

TOWNSHIP OF LOWER MERION

Building & Planning Committee

Issue Briefing

Topic: Approval of a resolution to support \$25,000 grant request to DCED Keystone Communities Program

Prepared by: Eric Persson, Economic Development Specialist

Date: July 5, 2019

I. Action To Be Considered By The Board:

Approval of a Resolution supporting the request for \$25,000 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:

The DCED grant application window is open until August 30. 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 for other State programs.

IV. Other Relevant Background Information:

The Township of Lower Merion has been awarded previous grant funding from DCED to help with facade improvements on commercial properties in areas previously identified by DCED to be architecturally consistent with the grant guidelines. The Township did apply last year but was unsuccessful. In critiquing the grant application, DCED staff suggested that the grant request was too geographically dispersed, and they felt the impact of the grant could be visibly diluted. In order to comply with the suggestion by DCED staff; the grant request for this year will be for the Bryn Mawr commercial area. By targeting the use of the grant while reducing the grant request amount, it is hoped the request will be reviewed favorably. The Ardmore commercial area has its own independent façade grant program administered by the Ardmore Initiative.

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 are supplied 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.

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.

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.