

*City of Alexandria, Virginia*

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**MEMORANDUM**

DATE: NOVEMBER 11, 2009

TO: THE HONORABLE MAYOR AND MEMBERS OF CITY COUNCIL

FROM: JAMES K. HARTMANN, CITY MANAGER *J*

SUBJECT: GRANT APPLICATION AND RESOLUTION FOR A TRANSPORTATION ENHANCEMENT PROGRAM GRANT FROM VDOT TO PARTIALLY FUND RESTORATION OF GADSBY'S TAVERN MUSEUM ICE WELL

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**ISSUE:** Council consideration of a grant application and resolution for a Transportation Enhancement Program grant from the Virginia Department of Transportation.

**RECOMMENDATION:** That City Council authorize the City Manager to:

- (1) Reapply for a federal Transportation Enhancement Program grant to partially fund the restoration of Gadsby's Tavern Museum ice well in the amount of \$200,000, and
- (2) Authorize the City Manager to execute all necessary documents that may be required.

**BACKGROUND:** In 1991, Congress introduced the Transportation Enhancement Program, which requires each state to set aside 10 percent of its Surface Transportation Program funds for transportation enhancement projects. This program offers broad opportunities and federal funding for creative projects that integrate transportation into our communities and environment. The legislation designated 12 activities related to surface transportation, including pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure and safety program, scenic and historic highway programs, landscaping and scenic beautification, historic preservation and environmental mitigation. This grant program is meant to improve non-motorized transportation, enhance the public's traveling experience, revitalize communities, and improve the quality of life.

Gadsby's Tavern Museum consists of two buildings, the ca.1785 tavern and 1792 City Tavern, both built by tavernkeeper and entrepreneur John Wise. Taverns and hotels inherently relate to the history of surface transportation because they were built to provide weary travelers with food and lodging. A unique feature of the City Tavern was the installation of an adjoining subterranean ice well which provided the tavern with a ready supply of ice. As noted in the Alexandria Common Council's minutes, John Wise was given permission to build an ice well under Cameron Street in 1793.

Gadsby's Tavern Museum's ice well is a unique artifact from the beginning of the hospitality and travel industry, providing a cutting-edge amenity to guests. Linked directly to the hotel basement by a brick-walled and vaulted tunnel, the ice well was also accessed by the tavern staff through a small hatch at the street level. Though perhaps not as initially striking as the imposing buildings to which it is attached, the ice well is an important part of Alexandria's historic built environment, a rare survivor in an urban setting, and provides an evocative glimpse into the City's commercial and social history.

With Council's approval, the City applied for this grant last fiscal year, but was not selected for funding. After consultation with the grant program staff, the museum staff has modified their application and is now re-applying for funding. During the intervening year, the Old and Historic District Board of Architectural Review also approved a final design for the ice well, so the project is now largely "shovel-ready."

**DISCUSSION:** If awarded this \$200,000 grant, funds would be used for the restoration/rehabilitation of the ice well, estimated to cost \$400,000. The balance of the funds would be privately raised. The goals of the ice well project are twofold: 1) to preserve the unique structure and 2) to improve the visitor's experience with the ice well. The ice well was originally restored and made visible to the public in the early 1970s restoration of Gadsby's Tavern Museum. Time and the environment have taken their toll on this historic feature.

**GRANT PERIOD:** Awards will be announced in June 2010. The term of the grant is October 1, 2010-June 30, 2011.

**FISCAL IMPACT:** This \$200,000 grant requires a 20 percent match (\$40,000) of non-federal funds through donated materials and services, cash, or volunteer labor. This match, along with the balance of the \$400,000 funds needed for this project, will be raised by the Gadsby's Tavern Museum Society, the 501(c)(3) Friends organization of Gadsby's Tavern Museum, and through special programs sponsored by Gadsby's Tavern Museum. No City funds will be used for this project.

**ATTACHMENT:** Resolution

**STAFF:**

Mark Jinks, Deputy City Manager  
Bernard Caton, Legislative Director  
Lance Mallamo, Director, Office of Historic Alexandria  
Gretchen Bulova, Director, Gadsby's Tavern Museum, Office of Historic Alexandria

**RESOLUTION No.**

WHEREAS, in accordance with the Commonwealth Transportation Board construction allocation procedures, it is necessary that a request by resolution be received from the local government or state agency in order that the Virginia Department of Transportation program an enhancement project in the City of Alexandria; and

WHEREAS, the restoration of the ice well at Gadsby's Tavern Museum, Alexandria's five-star hotel of the 18<sup>th</sup> century, will enhance the hospitality story of this important landmark; and

WHEREAS, the ice well is an important part of Alexandria's historic built environment and a rare survivor in an urban setting, providing an evocative glimpse into the City's commercial and social history; and

WHEREAS, the Gadsby's Tavern Museum ice well is located at an active intersection for foot traffic and is an important attraction for the on-road bikeway; and

WHEREAS, this project is compatible with the City of Alexandria's interests and goals related to historic preservation and supports the economic vitality of our community;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the City Council of the City of Alexandria, requests the Commonwealth Transportation Board to establish a project for the restoration of the Gadsby's Tavern Museum ice well; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that Gadsby's Tavern Museum and its friends group, the Gadsby's Tavern Museum Society, hereby agree to ensure a minimum 20 percent of the total cost for planning and design, right of way, and construction of this project, and that, if Gadsby's Tavern Museum subsequently elects to cancel this project, Gadsby's Tavern Museum hereby agrees to reimburse the Virginia Department of Transportation for the total amount of costs expended by the Department through the date the Department is notified of such cancellation.

ADOPTED: November 24, 2009

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WILLIAM D. EUILLE, MAYOR

ATTEST:

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Jackie Henderson, CMC      City Clerk

**RESOLUTION NO. 2370**

**WHEREAS**, in accordance with the Commonwealth Transportation Board construction allocation procedures, it is necessary that a request by resolution be received from the local government or state agency in order that the Virginia Department of Transportation program an enhancement project in the City of Alexandria; and

**WHEREAS**, the restoration of the ice well at Gadsby's Tavern Museum, Alexandria's 5-star hotel of the 18<sup>th</sup> century, will enhance the hospitality story of this important landmark; and

**WHEREAS**, the ice well is both an important part of Alexandria's historic built environment and a rare survivor in an urban setting, providing an evocative glimpse into the City's commercial and social history; and


**WHEREAS**, the Gadsby's Tavern Museum ice well is located at an active intersection for foot traffic and is an important attraction for the on-road bikeway; and

**WHEREAS**, this project is compatible with the City of Alexandria's interests and goals related to historic preservation and supports the economic vitality of our community; and

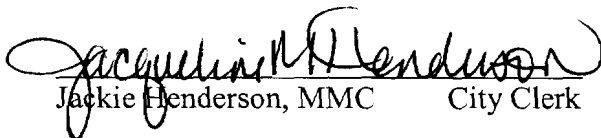
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**WILLIAM D. EUILLE MAYOR**

ATTEST:

  
Jackie Henderson, MMC City Clerk