



Report to: Development Services Committee

Date: May 31, 2011

SUBJECT: Commercial Façade Improvement Grant Program for Heritage Districts 2011
PREPARED BY: Peter Wokral, Heritage Conservation Planner ext. 7955

RECOMMENDATION:

- 1) THAT the report entitled “Commercial Façade Improvement Grant Program for Heritage Districts 2011” be received;
- 2) AND THAT the applications for the Commercial Façade Improvement Grant Program be approved, provided that the applicants comply with the eligibility requirements of the program;
- 3) AND THAT 147A Main St. Unionville receive up to \$15,000.00 of grant assistance (subject to the lowest quote), provided the applicant revises their application to reflect an accurate restoration of the façade(s) of this building to its original late 19th century appearance based on local surviving historical examples, and physical evidence obtained on site, to the satisfaction of the Manager of Heritage Planning, and provided the applicant obtains the necessary approval, and enters into a Grant Agreement and Façade Easement with the Town;
- 4) AND THAT 4400 Highway 7 E. Unionville receive \$10,000.00 of grant assistance to help pay for the work already completed to improve the appearance of the property, provided that the applicant enters into a Grant Agreement and Façade Easement with the Town;
- 5) AND THAT 8 Main St. N. receive \$5,252.12 of grant assistance, provided the applicant fabricates 3 pairs of historically accurate louvred shutters, and paints the historic windows, to the satisfaction of the Manager of Heritage Planning, and provided the applicant obtains the required approval, enters into a Grant Agreement with the Town, and the existing Façade Easement agreement is updated to include the replicated shutters;
- 6) AND THAT 190 Main St. N. receive up to \$15,000.00 of grant assistance, (subject to the lowest quote) to accurately replicate the historic woodwork of the front veranda, provided that the applicant also replaces existing inappropriate windows and the front door on the heritage portion of the building with an appropriate heritage door and windows to the satisfaction of the Manager of Heritage Planning, obtains the required approval, enters into a Grant Agreement with the Town, and the existing Heritage Conservation Easement agreement is updated to reflect the replicated windows and door;
- 7) AND THAT Council authorizes the Mayor and Clerk to enter into Façade Easement Agreements with the owners of 147A Main Street Unionville and 4400 Highway 7 E. Unionville, and to update the existing Façade and Heritage

Conservation Easement agreements for 8 Main St. N. and 190 Main St. N to reflect the proposed improvements, and any other documents required to give effect thereto, in a form satisfactory to the Town Solicitor;

- 8) AND THAT Council agrees to waive the eligibility criteria pertaining to the timing of the work already done on 4400 Hwy. 7 E. as well as the provision of two competing quotations;
- 9) AND THAT the grants be funded through the Heritage Façade Improvement/ Sign Replacement Project Account 620 101 5699 9059 in the amount of \$33,000.00 and Account 620 101 5699 10013 in the amount of \$12,252.12.

And that Staff be authorized and directed to do all things necessary to give effect to this resolution.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

“Not Applicable”

PURPOSE:

The purpose of the report is to recommend the approval of grant assistance for commercial façade improvements for properties within the Town’s heritage districts.

BACKGROUND:

Council approved the Commercial Façade Improvement Grant Program for commercial properties located in the Town’s three Heritage Conservation Districts on June 8, 2004.

The purpose of the program

The purpose of the façade improvement program is to assist in the exterior improvement of privately owned buildings in commercial use located within the Town of Markham’s heritage districts. The financial assistance is available to encourage the restoration and improvement of commercial building facades in the heritage districts/ main street areas. Both heritage and non-heritage buildings in commercial use are encouraged to apply.

Eligibility requirements for grant assistance

Commercial properties located in the Town’s heritage districts are eligible for the façade grant program. Owners and tenants of commercial property can apply for assistance. The subject property must not be in default of any municipal taxes, local improvements or any other monies payable to the Town (fees or penalties). Also, the property must not be the subject of a by-law contravention, work order or outstanding municipal requirements, and the proposed work cannot commence prior to application approval.

Types of improvements that are eligible for assistance

Eligible facade improvements on **heritage properties** may include:

- Repair or restoration of original features (cornices, parapets, eaves, other architectural features).
- Repair, restoration or replacement of windows and doors.

- Cleaning and repair of masonry.
- Removal of non-original siding or facing
- Installation of new signage in accordance with the Town's Sign By-law for Special Sign Districts

Eligible façade improvements on **non-heritage properties** may include:

- 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.).
- Improvements to the principal facades of incompatible buildings being sympathetic and compatible with the historic character of the area and the policies of the heritage conservation district plan.
- Re-cladding in more traditional materials complementary to the district character.

