



**The Alpena Downtown Development Authority's**

**FAÇADE IMPROVEMENT GRANT PROGRAM**

**For**

**2008**

# The Alpena Downtown Development Authority's

## FAÇADE IMPROVEMENT GRANT PROGRAM

### **Program Background**

The Alpena Downtown Development Authority (hereinafter referred to as the “DDA”) established its Façade Improvement Grant Program to encourage exterior improvements to existing buildings within its specific downtown DDA district in a manner that preserves the unique historical characteristics of those buildings. While it recognizes that it can not mandate the specific exterior improvements that property owners make to their buildings, to encourage adherence to certain design standards desired by the DDA **to preserve the original architectural characteristics of our downtown buildings**, the DDA determined that it could provide interested businesses with a financial incentive to do so in the form of a façade improvement grant. The DDA completed a Market Analysis and Downtown Strategic Plan in June, 2003 and it identified a façade grant program as an important element in helping to revitalize its downtown business district.

### **Program Eligibility Requirements**

- a.) Properties located within the legal boundary of Alpena's downtown district engaging in retail, commercial, entertainment or office services shall be deemed eligible for grant funding. Any question concerning the eligibility of a specific property may be answered by contacting the Executive Director of the Alpena DDA. A determination shall be provided to the interested party within 2 business days following receipt of the inquiry.

- b.) All property taxes must be paid up to date for any property that would be under consideration for a façade grant. Additionally, all city accounts in the name of the applicant must be current as well.
- c.) Grant funding may be requested for any façade (front, side or rear) that fronts on a public right-of-way (street, alley or public parking lot). Higher consideration for funding will be given to work proposed on a façade fronting a city street.
- d.) Buildings that have improvements proposed under a façade grant application must have basic structural integrity and an intact roof such that the applicant is able to obtain a basic building permit for the proposed work thereby protecting the DDA's possible investment in it.
- e.) Applicant must be carrying property insurance coverage on the property to receive the façade grant improvements and must provide a certificate of that coverage to the DDA with their application.

**Ineligible Uses of Façade Grant Funds**

- a.) Existing debt
- b.) Property acquisition
- c.) Interior improvements, equipment or furnishings
- d.) Site plans, building permits or sign permit fees
- e.) Property appraisal costs, legal fees, or loan origination fees
- f.) Labor costs paid to the owner/applicant or their relatives unless they are a licensed contractor and specific approval is granted as part of the application review process

## **Grant Awards**

The DDA façade grants programs will award grants under the program in any amount requested from a minimum award of \$500.00 up to a maximum award of \$ 5,000.00. Applicants for a grant must provide a matching amount to their grant request based on a dollar for dollar basis.

An applicant's proposed improvement project total can exceed \$ 10,000.00; however the DDA's participation will still be limited to a maximum amount of \$ 5,000.00.

All grant projects awarded funding must have the proposed work completed within 180 days, beginning with a written notification of the grant award, unless a specific written extension has been requested by the applicant and approved by the DDA due to extenuating circumstances documented by the applicant.

## **Pre-Application Process**

Persons interested in applying for a façade grant under the DDA's Façade Grant Program must contact the Executive Director of the DDA before any work has been done on the project. The potential applicant will be sent an application packet and will be asked to set up a time to meet with the Executive Director and the DDA's Design Committee to review the program guidelines. At this Pre-Application meeting, the Executive Director and Design Committee will be able to provide the potential applicant with a preliminary determination as to whether the proposed project meets the intent of the DDA's Façade Grant Program and, if it does, the potential applicant will be encouraged to complete the application and return it with all of the required information and drawings listed below in the summary of the program requirements.

Applicants interested in more detailed information concerning historic guidelines for their potential rehabilitation/renovation project, can be provided with sources of information available on-line or can pick up copies of that information which are available in the office of the DDA's Executive Director, Lynn Kolasa.

Persons applying for a grant can be either a property owner or a tenant, if the tenant obtains the property owner's written permission to make the desired improvements to their building.

