



Legislation Text

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City of Alexandria, Virginia

MEMORANDUM

DATE: DECEMBER 7, 2016

TO: THE HONORABLE MAYOR AND MEMBERS OF CITY COUNCIL

FROM: MARK B. JINKS, CITY MANAGER /s/

DOCKET TITLE:

Consideration of a Grant Application for \$125,489 to the Institute of Museum and Library Services to Support the Conservation of the Recently Excavated 18th Century Ship.

ISSUE: Consideration of approval for the Office of Historic Alexandria (OHA) to apply for a grant of \$125,489, and to accept these funds from the Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS) for the conservation of the recently excavated ship from the Alexandria Waterfront.

RECOMMENDATION: That City Council authorize the City Manager to:

- 1) Approve the grant application to IMLS (submitted December 1) for \$125,489;
- 2) Approve the acceptance of funds from IMLS for \$125,489, if the grant is approved; and
- 3) Authorize the City Manager to execute the necessary documents that may be required.

BACKGROUND: Alexandria Archaeology (AA), a division of the Office of Historic Alexandria (OHA), seeks \$125,489 from IMLS to support the conservation of an 18th century ship's hull, discovered during archaeological investigation at the Indigo Hotel development site on the City's waterfront - a crucial step in the ultimate reconstruction and exhibition of this significant resource.

The goals of the overall project are to:

- 1) Record the ship using traditional and digital documentation;
- 2) Conserve and stabilize the hull timbers and fastenings using industry standard

conservation treatment procedures; and

3) Build a support and reassemble the ship for exhibition.

Funding from IMLS will directly support the conservation of the historic ship, the third stage of the project.

DISCUSSION: In the late fall of 2015, archaeologists working at the Indigo Hotel site at Duke and Union Street unearthed the remains of an 18th century ship, buried in landfill prior to 1798 to extend the waterfront into the river east of Union Street. Staff of OHA's Alexandria Archaeology division worked tirelessly through the December holidays and into January 2016 to ensure recording dismantling and removal the ship from the construction site to temporary storage in a tank of water until conservation efforts could begin. Private fund-raising efforts by OHA began immediately and budget allocations for the ship and emergency archaeology issues in FY 2017 have together provided \$100,000 for the project to date. A Request for Proposals to hire a conservator was posted, and OHA is in the process of selecting a firm to conserve and reassemble the ship so that it can be interpreted for the public. The total estimated cost of restoration is likely to be between \$350,000 and \$400,000 and will take approximately five years to complete the documentation, PEG, impregnation, and freeze drying process. OHA has already applied for a grant to help fund the earlier documentation stage of the project from the National Park Service Maritime Heritage Program. The three-year IMLS grant will support the project through the first part of the third phase-actual conservation of the timbers. OHA submitted the grant application on December 1, pending subsequent City Council approval. If not approved, the application will be withdrawn.

FISCAL IMPACT: This grant, if awarded, will provide \$125,489 toward the conservation of the historic ship. Initial public fund-raising in FY 2016 raised \$30,000, and annual budget allocations from the established Wales Alley fund of \$20,000 will be used as matching funds to support the project over a three-year period as well as staff time that can be applied to the match. On-going fund-raising and applications to other granting sources will continue for the remaining conservation actions and exhibition costs during this time period and in future years.

The term of the IMLS grant award is for three (3) years.

ATTACHMENTS: None

STAFF:

Emily A. Baker, Deputy City Manager

J. Lance Mallamo, Director, Office of Historic Alexandria

Gretchen Bulova, Deputy Director, Office of Historic Alexandria

Francine Bromberg, City Archaeologist