

CP 21-2021

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March 1, 2021

Howard County Council
George Howard Building
3430 Court House Drive
Ellicott City, MD 21043

RE: In support of Council Bill 21-2021

Dear Members of the Howard County Council:

I write to you in support of the Council Bill 21-2021, which would amend the Howard County Zoning Regulations (ZRA-196) to permit Country Inns, Personal Service Establishments, and Specialty Stores to be included among the business uses allowable by right for commercial properties in the HO (Historic: Office) zoning district.

In particular, this would aid such commercial properties in the Upper Court House zoning district, which for decades have been able to support their use as offices for lawyers, title researchers, insurance and bonding companies, and for other businesses ancillary to the courts and the judicial system. However, with the decision to build the new Circuit Court on Bendix Road, it is unlikely that many of these businesses will retain their location. In fact, some businesses have already moved in anticipation of the new Circuit Court opening in July of this year.

The Council is well aware of the devastation which the two recent floods have caused to Old Ellicott City, and this past year's COVID-19 pandemic has severely hurt businesses as well. The relocation of the Circuit Court later this year may be the 'last straw' for commercial properties in the Upper Court House zoning district, unless new opportunities allow for different types of business use and growth.

As a long-time legal practitioner here in Ellicott City, I urge you to help revitalize the HO zoning districts in general, and the Upper Court House district in particular, by passing Council Bill 21-2021 (ZRA-196), and thereby amending the zoning regulations to allow these important uses.

Thank you for your consideration of this important matter.

Very truly yours,


John Willis

JW/me

Sayers, Margery

From: Jack Willis <jack@whlawfirm.com>
Sent: Monday, March 1, 2021 9:16 AM
To: CouncilMail
Subject: In support of Council Bill 21-2021
Attachments: Willis, John, Esq. -- letter in support of Council Bill 21-2021.pdf

[Note: This email originated from outside of the organization. Please only click on links or attachments if you know the sender.]

Please present to the Howard County Council the attached letter in support of Council Bill 21-2021, which will be presented at this evening's legislative session.

Thank you,

John Willis

John Willis
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Sayers, Margery

From: Don Reuwer <dreuwer@waverlyre.com>
Sent: Saturday, February 27, 2021 5:22 PM
To: CouncilMail
Subject: CB 21

[Note: This email originated from outside of the organization. Please only click on links or attachments if you know the sender.]

I hope you are all doing well! I strongly support CB 21 and believe it is needed for Ellicott City to prosper. Creative uses for old buildings is a must! I believe the County Court House has the same zoning and would likewise benefit from CB 21 when it is re-purposed.

Thanks for your time.

Donald R. Reuwer Jr.
8318 Forrest Street – Suite 200
Ellicott City, MD 21043
Phone 410-707-7054



Sayers, Margery

From: Linda Jones <teaonthetiber@aol.com>
Sent: Monday, March 1, 2021 8:48 AM
To: CouncilMail
Subject: ZRA196

[Note: This email originated from outside of the organization. Please only click on links or attachments if you know the sender.]

March 1, 2021

Re: ZRA196

Dear Howard County Council Members,

My name is Linda Jones. I owned and operated Tea on the Tiber at 8081 Main Street in Historic Ellicott City until just before the flood of 2018.

After months of uncertainty of whether or not the building would be torn down or restored, I was enticed to consider to move my Tea Room to the Upper Court House district in the Mt. Ida property. Unfortunately, the landlord discovered we could not operate there without gaining more permitted uses by right which forced him to turn away from the property purchase.

Shortly following this zoning complication and disappointment, I was encouraged to consider a purchase of building owned and operated by Mat About You in Parking Lot D. Again, I was informed I could not operate there without a zoning change or conditional use application.

I have looked at over 34 properties to relocate my tearoom since the 2018 flood and subsequent buying of the building I was in by the county. I have tried to come back to Ellicott City but have been turned away several times due to problems with zoning permissions.

I know the ZRA196 sponsored by the business owners in Upper Court House have this frustration in mind. How will Ellicott City be able to attract business to the only remaining historic commercial buildings in town, if their businesses are not allowed by right?

Being one of the ten businesses that were displaced as a result of the 2018 Flood I have been frustrated with the desire to return to Main Street. As an established business in Ellicott City since 2003, we brought many people to Ellicott City with the average being 300 per week. They came by reservation to enjoy tea with us and then lingering in the town purchasing items from the other businesses

I am hoping you can support ZRA196 so business like myself will have a place to create new business opportunities for our struggling town.

Thanking you in advance,

Linda Jones
Tea on the Tiber

Sayers, Margery

From: Julian Manelli <julian21043@gmail.com>
Sent: Saturday, February 27, 2021 6:17 PM
To: CouncilMail
Subject: ZRA 196

[Note: This email originated from outside of the organization. Please only click on links or attachments if you know the sender.]

Statement in Support of ZRA196

My name is Julian Manelli and my father and I operated Gino Manelli Art Gallery and later Mat About You Gallery at 3774 Old Columbia Pike, Ellicott City, MD 21043 and operated the business at that location for over 45 year.

