

# Carroll County Times

## CARROLL COUNTY NEWS

### **Sykesville awarded \$2 million state grant to renovate B.F. Shriver Cannery building in South Branch Park**

By Sherry Greenfield

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The historic B.F. Shriver Cannery building in Sykesville's South Branch Park is getting a new life, thanks to a \$2 million grant from the state.

The grant money is intended for infrastructure improvements needed to reuse the now-empty building. The funding will also be used to improve pedestrian access to South Branch Park.

"This funding will go a long way in helping Sykesville achieve our long-desired goal of seeing the cannery building put back into productive public use," Sykesville Mayor Stacy Link stated in a news release. "The town will work diligently to develop options in the future reuse of the building, while ensuring that the public plays a part in the final say."

In a follow up interview, Link said the Sykesville Town Council contracted with the Devos Institute of Arts Management at the University of Maryland to help determine a new use for the cannery building. The process could take six to eight months.

Link said engineers have already determined that the building is stable and in "really good shape," and it has a newer roof.

Link said her own vision for the building would be to create an arts space. Town residents will have the chance to weigh in with their ideas via online surveys and public meetings.

The B.F. Shriver Canning Company constructed the building in Sykesville in 1917, according to the Maryland Historical Trust. The cannery is important in Maryland's history for being one of the earliest canning operations in the state. It proved to be beneficial to both southern Carroll County and northern Howard County throughout the 19th and 20th centuries.

The cannery, named for Benjamin Franklin Shriver, was owned by a Maryland company but worked with various farms and canneries in Pennsylvania and Carroll County. The Shriver Company sold the cannery in 1944 to A.H. Renehan & Son, which manufactured apple butter.

The South Branch Park site is on the Patapsco River in Howard County, just across the river from the Town of Sykesville in Carroll County.

Sykesville leases the park from Howard County, and has made several improvements over the years, including adding a large pavilion, play structure, skate park and, most recently, a 56-space parking lot.

“There is no better example of our work to forge strong partnerships and deliver results than right here at South Branch Park in Sykesville,” Howard County Executive Calvin Ball stated in a news release. “Working with strong leaders like Sen. Katie Fry Hester and Mayor Link, we have delivered new parking, walkways, ramps, benches, flowers and trees for this beautiful and historically significant park.”

Ball said with the state funding Howard County looks forward to a “creative vision for the adaptive reuse of the B.F. Shriver Cannery.”

Hester, a Democrat who represents District 9 in Carroll and Howard counties in the General Assembly, issued her own statement about the project.

“I am extremely excited to bring home funds that will invest in our local economy and provide good jobs for Marylanders,” she stated. “Main Street is the heart and soul of Sykesville, and I’m proud to have worked with my colleagues in the legislature to prioritize our community’s infrastructure.

“This project will ensure that Sykesville maintains its position as the ‘Coolest Small Town in America.’”