### **Submittal Requirements**

The DDA's Design Committee will review all applications submitted under the program and make a final determination of approval or denial of a grant award. The following information must be submitted with the application:

- 1.) Grant application form, signed and executed.
- 2.) Detailed description of the work proposed and justification as to why the request meets the DDA's desired intent of preserving or enhancing the historical character of their building in the downtown district.
- 3.) Detailed cost estimate from a minimum of two qualified contractors for the work proposed and the name, address and phone number of the person responsible for the preparation of the estimate.
- 4.) Business name, address, phone number and references for the contractor and any subcontractor(s) the applicant is proposing to hire to complete the project improvements.

- 5.) Any architectural plans and/or sketches and specifications needed to understand the scope of the work proposed.
- 6.) Color schemes and materials proposed for the exterior improvements, including painting work, brick replacement work, signage, windows, awnings, etc.
- 7.) A description of the long term maintenance plan proposed by the grantee for the building's exterior once the grant funded improvements are completed.
- 8.) List of the Federal, State and Local permits required for the proposed work.
- 9.) For work proposed by a building tenant, property owner's written permission.
- 10.) Written proof (paid receipts) that all property taxes for the property under consideration have been paid.
- 11.) Copy of certificate of property insurance shall be provided.
- 12.) A project timeline or schedule shall be provided detailing the applicant's expected progress in completing the requested improvements.

### **Review Process**

The DDA's Design Committee meets regularly once a month (last Tuesday of each month) to conduct business. All applications for funding under this program will be reviewed at those meetings unless the applicant can provide a compelling reason for calling a special meeting to consider their application.

Approval of the final design for the project will be made by the DDA's Design Committee based upon the following criteria:

- 1.) The historical accuracy of the design proposal. Applicants are strongly encouraged to contact the City of Alpena's Historic Preservation Committee prior to the submittal of a grant application to discuss details of historic significance that may be involved in their façade grant application. The committee may be able to provide photographs or other pertinent information about the building to the applicant.
- 2.) The historical and architectural significance of the building to which the improvements will be made.
- 3.) The visual prominence of the building and its location within the downtown district.
- 4.) The long term maintenance plan for the building's exterior once the proposed improvements are completed.

As part of the DDA Design Committee's review process, the application will be submitted to the City of Alpena's Historic Preservation Committee to solicit their input as to the historical appropriateness of the proposed improvements in the grant application.

All applicants will be notified of the DDA's decision on their grant application within 30 days of the submittal deadline date, unless a written request for additional information has been sent to the applicant. If additional information is requested, the remainder of the 30 day review period will be suspended until such time as the DDA receives the additional information. Once received, the remainder of the 30 day review period will begin again.

## **Rights Reserved**

The DDA reserves the right to reject any and/or all applications submitted for consideration under this program. The DDA reserves the right to modify or amend the program guidelines at any time deemed necessary by the DDA. The DDA reserves the right to discontinue funding for this program subject to the availability of funding for the program.

## **Pre-Construction Meeting**

Prior to the commencement of work under a façade grant, the successful applicant and their contractor(s) must meet with the DDA's Design Committee. Applicants must call the DDA's Executive Director to set up the day and time for this meeting. The purpose of the meeting is to review the specific items of work agreed to in the application to ensure a clear understanding of the DDA's expectations with respect to the historic elements of the project as proposed by the applicant, to discuss the Contractor's schedule for the work proposed to determine if it will take place during and have any effect on any specific downtown activities such as Riverfest, Friday nights, the Brown Trout Festival, etc., to determine if there are any special accommodations needed during the work (such as closing off sidewalks, dumpsters to be placed on sidewalks or in parking spaces, etc.) and to review the DDA's requirements for handling any proposed changes to the scope of work once the project has started.

## **Project Amendments**

Any design changes proposed by the applicant after the award of a grant under this program (if no change in the grant amount is proposed), must be submitted to the DDA's Design Committee and approved prior to any work being completed, to remain eligible for the original grant amount. Failure to obtain approval for any changes undertaken for an approved project will result in the disqualification of the applicant from the program and the loss of the entire grant funding.

For design changes requested after work has started which would require additional grant funds (only for original project grant awards less than the \$5,000.00 maximum amount), applicants must submit all necessary information (review applicable requirements of original grant) for review by the DDA's Design Committee. A determination of approval for an amended grant amount will be made within 15 days of receipt of all required submittal data.

