



Legislation Text

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Subject:

2017 Main Street Historic District Grant Applications

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POLICY QUESTION:

How does the Historical Preservation Board wish to allocate the 2017 Main Street Historic District Grant funds?

BACKGROUND:

§4-6-12(E) of the city code establishes the Main Street Historic District Grant Fund:

There is hereby created a special fund to be known as the Main Street historic district grant fund. Monies in this fund shall be established by city council. The funds may be granted to property owners or tenants of properties within the Main Street historic district or designated historic landmarks in downtown Littleton used for commercial purposes. As used in this subsection, "downtown Littleton" means the area bounded by Santa Fe Drive on the west, the railroad depression on the east, W. Church Avenue on the south and W. Crestline Avenue on the north. Grant funds shall be used for architectural design assistance, facade work, removal of graffiti, maintenance, for signage or other improvements to new tenants. Application for such funds shall be made to the historic preservation board and granted to the applicant upon approval by the board.

The General Fund of the city's 2017 budget includes \$50,000 for the Main Street Historic District Grant Program. By the May 30, 2017 application deadline, the city had received three grant requests totaling \$76,440. These grant requests represent 61% of the larger cost of these projects, which is \$125,185.

The process for awarding the grants is in two steps. The first step is the June 19, 2017 historical preservation board meeting for the board to discuss the applications. Grant applicants must attend the June meeting so they may respond to questions from the board. The second step of the process is that the board will meet again on July 17 to further discuss the applications and to award funding. Applicants are not required to attend the July 17 meeting.

As with the last several years, applicants have reported difficulty gathering bids from contractors, sometimes because of the specialized nature of the proposed projects and in other cases because of the high construction market. Board policy asks for three bids, but in the last several years, the board has been willing to waive that policy case by case.

In all cases, grant related projects will be subject to COA review and approval, either at a staff or board level depending on the scope of the project.

Grant funds are paid following completion of a project and staff inspection of the project for consistency with the grant. The city will reimburse the grantee following submission of proof of payment of the contractor.

STAFF ANALYSIS

Attachment A, Project Summaries, provides basic information about each of the three applications:

1. The historic name of the property
2. The address of the property
3. The primary tenant(s) of the property
4. An overview of the project
5. The project cost
6. The grant request
7. The percentage of the project cost requested as a grant
8. Whether or not the property is new to the district
9. The number of bids submitted with the application
10. A blank space that will be completed once the board has determined its allocation of grant funds

While city code establishes the eligibility requirements for the grants, the board establishes the evaluation criteria. **Attachment B, Evaluation Criteria**, provides an evaluation of each of the three applications for its consistency with the standard criteria, established in the city code, and the discretionary criteria, set by the board.

STANDARD CRITERIA, established in §4-6-12(E) of the city code:

1. To qualify for a grant, a property must be within the Main Street Historic District or be an individual landmark that has a commercial use and is within downtown, as defined by the code.

NOTE: *Two of this year's projects, the Masonic Lodge and the Littleton Creamery, are in the district, but are not individual landmarks, and the third project, the Duncan House, is not in the district, but is an individual landmark.*

REVIEW: *All three projects meet this criterion.*

2. The grant must be for one of the six qualifying types of projects: (a) architectural design assistance, (b) façade work, (c) maintenance, (d) new signage, (e) graffiti removal, or (f) other improvements for new tenants.

NOTE: *Each of the proposed projects is for at least one of these qualifying types of projects. The Masonic Lodge is both façade work and maintenance, the Littleton Creamery is architectural design assistance, maintenance and other improvements for new tenants, and the Duncan House is façade work and maintenance.*

REVIEW: *All three projects meet this criterion.*

DISCRETIONARY CRITERIA, established by the historical preservation board:

1. All seven elements of an application must be completed:
 - a) A written description of the project
 - b) Photos of existing conditions
 - c) The proposed budget, or anticipated total cost of the project
 - d) Three contractor bids
 - e) The proposed time frame for completing the project
 - f) For façade work, a description of the elements that will be restored or replaced

g) Information about the restoration or replacement of architectural details and materials

NOTE: One of the applications, Weston Masonic Lodge, provided all seven of the elements of the application. The other two applications, had trouble getting three bids for the proposed work. At the time of submittal, the Littleton Creamery application provided two bids for demolition and construction and one bid for electrical work and the Duncan House application contained two bids for siding and trim. The applicants for the Littleton Creamery and the Duncan House have continued to seek bids and may bring additional bids to the first meeting.

REVIEW: In the past several years, by considering each application individually, the board has allowed flexibility on the number of bids presented. Once again, this is a question for the board to consider.

2. Preference is given to properties that have not had previous grant funding.

NOTE: *This criterion may need to be re-evaluated by the board since in past years weight has also been given to projects that have been phased, such as projects at the Masonic Lodge and at the JD Hill General Store. Two of the potential grant projects, the Masonic Temple and the Littleton Creamery, have had previous grants, while the Duncan House has not.*

REVIEW: One property, the Duncan House, has not had any previous grant funding. The Weston Masonic Lodge has received three grants, one for each of the other sides of the building. The Littleton Creamery has a recent grant for the reconstruction of the foundation for the front porch.

3. Properties that have joined the district within the last 12 months have an expanded set of possible project types: certain interior improvements and an extended period for retroactive funding.

NOTE: *None of the three properties for which projects are proposed this year are new to the district.*

REVIEW: *None of this year's projects qualify for these additional project types.*

4. Projects are evaluated for their relative visual impact on the historic character of the district.

NOTE: *All of this year's proposed projects, at a minimum, will have a subtle impact on helping to preserve the historic character of the district. The mortar project at the Masonic Temple is primarily maintenance, as is the siding replacement project at the Duncan House. The demolition and reconstruction project at the Littleton Creamery will have a significant impact on the historic character of the district. While the impact of this project will be somewhat lessened by its being on the rear of the building, the rear of the buildings along the alley between Main and Alamo are increasingly visible as the alley is enlivened by other historic properties such as the View House, Jake's, and the Alley Bar.*

REVIEW: *On Attachment B, staff has provided recommended ratings for the three projects, but recommends that the board members visit each of the three sites and evaluate their potential visual impacts on the historic character of the district. Please remember to visit individually and to not discuss the project with anyone before the meeting.*

5. Projects are evaluated for their ability to respond to health / safety / welfare issues.

NOTE: *Last year, staff recommended that this criterion be added and it has been included again this year. Even though none of this year's projects are a direct response to health, safety, or welfare concerns, it can be argued that each has at least a minimal benefit to potential health, safety, welfare concerns.*

REVIEW: *On Attachment B, staff has provided recommended ratings for the three projects, but recommends that the board members visit each of the three sites and evaluate their potential visual impacts on the historic character of the district. Please remember to visit individually and to not discuss the project with anyone before the meeting.*

The next three attachments, **Attachments C, D, and E**, are copies of materials submitted to supplement the applications, including photographs of existing conditions and bids for the work to be completed.

PROPOSED MOTION:

No motion will be made at this meeting. The grant applicants will be present at this meeting for the board to ask questions regarding the requests.

The board will take formal action at the July meeting.

In preparation for the allocation of grant funds at the July meeting, staff will provide a formal staff communication, a draft resolution, and a series of draft motions.