


City of Alexandria, Virginia

MEMORANDUM

DATE: FEBRUARY 24, 2010

TO: THE HONORABLE MAYOR AND MEMBERS OF CITY COUNCIL

FROM: JAMES K. HARTMANN, CITY MANAGER 

SUBJECT: SUBMISSION OF A GRANT APPLICATION TO THE VIRGINIA COMMISSION FOR THE ARTS FOR FUNDS FOR TORPEDO FACTORY BANNERS AND SIGNAGE

ISSUE: Funding for banners and signage recommended by the recently released Torpedo Factory Art Center Study.

RECOMMENDATION: That City Council:

- (1) Ratify the submitted grant application, in the amount of \$20,000, to the Virginia Commission for the Arts' Services to the Field Grant Program; and
- (2) Authorize the City Manager to execute all necessary documents that may be required.

DISCUSSION: In 2008, the Virginia Commission for the Arts (VCA) instituted the Services to the Field matching grant program as a means to provide additional State funding to municipalities. A one-to-one match of State funds is required. These grants support the work of local arts agencies and other organizations that provide services to artists and arts organizations that focus on the development of the arts as a whole in the community or region, and that work to integrate the arts more fully into the community or region. Regranting funds or the costs of presenting arts activities for the public are not funded in this category. The City received its first Services to the Field Grant last year for Fiscal Year 2010.

For Fiscal Year 2011, the City is seeking \$20,000 in State funds. These funds, if awarded to the City, are proposed to be allocated to the Office of the Arts to fund the following marketing efforts for the Torpedo Factory Art Center:

- Outdoor Signs, including Banners
- Indoor Floor Graphics
- Window Art Replacement
- Entrance Awning Replacement
- LED Display

As identified in the recent study conducted by Management Analysis, Incorporated (MAI), signage is the most critical element of effectively marketing the center:

“Among all possible investments in marketing, new signage is the most urgent need and is likely to bring the greatest return in capturing more of the increasing traffic as a result of the water taxi and trolley.”

To support the marketing efforts of the Torpedo Factory Art Center while meeting the economic needs of the City of Alexandria, the Office of the Arts seeks to secure funding to redevelop and refresh the building’s image. New and artistically appealing building graphics are needed to properly market the Art Center as a cultural destination. Outdoor graphics will identify the building as a vibrant art center and will welcome and direct visitors into the building.

The proposed services will support the mission of the Office of the Arts, The Torpedo Factory Artists Association, The Art League and the Alexandria Archaeology Museum and will be executed in collaboration with the waterfront planning process. The banners and signage visible from the exterior will require Board of Architectural Review approval.

Because this grant application was due on March 1, it was submitted contingent upon City Council ratification. If work days cancelled due to the snow storms had not delayed working out a specific proposal and docket item, this docket item would have been presented to Council for approval on February 23.

FISCAL IMPACT: The Virginia Commission for the Arts provides up to 50% of program costs under this grant program. To match the State’s \$20,000, the City has identified \$13,000 of Torpedo Factory CIP funds toward the program cost. \$6,000 will come from contributions from the Torpedo Factory Artists’ Association, The Art League, private individuals and businesses. The Department of Recreation, Parks and Cultural Activities will provide \$1,000.

The City is responsible for normal administrative costs associated with this grant. These costs include financial and reporting oversight provided by the administering agency (the Department of Recreation, Parks and Cultural Activities), as well as the Office of Management and Budget and the Finance Department. It should be noted that no monies are available in the City’s Budget to continue these activities once the grant funds are expended.

STAFF:

Mark Jinks, Deputy City Manager

Tom Gates, Assistant City Manager

James Spengler, Director, Recreation, Parks and Cultural Activities

Alisa Carrel, Director, Office of the Arts, Recreation, Parks and Cultural Activities

Cheryl Anne Colton, Cultural Arts Administrator, Office of the Arts, Recreation, Parks and Cultural Activities