Amount of grant assistance

The maximum façade 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 \$5,000 or more, the property owner is required to enter into a façade easement agreement, in perpetuity, with the municipality.

Applicants who secure grant approval are also required to enter into a Grant Agreement/ Letter of Understanding with the municipality. This Agreement establishes a formal arrangement between the applicant and the Town, and outlines the amount of the grant, the work to be done and the project completion date.

OPTIONS/ DISCUSSION:

Four applications were received in February 2011 in response to latest advertisement of the program

The review of grant applications is undertaken by Heritage Section Staff and Heritage Markham, Council's heritage advisory committee. In total, four applications were received by the February 28, 2011 deadline and these have been reviewed. (See Appendix A for a summary of each requested grant). The following criteria were considered when reviewing the applications for assistance:

- The project must comply with the policies and guidelines of the area's heritage district plan;
- 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.

The grant application for 147A Main Street, Unionville is recommended for approval with conditions

The façade improvement application for 147A Main Street Unionville is recommended for approval up to \$15,000.00 (subject to the lowest quote) provided that the building is restored to its original late 19th century appearance rather than the more cosmetic improvements proposed in the application. A revised application should include a restoration plan for this building providing for the restoration and/or replication of the original cladding materials, reinstatement of a period storefront, and replication of the second storey windows. Given that there are no known late 19th century photographs illustrating the original appearance of the building, the restoration plan should be based on details found on other similar local historical examples, and physical evidence obtained on site. Recommendation for approval is also conditional on a review by Town departments determining that there are no outstanding issues related to the property, the owner entering into a Grant Agreement/Letter of Understanding, and a Façade Easement agreement with the Town.

The grant application for 4400 Hwy.7 Unionville is recommended for approval with conditions notwithstanding the eligibility requirements of the program

The applicant has already completed work at this property with the exception of the windows, and could only provide an account of what the work has cost to date instead of the two competing quotations required by the program. These two factors would normally disqualify the applicant from meeting the eligibility requirements of the program. However, due to business constraints, the work undertaken by the applicant could not wait until the regularly planned advertisement of the program, but the alterations meet the intent of the program, and significantly improve the appearance of this property. The value of work to date has exceeded \$35,000.00, and the alterations have been approved by both Heritage Section Staff and Heritage Markham through the Building Permit process. The maximum grant of \$10,000.00 is recommended for this application provided a review by Town departments determines that there are no outstanding issues related to the property, and the owner entering into a Grant Agreement/Letter of Understanding and Façade Easement with the Town.

The grant application for 8 Main Street North, Markham Village is recommended for approval

The façade grant application for \$5,252.12 to construct three pairs of historically accurate, louvered, shutters and to paint the historic wooden windows of 8 Main St. N. is recommended for approval provided that a review by Town departments determines that there are no outstanding issues related to the property, the owner entering into a Grant Agreement/Letter of Understanding with the Town, and the existing Façade Easement agreement being updated to reflect the newly replicated shutters.

The grant application for 190 Main Street North, Markham Village is recommend for approval

The façade grant application to accurately replicate the woodwork of the historic veranda is recommended for approval up to the maximum grant permitted of \$15,000.00 (subject to the lowest quote) provided the applicant also replaces the existing inappropriate windows on the south and east facades, and the door of the east façade, of the heritage portion of 190 Main St. N. with new historically accurate door and windows to the satisfaction of the Manager of Heritage Planning, enters into a Grant Agreement /Letter of Understanding with the Town, and the existing Heritage Conservation Easement agreement is updated to reflect the new windows and door.

FINANCIAL CONSIDERATIONS AND TEMPLATE: (external link)

The total cost of the requested façade grants is \$45,252.12. These applications will be funded through the Heritage Façade Improvement/Sign Replacement Project Account 620 101 5699 9059 in the amount of \$33,000.00 and Account 620 101 5699 10013 in the amount of \$12,252.12.

The remaining balance in the account will be set aside for future Commercial Façade Grant and Sign Replacement grants.

HUMAN RESOURCES CONSIDERATIONS

“Not Applicable”

ALIGNMENT WITH STRATEGIC PRIORITIES:

Assisting with the costs of restoring and improving downtown 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:

The applications were forwarded to Heritage Markham for review on April 13, 2011. Heritage Markham has no objection to the approval of the grant applications subject to the noted conditions. The Finance Department has reviewed this report.

RECOMMENDED BY:

Biju Karumanchery, M.C.I.P., R.P.P.
Senior Development Manager

Jim Baird, M.C.I.P., R.P.P.
Commissioner of Development Services

ATTACHMENTS:

Appendix ‘A’

Summary of Applications and Photographs