



Legislation Text

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City of Alexandria, Virginia

MEMORANDUM

DATE: MAY 2, 2023

TO: THE HONORABLE MAYOR AND MEMBERS OF CITY COUNCIL

THROUGH: JAMES F. PARAJON, CITY MANAGER /s/

FROM: GRETCHEN BULOVA, DIRECTOR, OFFICE OF HISTORIC ALEXANDRIA

DOCKET TITLE:

Consideration of a Grant Application to National Endowment for the Humanities for Infrastructure and Capacity Building.

ISSUE: The Office of Historic Alexandria (OHA) is seeking a \$150,000 Grant from the National Endowment for the Humanities to support the Office of Historic Alexandria long term storage planning.

RECOMMENDATION: That City Council:

- (1) Approve the grant application, due May 17, 2023; and
- (2) Authorize the City Manager to execute all the necessary documents that may be required.

BACKGROUND: OHA faces a significant challenge in preserving and storing the vast collection of artifacts, documents, and images it has amassed over the years. With limited resources and infrastructure, the OHA is struggling to maintain and provide access to its collections in a way that meets modern standards for long-term preservation and storage.

For example, the Archaeological Curation Facility at Payne Street (Room 28) was designed in 1990 to hold roughly 3000 boxes of artifacts on compactor shelving. As of December 2022, this space is over 96% full and there are fewer than 50 box locations left. Alexandria Archaeology curates archaeological collections from archaeological sites in Alexandria that derive from the City's Archaeological Protection Code and other excavations. Staff anticipates that the remainder of the artifact collection from the Robinson Landing Site will be transferred to the City in the next year. That collection consists of nearly 200 boxes of artifacts and holds great research, interpretive, and exhibit potential. Beyond this large collection, accessioning of several other smaller collections is anticipated in the next year. By December 2023, the Payne Street Curation Facility will be 110% full.

The Infrastructure and Capacity Building Program supports the design, purchase, construction, restoration, or renovation of buildings or sites of national, historical, architectural, or cultural significance and facilities that house humanities collections or are used for humanities activities.

DISCUSSION: If awarded this grant, the funds are planned to plan, design, and build or renovate a curation facility.

FISCAL IMPACT: An award of \$150,000 must be matched with \$1 from third-party donors for every \$1 in federal funds. This total would equal \$150,000 in matching donations funding over the 5-year period of performance.

STAFF:

Emily A. Baker, Deputy City Manager
Eleanor Breen, City Archaeologist