

City of Montgomery
Planning, Zoning and Landmarks Committee
January 6, 2020

Staff Present

Present

Brian Riblet, City Manager
Connie Gaylor, Clerk of Council
Melissa Hays, Zoning Code and Compliance Officer

Council Committee Members

Craig Margolis, Chair
Ken Suer
Lee Ann Bissmeyer

The meeting of the Planning, Zoning and Landmarks Committee of City Council convened in Council Chambers at 5:30 p.m., with Mr. Margolis presiding.

New Business

Historic Preservation Matching Grant

Ms. Hayes explained to the Committee that in 2019, the CIC once again reinstated the Historic Preservation Matching Grant Program for the remainder of the calendar year. In 2019, the CIC awarded one grant in the amount of \$2,106.44 for exterior storm windows on the Wooley Kelsch House. She stated that although there was only one application in 2019 that staff would like to continue the program and that an applicant has presented an application for consideration for 2020.

Mrs. Bissmeyer stated that she felt the grant was a great program and would like to see it continue.

Mr. Margolis asked what methods were used for outreach.

Mr. Riblet stated that articles have been placed in the monthly bulletin but suggested that letters be sent out to the historic landmark homeowners informing them of the renewal of the grant program.

Mrs. Bissmeyer asked if the program is still of value or has the cost to make improvements to the homes has become too costly in relation to the amount of grant monies the homeowner would receive.

Mr. Riblet stated that he felt it was still a good value for a matching grant program.

Mr. Suer stated that he felt the funding mechanism was still good. He stated that he researched and since the grant program has been offered 10 out of the 30 homes have utilized the matching funds. He explained that in the last four years applicants were awarded \$79,706 which averaged out to \$19,769 a year. He stated that for \$20,000 a year we can incentivize owners to maintain the properties and thought that was very effective.

Mr. Riblet proposed staff obtaining testimonials from the homeowners with before and after shots of the homes after the improvements have been made that could be used as promotional pieces in the bulletin and on the website.

The Committee discussed the Historic Matching Grant program. Mrs. Bissmeyer made a motion to continue the matching grant through 2021. Mr. Suer seconded. The Committee unanimously agreed.

Incentives for Promoting Solar Power

Ms. Hays provided background on the Solar Power incentives and explained that in 2017, the City reinstated the waiver of building permit fees for new solar installations through calendar year 2019. During that time frame a total of 14 solar panel systems have been installed utilizing the incentive program (13 residential installations and 1 commercial installation). The total cost of the waived building fees is \$4,888.08, which averages to approximately \$350 per permit.

Ms. Hays stated that at this time, installing a photovoltaic solar array for a home or business is costly and has a fairly long payback period; however, there are federal tax incentives that can offer relief and the cost of the panels themselves have continued to drop in recent years. The City of Cincinnati and the Greater Cincinnati Energy Alliance continue to partner to provide the Solarize Cincinnati program. Any property within Hamilton County is eligible for participation in the program, which provides a free solar assessment, discounted rates and financing.

Ms. Hays closed by stating that staff recommends reinstating the waiver of building permit fees for new solar installations within the City through calendar year 2021, which would provide a greater incentive to residents if paired with the Solarize Cincinnati program and federal tax credits. The Environmental Advisory Commission is also supportive of this waiver.

Mr. Suer stated that he agrees that offering the incentive makes the city look like a progressive community and we want to encourage energy efficiency and conservation.

Mrs. Bissmeyer stated that she felt it was a small price to pay to be a progressive community.

Mr. Riblet stated that at the federal level there are rebates available as well.

Ms. Hays explained that this incentive can be relayed to the builders during the preconstruction meeting that she conducts with them.

Mr. Suer stated that with the LEED certification being coveted that this would be a good incentive to encourage that type of construction.

Mrs. Bissmeyer made a motion to continue to waive the building permit fees for solar power installation through 2021. Mr. Suer seconded. The Committee unanimously agreed.

Other Business

Mr. Suer stated that there were several Board and Commission members that have expiring terms on January 31, 2020. He made a motion to reappoint the following members to the following boards and commissions:

Steve Uckotter to Board of Zoning Appeals for a term expiring on 1/31/2024

Bob Saul to the Board of Zoning Appeals for a term expiring on 1/31/2024
Stephen Schmidlin to the Landmarks Commission for a term expiring on 1/31/2023
Brett Macht to the Landmarks Commission for a term expiring on 1/31/2023
Vince Dong to the Planning Commission with a term ending on January 31, 2024
Darrell Leibson to the Planning Commission with a term ending on January 31, 2024

Mrs. Bissmeyer seconded the motion to reappoint the aforementioned members to their respective boards and commissions. The Committee unanimously agreed.

Mr. Riblet stated that Governor DeWine established an incentive for the installation of Safe Rooms in homes and was offering a 75% reimbursement for homeowners who installed them in their homes. He stated there could be interest in offering an incentive for this in the city.

Minutes

Mrs. Bissmeyer moved to adopt the minutes of the September 3, 2019 meeting of the Planning, Zoning and Landmarks Committee. Mr. Suer seconded. The Committee unanimously agreed.

Adjournment

Mrs. Bissmeyer moved for adjournment. Mr. Suer seconded. The Committee unanimously agreed.

The Planning, Zoning and Landmarks Committee meeting adjourned at 6:00 p.m.


Chair