

## **TOWNSHIP OF LOWER MERION**

### ***Building & Planning Committee***

#### **Issue Briefing**

**Topic:** A Resolution supporting a request for \$35,000 grant from DCED Keystone Communities Program

**Prepared by:** Eric Persson, Economic Development Specialist

**Date:** July 2, 2018

**I. Action To Be Considered By The Board:**

Approval of a Resolution supporting the request for \$35,000 in grant funds from DCED Keystone Communities Program to continue implementation of commercial façades improvement in Lower Merion Township. The required matching funds must be provided by successful applicants.

**II. Why This Issue Requires Board Consideration:**

A resolution by the Board of Commissioners is a requirement to submit a grant application for these funds.

**III. Current Policy Or Practice (If Applicable):**

The Board of Commissioners has approved similar resolutions for this grant program in 2008 and 2012 as well as other State programs.

**IV. Other Relevant Background Information:**

The Township of Lower Merion has been successfully awarded previous grant funding from DCED to help with facade improvements on commercial properties in the Bala, Bryn Mawr, and Merion-Cynwyd commercial areas; areas previously identified by DCED to be architecturally consistent with the grant guidelines. The Township completed its last grant disbursement in May, and the current grant program has been fully disbursed. The new DCED grant application window is now open until August 31.

Private commercial property owners and/or business owners have an opportunity to utilize the grant funds to make improvements to their buildings in our commercial areas. The matching reimbursement grant funds supplied are not by the Township, but rather by the successful applicants; which can be either commercial property owners or business owners (with permission of the property owner). Individual grant awards are up to \$5,000 per applicant, matched on a 50/50 basis by the applicant.

All façade work proposed under the grant program follow the Secretary of Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation. The program funds can only be used for exterior facade improvement only. Examples of eligible activities include rehabilitation of historic or distinctive features, painting, as well as awnings and/or signage that is compatible with the building.

The Ardmore commercial area has its own independent façade grant program administered by the Ardmore Initiative.

**V. Impact on Township Finances:**

There is no impact on Township Finances as all matching funds are supplied by the individual applicants to the Township program.

**VI. Staff Recommendation**

Staff recommends that the Board of Commissioners adopt a Resolution in support of the application to DCED Keystone Communities Program for grant funding.