## **Project Inspections**

Upon receiving a grant award for funding under this program, the applicant agrees to provide access to their building for the DDA's representative for purposes of inspecting the work being completed by the applicant and/or their contractor. It is not the intent of the DDA to become construction inspectors during the applicant's project and as such, they will not be conferring with or advising the applicant's contractor of deficiencies during the course of the work. If, during any visit to the site, an issue of non-compliance is noted by the DDA's representative, the **applicant** will be immediately advised of the problem in writing. The applicant is required to respond to the DDA's Executive Director within 24 hours to provide an explanation of their review of the problem and what is being done to correct it.

## **Disbursement of Grant Funds**

Applicants, shall submit one final request for full payment of the grant funds once all project improvements have been completed and the DDA has conducted a final inspection verifying their compliance with the original grant requirements.

The applicant must contact the DDA's Executive Director when ready to submit a request for payment of the grant funds. The Executive Director will arrange to have the completed work inspected for compliance with the project description and drawings submitted by the applicant with the program application. If the work is found to be in compliance, the DDA shall provide payment of the grant funds within 30 business days of the date of receipt of the request for payment.

If any of the applicant's completed work is found to be in non-compliance with the program requirements during any site visit by DDA representatives, the applicant will be sent a letter from the DDA within 3 business days describing the item(s) of non-compliance. The letter will require the applicant to provide the DDA with a written plan of action describing what actions will be taken to bring the project into compliance with the applicant's original grant proposal. Final payment of grant funds will be withheld until all areas of non-compliance are brought into compliance, inspected, and approved by the DDA.

## FAÇADE GRANT APPLICATION FORM

Submittal Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Applicant: \_\_\_\_\_

Property Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Mailing Address(if different): \_\_\_\_\_

Applicant's Phone Number (Work): \_\_\_\_\_ (Home): \_\_\_\_\_

Total Cost of Proposed Improvements: \_\_\_\_\_

Total Grant Amount Requested (up to a maximum of \$5,000.00): \_\_\_\_\_

Brief Description of Work Proposed :

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***Required attachments are listed on the following page.***

Attached to this application are the following documents:

- 1.) Detailed description of the work proposed and justification as to why the request meets the DDA's desired intent of preserving or enhancing the historical character of their building in the downtown district.
- 2.) Detailed cost estimate for the work proposed and the name, address and phone number of the person responsible for the preparation of the estimate.
- 3.) Business name, address, phone number and references for the contractor and any subcontractor(s) the applicant is proposing to hire to complete the project improvements.
- 4.) Architectural plans and/or sketches and specifications needed to understand the scope of the work proposed.
- 5.) Color schemes proposed for the exterior improvements, including painting work, brick replacement work, signage, awnings, etc.
- 6.) A description of the long term maintenance plan proposed by the grantee for the building's exterior once the grant funded improvements are completed.
- 7.) List of the Federal, State and Local permits required for the proposed work.
- 8.) For work proposed by a building tenant, property owner's written permission.
- 9.) Written proof that all city property taxes are paid up to date for the property under consideration.
- 10.) Copy of certificate of property insurance shall be provided
- 11.) A project timeline or schedule for the proposed improvements

**Applicant:** I have reviewed the program requirements with the Executive Director of the Alpena DDA and I understand that my participation in this façade grant program is contingent upon my compliance with them. I understand that this is a matching grant program and that the DDA will provide funding on a 50/50 matching basis and that the grant money is provided on a reimbursement basis, following completion of the work and approval by the DDA. I understand that design changes not approved by the DDA prior to their incorporation into the project may result in no grant award for the entire project. I also certify that if I am a tenant of the aforementioned property that I have obtained written approval from the property owner to complete the project improvements.

\_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Applicant's Signature

**Owner Authorization Form**

**For**

**Tenant Proposed Façade Improvements**

I, \_\_\_\_\_ hereby authorize \_\_\_\_\_  
to carry out the exterior improvements as detailed in the attached Façade Improvement Grant  
Application Form, on my property located at \_\_\_\_\_  
which is located within the Alpena DDA District.

I also agree to hold harmless the Alpena DDA Board Members, Committee Members, Staff and  
the City of Alpena in the event of property damage or physical injury as a result of working on  
the aforementioned project.

\_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Property Owner

\_\_\_\_\_

Notary Public Signature (affix seal)