In spite of our location smack in the middle of commercial activities, coffee shops, Offices and Electrical Contractors we were found in violation of operating a Gallery because we were zoned Residential Village. We went through the “conditional use” process and had so many restrictions put on us that we rejected it. For example: we were not allowed to do a Gallery Opening Events for artists, while right across parking lot D, where we are located, you can have a wedding reception and adjacent to 3774 you can have an evening of outdoor entertainment attended by over 100 people. We decided to operate without the “conditional use” and take our chances. We continued until we decided to retire and sell. We were unable to sell a very successful business because of the “conditional use” hurdle. The sale of the business became problematic to potential buyers, artisan or craft person. They simply didn't want to go through all that hassle for a location that looked very much to all of them to be located in a business area. "Conditional Use" was a major factor for the business not continuing.

In 2015 there were six art galleries and artist studios which were nationally recognized, today's there are none. Let's open up the Old Town with ZRA 196 so that it can be a vibrant village again.

I continue to support Old Town through my sponsorship of the Howard County Arts Council Annual “Paint-it”. An event which attracts artists from all over the United States to come and spend a weekend and paint in Old Town. Wouldn't it be nice if they could come and set up their studio's here too!

Respectfully submitted,
Julian Manelli



6240 Old Dobbin Lane ■ Suite 110 ■ Columbia, MD 21045

February 26, 2021

Ms. Elizabeth Walsh
Chair, Howard County Council
3430 Courthouse Drive
Ellicott City, MD 20143

RE: ZRA196

Dear Chairwoman Walsh:

The floods of 2016 and 2018 combined with the recent Covid 19 pandemic have created economic development challenges for Historic Ellicott City. As the Howard County community comes together to restore the economic vitality of this beloved historic district, it is important that our land use and zoning policies encourage rather than stifle development. Currently, the Upper Court House district allows commercial uses including, but not limited to Bed and Breakfast inn, Institution, Church, School, Office, Conference Center and Community Hall. There is no question that the historic integrity of the district must be protected. Simultaneously, there must be flexibility in allowing future business and property owners to have additional commercial uses.

ZRA-196 was created to petition Howard County Government to allow more commercial uses, specifically three (3) of the categories of commercial uses, which are permitted as a matter of right along Main Street's commercial district to the properties in the Upper Court House commercial district.

Upon review, we believe business and property owners need more certainty in land-use than the potential-for-opportunity the *conditional use* process may provide. *Conditional use* applications are lengthy, require public hearings, and do not give buyers, tenants, landlords or investors the confidence needed to proceed to commit to leases or contract terms or make the kind of investment necessary to support the getting into business or pivoting from one business to another based on business or economic needs. It is important to recognize that the Upper Court House district is an existing commercial district. The additional categories of commercial uses outlined in ZRA196 will serve to enhance the underlying commercial district and not change the underlying district; which would be the impact a *conditional use* would serve to protect if the district were shifting to commercial use from an underlying residential district.

It is our belief that ZRA196 is the action that brings the Upper Court House commercial district into focus as an economic district which contributes to a recovering Main Street with revitalization, restoration, and re-use of existing buildings at its core. Limiting any existing or expanded commercial category use removes the certainty businesses and Old Ellicott City need today. Without this confidence, our town continues to be left waiting, watching, and wondering

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why buildings go dark, remain vacant and why someone; anyone, will not DO something to spark renewal and regrowth.

We believe the uses outlined in ZRA196 will contribute positively to this recovering economic district. Further, it focuses on the revitalization and re-use of existing historic buildings which is at the heart of what attracts residents, visitors, and business owners, alike to Old Ellicott City. For the reasons outlined, the Howard County Chamber request an approval of ZRA196.

I thank you in advance for your consideration. Should you have additional questions, I can be reached at 410-730-4111 ext 107.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Leonardo McClarty". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long, sweeping tail on the letter 'y'.

Leonardo McClarty, CCE
President, Howard County Chamber

CC: Howard County Chamber Board of Directors
Howard County Chamber Legislative Affairs Committee

February 25, 2021

Howard County Council

Letter of Support for ZRA196 (CB21)

Sent via email: councilmail@howardcountymd.gov

Dear Council Members,

I am writing in support of ZRA196 (CB21) to add Personal Service Establishment, Specialty Store and Country Inn business uses to those presently available by right in the upper court house district, HO.

With these additional uses permitted, the upper court house commercial district properties can better support the urgently needed business and economic recovery in our town.

I live on Church Road behind the upper court house district. With businesses shuttered on Main Street, we need more opportunity to bring more business to support Ellicott City.

We cannot attract more people to shop, dine and live in Ellicott City if we do not have a thriving business district.

ZRA196 is an opportunity to expand our Main Street and start attracting people to town again.

Please approve ZRA196.

Sincerely,

Greg Mason and Florence Chu

3749 Church Road, Ellicott City, Maryland 21043