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Kittleman and Weinstein seek extension of State of Emergency in Ellicott City until Oct. 6; announce reopening plans

ELLICOTT CITY, MD – Following a Town Hall meeting Sept. 14 where he received input from hundreds of residents, merchants and property owners, Howard County Executive Allan H. Kittleman today announced he will ask the Howard County Council to extend the State of Emergency in Ellicott City until Oct. 6.

Kittleman was joined at the Town Hall by Council Vice-Chairperson Jon Weinstein who represents the area hardest hit by the July 30 flash flood. Following the meeting, Kittleman and Weinstein agreed to seek an extension of the State of Emergency.

“I appreciate the input we heard from those who attended the Town Hall. Those are the folks who live and work along Main Street and we want to give them the additional time they requested,” said Kittleman. “Extending the State of Emergency is a reasonable and balanced solution and one that Jon and I believe will be very beneficial to the needs of the Main Street community. I am pleased that residents can move back into their homes this weekend and businesses can start the important task of rebuilding.”

While it seeks the extension of the State of Emergency, the County plans to reopen all of Main Street on Sept. 17 at 7:00 a.m. except for the area just east of Old Columbia Pike and just west of Maryland Avenue. Credentials will be required to have full, around the clock access to this area. Businesses will be required to obtain wristband credentials for their own clients, customers and contractors.

Credentialing will be available at the Roger Carter Community Center, 3000 Milltown Drive, daily from 7:00 a.m. to 10:00 p.m. All previous credentials remain valid.

Residents will be allowed to reoccupy their units if their building has been inspected, approved and deemed safe for habitation. Residents should check with landlords before reoccupying. The County will contact building owners of properties that are deemed unsafe.

For residents, personal vehicles will be allowed into the area for loading and unloading only. All credentialed and approved vehicle traffic on Main Street will be one-way eastbound between Old Columbia Pike and Maryland Avenue. Business owners, construction crews and contractor vehicles will be allowed to park along Main Street. No overnight parking will be permitted.

Also on Sept. 17 at 7 a.m., the Patapsco River Bridge will reopen to two-way traffic for access to Maryland Avenue and St. Paul Street. Commuters are urged to use alternate routes.

On-street parking of personal vehicles will remain prohibited on Main Street. Parking will be available in all county lots, with the exception of Lot "B" which is located on the eastern portion of Main Street. Parking in Lot "D" will be limited and two-way access will be from Old Columbia Pike onto Roussey Lane. There will be no direct access to or from Main Street.

"The discussion at the Town Hall meeting provided a clear sense of the need for more time for businesses to prepare for re-opening the historic district" said Weinstein. "I believe the plan we have devised will provide the needed time, while allowing residents whose buildings are ready, to move back home. This is an important step in the recovery process."

Council Chairman Calvin Ball supported the extension as well.

"I remain firm in my resolve to help our businesses and property owners as they continue their recovery efforts while residents seek to return to their homes," said Ball. "We must be cautious in our approach and by the Council extending the State of Emergency, this allows us to support the efforts of the County and our businesses who are still working to rebuild in as safe of an environment as possible."

Kittleman stressed that Main Street remains an active construction zone and it may be necessary to impose temporary restrictions and changes through the flood damaged area. Traffic pattern changes, such as one-way traffic patterns, detours, lane closures, flagging operations and complete closures of the roadway, could occur.

Howard County Police and private security will maintain security checkpoints and enhanced patrols around the clock through Oct. 6.

It is anticipated that Main Street between Old Columbia Pike and Maryland Avenue will reopen on Oct. 6 at 5:00 p.m.

Kittleman signed the initial State of Emergency on July 30, just hours after the flooding. On Aug. 5, the County Council approved the executive's request to extend the State of Emergency through Sept. 7. The County Council subsequently extended it again through Sept. 20.

For more information or assistance, please call 410-313-2900 and continue to visit the recovery resource page at www.ECfloodrecovery.org.

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