

**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:** January 29, 2018

- I. Action To Be Considered By The Board:** Consider for recommendation to the Board of Commissioners adoption of 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.
- 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 adopt resolutions approving grant applications.

**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 Thursday, March 1, 2018 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 which are open for public use. The Township obtained a National Register Determination Of Eligibility as part of an unsuccessful 2017 grant application. After speaking with Karen Arnold, Grant Administrator, the Township application was very strong and fell just outside of their funding ability in 2017.

This project is an "A" in the 2018- 2023 CIP, and based on the timing of the award of this grant the 2018 expenditures would be limited, with the bulk of the project proceeding in 2019.

The Grant will come with a requirement for a Preservation Covenant if received. According to Karen Arnold, the Outbuildings on the Ashbridge property are not included in the 1988 Pennsylvania Historical Survey, which would reserve 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 obtained confirmation that the outbuildings are not included in the covenant in order to preserve options with respect to any plans 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 in July 2018, and executed agreement by October 2018, the timing would be as follows; the 2018 Township CIP has up to \$10,000 budgeted for engineering which would include construction documents and bidding the project. The bulk of the expenditure would be in 2019 with the construction of the project at \$200,000; (\$100,000 Grant funds \$100,000 Township). The \$100,000 is budgeted in the 2019 CIP projection.

Grant supported project expenditures cannot begin until the successful applicant has received a fully executed Grant Agreement. The grant project time frame is October 2018 – October 31, 2020. 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 that the Township adopt the resolution applying for the maximum \$100,000 award grant to contribute to the completion of the exterior restoration to the Ashbridge House.