

Council Agenda Report

Date: February 27, 2017
Prepared by: LaSara Kinser, Planning and Zoning Assistant
Submitted by: Odie Wheeler, Director, Public Works *OW*
SUBJECT: Grant Funding for completion of Historic Preservation Commission design guidelines.

Recommendation: That Council authorize staff to apply for funding through the Maryland Historical Trust Certified Local Government Program, in the amount of \$15,000, to complete the proposed Cambridge Historic District Design Guidelines.

Discussion: In 2013, the City of Cambridge staff and the Historic Preservation Commission undertook a major revision to "Historic District Regulations Design Guidelines: Chapter V. Design Guidelines for the Cambridge Historic District", in order to keep the guidelines consistent with current best practices, and to meet the needs of the residents within the Historic District. The Historic Preservation Commission (HPC), in conjunction with staff and the Council held several public work sessions and developed draft guidelines, "The Cambridge Historic District Design Guidelines", which to date have not been adopted.

Due to staffing issues and turnover within the Historic Preservation Commission, the proposed guidelines have stalled. In evaluating the draft Cambridge Historic District Design Guidelines, staff has become aware of inconsistencies, and of community concerns about the document.

The Planning and Zoning staff's priorities, in alignment with Council Goals, are currently focused on housing issues, which limits staff's ability to focus on the guidelines at this time. Therefore, staff requests City Council to consider hiring a consultant to review and revise the draft Cambridge Historic District Design Guidelines for clarity, correctness, and applicability to the existing community conditions as well as streamlining the process to allow for more administrative approvals, with grant funding.

Funding is available for this project, through Maryland's Certified Local Governments (CLG) program, which is jointly administered by the National Park Service and the Maryland Historical Trust and supported by the federal Historic Preservation Fund. Certified Local Governments are eligible to apply for funding for "non-capital projects that advance the CLG's efforts to protect and preserve historic, archeological and cultural resources." Eligible activities include documenting cultural and historic resources, researching and evaluating historic and archeological sites, developing or updating design guidelines and conducting studies to determine the fiscal impact or feasibility of preservation activities, etc. For 2017, the application period ends February 28th, awards will be announced in April and the project must be completed by July 31, 2018.

Fiscal Impact: A match is not required for this grant program. Staff is requesting approval to apply for \$15,000 which is competitive, and reimbursable. Therefore, there would no net cost to the City.

Approved by: Sandra Tripp-Jones, City Manager

