



**City of Racine, Wisconsin**  
**AGENDA BRIEFING MEMORADUM**

**AGENDA DATE:**

November 18, 2020 – Planning, Heritage, and Design Commission  
December 7, 2020 – Finance and Personnel Committee  
December 15, 2020 – Common Council

**SUBJECT:** Communication from the Director of City Development requesting permission to apply for a Certified Local Government Historic Preservation Grant from the Wisconsin Historic Society to help fund the preparation of Rehabilitation Design Guidelines for residential properties in Racine.

**PREPARED BY:** Jeff Hintz, CNU-A – Associate Planner, City Development Department

**SUMMARY:** Application for this grant does not commit the City to spending any money or even to do the project. This item only authorizes staff to complete the necessary application steps to apply for the grant. Should the project be successful, formal action to accept the grant money would be brought forward for consideration, and if approved, the project would go to bid for the work.

**PROJECT BACKGROUND & ANALYSIS:** This project would create a standards and guidelines for the proper rehabilitation of residential properties, primarily detached dwelling units. This guide would apply to both landmark and contributing properties but also those not having such designations; we do receive requests from people owning historical homes wondering what type of work would help keep the integrity and potential historical integrity intact. The guidelines would also briefly touch upon mixed use properties with a commercial component on the ground floor with residential uses above. The City’s legacy commercial districts already have design standards based on the Secretary of the Interiors standards, which describe how to treat commercial structures for renovation and new construction.

When trying to gain more local historic districts, especially in residential areas, guidelines are extremely important to have up front. Guidelines show those within the potential historic district how properties will be treated and which types of renovations and changes are appropriate based on the building style and eligibility as a historic resource. Without guidelines, property owners are likely to be hesitant to a local historic district without knowledge of what the rules will be up front.

**RECOMMENDED ACTION:** That Department of City Development staff be authorized to execute the necessary application form to apply for this grant.

**FISCAL NOTE:** Department of City Development staff expects this project to cost approximately \$15,000 and that is the amount the grant application will be for. If awarded the project will be bid and finalized at that time.