

TOWNSHIP OF LOWER MERION
Parks & Recreation Committee

Issue Briefing

Topic: Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission (PHMC) Keystone Historic Preservation Construction Grant

Prepared By: Donna L. Heller, Director of Parks & Recreation

Date: December 30, 2016

- I. Action To Be Considered By The Board:** Consider for recommendation to the Board of Commissioners to authorize the President to sign a Resolution authorizing the submission of a grant application, under PHMC’s Keystone Historic Preservation Construction Grant, to complete exterior restoration to the Ashbridge House, subject to obtaining National Register Determination of Eligibility and contingent upon finalizing the language of the Covenant.

- II. Why This Issue Requires Board Consideration:** The Board of Commissioners must approve the grant submission because of the requirement for the Township to commit to providing matching local funds.

- III. Current Policy Or Practice (If Applicable):** The Board of Commissioners typically pass a Resolution approving the application, agreeing to abide by the terms and conditions of the grant agreement should the project be funded. The Resolution is attached for your review.

- IV. Other Relevant Background Information:**

The Township has received notification that applications are being accepted for grants through PHMC’s Keystone Historic Preservation Construction Grant. Applications must be received Monday, March 1, 2017 to be considered for funding.

The Grant will be used to complete exterior restoration to the Ashbridge House, including windows, doors & wood scallop siding with a total project cost of approximately \$210,000. This grant program is for historic buildings and will be subject to the Township obtaining a National Register Determination Of Eligibility. The last Pennsylvania Historical Resource Survey Form was completed in 1988 and is being updated to determine whether the Ashbridge House is eligible for the National Register.

This project was a “B” in the 2017 CIP, and based on the timing of the award of this grant the 2017 expenditures would be limited, with the bulk of the project proceeding in 2018.

The Grant will come with a requirement for a Preservation Covenant if received. According to Karen Arnold, Grant Administrator, the outbuildings on the Ashbridge property are not included in the 1988 Pennsylvania Historical Survey, which would

maintain the outbuildings outside the scope of this Covenant. Preservation covenants are required on all properties receiving funding from the Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission. The covenant is a formal agreement between the PHMC and the grantee in which the grantee agrees to ensure the maintenance and preservation of the architectural and historical characteristics that qualify the property as eligible for the National Register of Historic Places. The covenant is in place for a period of up to fifteen years and requires the owner to contact the PHMC for review and approval prior to the commencement of any substantial construction that may adversely affect the property's eligibility for the National Register.

Staff will have to obtain confirmation that the outbuildings are not included in the covenant in order to preserve our options with respect to the future work planned for the barns on the property.

V. Impact On Township Finances:

The total cost for Ashbridge House restoration of windows, doors & wood scallop siding is \$210,000. With this grant award being July 2017, and executed agreement in October 2017, the Township CIP funds needed for 2017 would be \$10,000 for engineering, construction documents and bidding the project. The bulk of the expenditure would be in 2018 with the completion of the project at \$200,000; (\$100,000 Grant funds \$100,000 Township). Grant supported project expenditures cannot begin until the successful applicant has received a fully executed Grant Agreement. The grant window is October 2017 – October 2019. The grant requires a 100% Township match; in this case the Township would exceed the match for a total Township contribution of \$110,000 with PHMC's Maximum award of \$100,000.

VI. Staff Recommendation: Recommend to the Board that the Township apply for the maximum \$100,000 award grant to contribute to the completion of the exterior restoration to the Ashbridge House, subject to obtaining Nation Register Determination of Eligibility and confirmation that the outbuildings are not subject to the Covenant.