

TOWNSHIP OF LOWER MERION
Parks & Recreation Committee

Issue Briefing

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

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Date: February 12, 2019

- I. Action To Be Considered By The Board:** 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 requiring local matching funds.
- 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. The Resolution to support the applications can follow the submission deadline of Friday, March 1, 2019, which was met.

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 \$285,000. 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. This will be the third application for PHMC funding of this project. After speaking with Karen Arnold, Grant Administrator, the Township applications were very strong and fell just outside of their funding ability in 2017 & 2018. Karen stated, many grantees have submitted multiple times for funding before successfully acquiring funding.

This project is an "A" in the 2019- 2024 CIP and based on the timing of the award of this grant the 2019 expenditures would be limited, with the bulk of the project proceeding in 2020.

The Grant will come with a requirement for a Preservation Covenant if received. 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.

V. Impact On Township Finances:

The total estimated cost for Ashbridge House restoration of windows, doors & wood scallop siding is \$285,000. With this grant award in July 2019, and executed agreement by October, the timing would be as follows; the 2019 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 2020 with the construction of the project at \$275,000; (\$100,000 Grant funds \$175,000 Township).

Grant supported project expenditures cannot begin until the successful applicant has received a fully executed Grant Agreement. The grant project time frame is October 2019 – October 31, 2021. The grant requires a 100% Township match; in this case the Township would exceed the match for a total Township contribution of \$175,000 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.