



CITY OF HARRISONBURG
**PUBLIC
WORKS**

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To: Ande Banks, City Manager
From: Thomas Hartman, PE, PMP, LEED AP, Director of Public Works
Date: October 2, 2024
Re: Harrison House Project and Virginia 250 Preservation Fund Grant

Summary:

The Public Works Department will present an update on the Harrison House Project and the Virginia 250 Preservation Fund Grant.

Background:

In 2014, the City of Harrisonburg acquired the historic Harrison House from Asbury United Methodist Church with a vision to restore this key landmark. The restoration project was supported by a pledge from the Margaret Grattan Weaver Foundation, promising \$500,000, which the City would match with an equal amount. However, in 2023, due to the closure of the Foundation, the funds were transferred to the Community Foundation with a condition that they be utilized within three years.

The Virginia Department of Historic Resources (DHR) has established the Virginia 250 Preservation Fund (VA 250) that will award \$20 million through grants to support improvements at significant historic sites and history museums in Virginia in anticipation of the 250th anniversary of the American Revolution and the 1776 United States Declaration of Independence. The City submitted a pre-application to DHR for the Harrison House on August 28, 2024, in order to construct a Terrace Area and perform restorations to the Harrison House. On September 16, 2024, City staff were notified that their pre-application to VA 250 was successful and were invited to submit a full application by October 14, 2024.

The City collaborated with Frazier and Associates and developed the proposed plan that involves demolishing the Hall House Addition to create a Terrace Area. This new space will open up a clear view of the Harrison House and provide connections to Denton Park, Bruce Street, and the Ruby's Parking Lot. The extent of restoration to the Harrison House has not yet been determined, however if the grant is awarded the City will work with historic restoration professionals to plan for these restorations. If successful with the grant request, the work will be completed by June 2026.

The VA 250 grant requires a funding match equal to 1/3 of the grant request. For our project the

City would request \$3 million in VA 250 funds, which will be matched with the \$1 million of existing project funds. City Council previously approved the \$1 million of existing project funds to be used as matching funds for the proposed project at its August 27, 2024, meeting.

City staff seeks a Resolution of Support from City Council to submit as an attachment with the full grant application.

Key Issues:

N/A

Environmental Impact:

N/A

Fiscal Impact:

A Capital project already exists for this project.

Prior Actions:

City Council approved the \$1 million of existing project funds to be used as matching funds for the proposed project at its August 27, 2024, meeting.

Alternatives:

- (a) Approve the project and funding.
- (b) Deny the project.

Community Engagement:

N/A

Recommendation:

Staff recommends that the City Council adopt the Resolution of Support.

Attachments:

- 1. Resolution of Support
- 2. Presentation

Review: