



Report to: Development Services Committee

Report Date: June 18, 2024

SUBJECT: Commercial Façade Improvement Grant Program - 2024

PREPARED BY: Peter Wokral, Senior Heritage Planner, ext. 7955

REVIEWED BY: Regan Hutcheson, Manager Heritage Planning, ext. 2080
Stephen Lue, Senior Development Manager, ext. 2520

RECOMMENDATION:

- 1) THAT the Staff report, dated June 18, 2024, titled, “Commercial Façade Improvement Grant Program - 2024”, be received;
- 2) THAT Council support the following financial assistance for two projects, representing \$17,288.25 in grant assistance:
 - a) The re-conditioning of the historic two-over-two wooden segmental arched windows and the production of new wooden storm windows at 147 Main Street Unionville, subject to the applicant entering into a Heritage Conservation Easement Agreement with the City (up to a maximum of \$15,000.00);
 - b) The production of new ground sign in compliance with the City’s Sign-By-law at 5 George Street, Markham Village (\$2,288.25);
- 3) THAT the grants be funded through the Commercial Facade Improvement Grant Program Fund, Account 620-101-5699-24015 (\$30,000.00 available for 2024);
- 4) THAT the Mayor be authorized to enter into a Heritage Conservation Easement agreement with the Owner of 147 Main St. Unionville to permit grant funding in excess of \$5,000.00;
- 5) AND THAT staff be authorized and directed to do all thing necessary to give effect to this resolution.

PURPOSE:

This report recommends the approval of the grant assistance for commercial façade improvements at 147 Main Street Unionville and 5 George Street, Markham Village.

BACKGROUND:

The grant programs were created in 2004

Council approved the Commercial Façade Improvement Grant Program (the “Façade Program”) and the Commercial Signage Replacement Grant Program (the “Signage Program”) for commercial properties located in the Buttonville, Markham Village, Thornhill, and Unionville heritage conservation districts, and for individually designated commercial properties located outside of these districts.

The Programs provide financial assistance to motivate positive improvements

The purpose of the Façade and Signage Programs is to encourage and assist in the exterior improvement of privately-owned buildings, in commercial use, through joint public/private action and investment. Both heritage and non-heritage buildings in heritage districts are encouraged to apply. The Programs strive to address substantive improvements rather than short-term, cosmetic changes with the main goal being to help stimulate the revitalization of historic core areas.

Grant assistance is subject to eligibility requirements

Properties within the identified areas must be a commercial use to be eligible for grant assistance. Both owners and tenants of a commercial property can apply and the property must not be in default of any municipal taxes, local improvements, or any other monies payable to the City (fees or penalties). Also, the property must not be the subject of a by-law contravention, work order, or outstanding municipal requirements. Approved work completed since the 2023 deadline for applications to the program may also be considered eligible for grant assistance.

A range of exterior façade improvements are eligible for assistance as described below**a) Heritage Properties**

Eligible facade improvements on heritage properties may include the following:

- i) Repair or restoration of original features (cornices, parapets, eaves, other architectural features)
- ii) Repair, restoration, or replacement of windows and doors
- iii) Cleaning and repair of masonry
- iv) Removal of non-original siding or facing
- v) Installation of new signage in accordance with the Special Sign District policies of the City's Sign By-law

b) Non-Heritage Properties

Eligible façade improvements on non-heritage properties may include the following:

- i) Renovation of existing commercial storefronts in accordance with standard principles of traditional storefront design (fascia board for signage above storefront, appropriate display windows, removal of incompatible alterations, etc.)
- ii) Improvements to the principal facades of incompatible buildings provided such work is sympathetic and compatible with the historic character of the area and the policies of the heritage conservation district plan
- iii) Re-cladding in more traditional materials complementary to the district character

The maximum amount of grant assistance depends on the heritage status of the property

The maximum Façade Program grant is \$10,000 for non-heritage properties and \$15,000 for heritage properties. The assistance is in the form of a 50/50 matching grant that is paid upon completion of approved work. An applicant can receive one grant per calendar year. As a condition of any grant of more than \$5,000 or more, the property owner is required to enter into a Heritage Easement agreement, in perpetuity, with the municipality. For 2024, Council allocated \$30,000.00 to these Programs, as part of the approved 2024 Capital Budget.

Grant recipients must enter into a Letter of Understanding with the municipality

The Letter of Understanding establishes a formal arrangement between the applicant and the City, and outlines the amount of the grant, the work to be done, and the project completion date.

OPTIONS/ DISCUSSION:***The City received two applications for 2024; both are recommended for funding***

Two applications were received by the deadline of April 5, 2024, requesting a total of \$17,288.25, as summarized in Table 1 with further details provided in Appendix “A”.

