



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

**AGENDA DATE:**

March 24, 2021 – Planning, Heritage, and Design Commission  
April 12, 2021 – Finance and Personnel Committee  
April 19, 2021 – Common Council

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

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

**SUMMARY:** On December 15, 2020 the Common Council authorized staff to apply for this grant and submit any necessary documents to apply. On February 23, 2021 Planning Division staff was notified that the grant was awarded by the State Historical Society in the amount of \$10,000. Note, this was a \$5,000 decrease from the original staff estimate for this project. based on guidance from the State CLG coordinator and the quote staff received when originally applying. The project will need to be narrowed and focused on a specific time period of housing unit to fall within our grant amount.

Next steps in the following order are: execution of a Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) with the State Historical Society, going to bid for the project, selecting a bidder, having the survey completed, acceptance of the work by the State Historical Society, and reimbursement of the funds.

**PROJECT BACKGROUND & ANALYSIS:** This project would create 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 documents to receive the grant and have this work completed.

**FISCAL NOTE:** The authorized grant amount is \$10,000 and the project will fall at or under that amount.