

Date

Mr. Kevin Baynes
Director, Community Legacy & Sustainable Communities
Division of Neighborhood Revitalization
7800 Harkins Road
Lanham, MD 20706

RE: Herbert Hearn Hardware Building – Phase II – Permanent Stabilization

Mr. Baynes,

[I] am writing in support of a grant application to the Community Legacy fund, administered by Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD). The grant is being sought by Dorchester County to complete the permanent stabilization - Phase II - of the Herbert Hearn Hardware Building, located in historic downtown Cambridge, MD. The award of \$500,000 would provide the remaining funds needed to complete the project.

Historic Downtown Cambridge has a great historical past, helping to provide services and goods to a vibrant City. Its prime years were between 1900 – 1970. There are several remaining “titans” that were constructed by local businessmen and families that make up the historic fabric of the historic downtown commercial district. Among them are the Herbert Hearn Hardware Building, being one of the largest commercial spaces downtown.

Recently, significant energy has been directed towards its immediate stabilization following a rapid period of deterioration and the resulting partial wall collapse in October 2015. So far, Dorchester County alongside the City of Cambridge, have acted quickly and decisively to secure the site and re-open the street to traffic following a partial wall collapse in October 2015. The City of Cambridge and Dorchester County governments have worked together in an unprecedented manner to accomplish securing and working towards permanent stabilization of the building.

The immediate priority is to continue the emergency stabilization of the remaining three masonry walls and the removal of collapsed materials that continue to threaten the structural integrity of the remaining portions of the building. The other immediate priority is to secure funding for the Phase II portion of the project - permanent stabilization. Permanent stabilization is vital for two reasons: 1) it helps to secure the envelope, return structural integrity of the structure, and prevent on-going deterioration, and 2) it helps to make the property marketable for re-development.

The building is over 30,000 sf of prime commercial space in an historic downtown and the project remains eligible for Federal and State Historic tax credits. The project success will most likely also lead to the redevelopment of additional buildings along this block of Race Street, which are also prime for historically sensitive redevelopment investment. This commercial block of Race Street is at a tipping

point in its lifespan and in dire need of focused redevelopment efforts which is a priority among multiple community and government partners.

Today, the Hearn building requires our continued and complete attention to secure the permanent stabilization of the structure. This building is absolutely vital to the economic development of the Downtown district.

Please accept our full support of the efforts of this community to save and rehabilitate this historic property. Please contact [my] office with any questions you may have.

Respectfully,