a public meeting where the [Army Corps presented their review of the County's flood mitigation plan for Ellicott City](#). The meeting can be viewed online [here](#).

The Army Corps performed an independent, interagency, objective review of approximately 60 flood risk management alternatives, comprised of separate flood risk management measures, such as flood diversion tunnels, upstream storage, floodplain modification and culvert improvements. As part of the evaluation, the Corps also identified additional opportunities for flood risk management measures for the County to consider.

"The decision as to which projects will be implemented ultimately lies at the local government level; it is not the Army Corps' role to make any formal recommendations to the County," said Andy Layman, Baltimore District project manager. "We evaluated the County's alternatives based on a number of criteria, including levels of flood reduction and construction cost and duration. Overall, the County's current plan can significantly reduce flood risk to Historic Ellicott City."

Gordon Ramsay in Ellicott City

In February, Multi-Michelin starred chef and TV personality Gordon Ramsay came to Ellicott City to film a special two-hour episode of "24 Hours to Hell and Back." The show is expected to feature three Ellicott City businesses with the goal of promoting and supporting the town as a whole. Despite the current global pandemic, the show is [still expected to air on May 12th on FOX](#).

To stay up-to-date on the Ellicott City Safe and Sound plan, please visit www.ecsafeandsound.org.

###