Table 1: Summary of Grant Requests and the Amount Recommended by Staff			
Address (Heritage District)	Grant Request by Owner ½ of Lowest Quote Provided	Staff Calculation of ½ of Eligible Work	Amount Recommended by Staff based on \$30,000.00 available
147 Main St. (Unionville)	\$15,000.00	\$15,000.00	\$15,000.00
5 George St. (Markham)	\$2,288.25	\$2,288.25	\$2,288.25
TOTAL	\$17,288.25	\$17,288.25	\$17,288.25

Specific criteria are used to evaluate the grant requests

Heritage Section Staff and Heritage Markham, Council’s heritage advisory committee, are required to review the grant applications based on the following criteria:

- The project must comply with the policies and guidelines of the area’s heritage conservation district plan (if applicable).
- Preference is given to applications proposing work on heritage properties.
- On heritage properties, conservation and restoration of original architectural features will occur to the extent possible.
- Projects must obtain municipal approval to qualify.
- The assistance should not reward poor property stewardship.
- Substantive improvements rather than short-term cosmetic patch-ups should be given priority.
- Has the property already received grant assistance from the program in previous years?

Heritage Planning staff consider both applications meet the eligibility requirements, subject to conditions. Heritage Markham reviewed the grant requests on May 8, 2024, recommending the funding of grants for both properties (See Appendix “B”).

Staff support the grant submissions

Staff recommend that Council fund the projects based on the \$30,000.00 available from the 2024 budget.

FINANCIAL CONSIDERATIONS

The requested grants are funded through the Heritage Façade/Signage Replacement Project Account 620-101-5699-24015, which has a 2024 allocated budget of \$30,000.00. The total sum of the grant assistance recommended by staff for allocation through the Facade and Signage Programs for 2024 is up to \$17,288.25.

HUMAN RESOURCES CONSIDERATIONS

Not Applicable

ALIGNMENT WITH STRATEGIC PRIORITIES:

Assisting with the costs of restoring and improving commercial properties individually designated under the *Ontario Heritage Act* and commercial properties in heritage conservation districts promotes private investment, increases property values, and property tax revenue, while strengthening a sense of community and civic pride.

BUSINESS UNITS CONSULTED AND AFFECTED:

Reviewed by: Heritage Markham Committee and Finance Department.

RECOMMENDED BY:

Giulio Cescato, MCIP, RPP
Director of Planning and Urban Design

Arvin Prasad, MCIP, RPP
Commissioner of Development Services

ATTACHMENTS:

Appendix 'A' Summary of 2024 Commercial Façade Improvement/Signage Grant Requests

Appendix 'B' Heritage Markham Extract of May 8, 2024

Appendix 'A'

Summary of 2024 Commercial Façade Improvement/Signage Grant Requests

147 Main Street, Unionville

Status: Designated under Part V of the Ontario Heritage Act and identified as a Class 'A' building with the District. Not currently subject to a Heritage Conservation Easement Agreement



Proposed Work	Quote 1	Quote 2
Re-conditioning of historic wooden windows and fabrication of new traditional wooden storm windows	David Wylie Restoration Ltd.	Casella Carpentry Services Corp.
Total Cost	\$38,809.85	\$33,702.25

Staff Comment: Staff support the grant funding up to \$15,000.00 (the maximum permitted based on the lowest quote provided) subject to the applicant obtaining a heritage permit for the work, and entering into a Heritage Conservation Easement agreement with the City.

5 George Street, Markham Village Heritage Conservation District, Robbins Properties Ltd.

Status: Type 'A' heritage building the Markham Village HCD and subject to a Heritage Conservation Easement Agreement



Completed Work	Quote 1	Quote 2
Installation of new ground sign approved by the City	Carver Creek Signs	None provided
Total Cost	\$4,576.50	NA

Staff Comment: Staff supports grant funding of \$2,288.25 (1/2 the value of the invoice provided) as the application meets the eligibility requirements of the program.

Appendix ‘B’
Heritage Markham Extract of May 8, 2024



13

**HERITAGE MARKHAM
EXTRACT**

Date: May 15, 2024

To: R. Hutcheson, Manager of Heritage Planning
P. Wokral, Senior Heritage Planner

EXTRACT CONTAINING ITEM # 5.5 OF THE FOURTH HERITAGE MARKHAM
COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON May 8, 2024

5. PART THREE - CONSENT

5.5 REVIEW OF 2024 GRANT APPLICATIONS

**2024 COMMERCIAL FAÇADE IMPROVEMENT GRANT PROGRAM
147 MAIN STREET, UNIONVILLE, 5 GEORGE STREET, MARKHAM
VILLAGE (16.11)**

File Numbers:
n/a

Recommendations:

THAT Heritage Markham supports a matching grant of up to \$15,000.00 for the re-conditioning of the historic two over two windows and fabrication of new traditional wooden storm windows at 147 Main Street Unionville subject to the applicant obtaining a Heritage Permit for the proposed work and entering into a Heritage Easement Agreement with the City;

THAT Heritage Markham supports a matching grant of \$2,288 for the new ground sign located at 5 George Street, Markham Village;

Carried
