



AGENDA INFORMATION SHEET

DEPARTMENT: Economic Development

ACM: Christine Taylor

DATE: September 13, 2023

SUBJECT

Receive a report, hold a discussion, and make a recommendation to City Council regarding a Downtown Reinvestment Grant Program application for 115-117 W. Hickory St. by Robert Moses. The Downtown Economic Development Committee recommends approval 10- 0.

BACKGROUND

Beth Marie's Old Fashion Ice Cream, a popular establishment in Denton, Texas, resides in the historic building at 115-117 W. Hickory St, located on the face of Square. The shop opened its doors in November 1998 and became a beloved locale.

The building itself, built in 1846, carries a rich history. Originally a two-story structure, it was altered significantly due to a fire in the 1970s that claimed its second level. Over the years, it has served various roles in the community, functioning as a general store, photo studio, waterbed retail outlet, mini-mall, and home to retail stores such as Elements of Design and Mad World Records. More Fun Toys, another local favorite, also found its home here in September 2020, reinforcing the building's longstanding tradition in the community.

After purchasing the building in 1997, Robert "Bob" Moses undertook a major interior and exterior renovation of the entire property, which had been neglected for several years. A complete electrical rewire and gas line update was done, and heating & air conditioning was installed via a roof-mounted "drop through" installation. The floors were replaced, and the front of the building was repaired and updated to reflect the appearance of the transom windows destroyed by the fire in the 1970s. A new roll-up awning was installed, utilizing the original hinged metal arms to preserve the historic elements of the building. This work was completed by 1998.

In 2003, Bob became a one-third owner/partner in Beth Marie's Old-Fashioned Ice Cream & Soda Fountain Shop. The partnership expanded the business into two additional locations: Unicorn Lake in 2009 and Old Downtown Carrollton Square in 2017. Each location serves between 48 and 64 flavors. Beth Marie's Old Fashioned Ice Cream, still made and hand-packed in Denton, is also available at Central Market grocery stores, local restaurants, and convenience stores. Several Beth Marie's ice cream flavors are named after Denton icons, including Courthouse Pecan, Peterbilt Big Rig, Frenchy Orange, and the City of Denton-North of Ordinary. Beth Marie's actively supports schools, non-profit organizations, and social organizations within the community.

Since completing the original improvements, the building has been repainted twice, the awning replaced once, and the signage for Beth Marie's updated once. The signage over the 115 W. Hickory suite has been

replaced three times due to tenant changes. The Beth Marie's Ice Cream sign over the 117 W. Hickory suite was renewed approximately 10 years ago in 2013 and received a \$3,000 Downtown Reinvestment Grant award. The More Fun Toys sign is only 1.5 years old and remains in good shape. However, the afternoon sun has faded the Beth Marie's Ice Cream signage, the awning, and building paint, indicating the need for an update. The paint, awning, and signage for Beth Marie's will be refreshed to maintain the appearance of the south side of the Denton Historic Square.

The project is located within the Downtown TIRZ #1 and Downtown Square Districts. It has been reviewed by the Historic Preservation Officer for Design Consistency, as outlined in the Denton Development Code Section 4.10.1, and received approval to proceed with the proposed updates to the building façade. Additionally, the signage update has been reviewed by the Department of Development Services Building Safety and has an approved permit.

Projected Improvements includes: Façade/Building Rehab, Awnings, and Signs

Project Submitted Expenses: \$8,044

Grant Request: \$4,022

Applicable Policy Limits:

- *Façade/Building Rehab:* Grants are limited to a 50% match of the eligible project's costs, with a cap of \$50,000 per grant for facade, roof, and foundation work. Roof and foundation repair may constitute no more than half of the request and shall only be considered for funding if included as a portion of a larger project. Paint-only grants are limited to a 50% match with a cap of \$7,500 per grant.
- *Awnings and Signs:* Replacing, adding or repairing awnings and signs. Signs may include signboards, projecting signs and pedestrian signage (includes window sign, hanging sign and awning/canopy Sign).

PRIOR ACTION/REVIEW (Council, Boards, Commissions)

Aug. 3, 2023 – The Downtown Economic Development Committee reviewed and scored the application. The application received an average score of 23 points, making it eligible for a recommendation of up to \$25,000. This score supports the recommendation to approve the application as requested. The grant application request and DEDC recommendation are for \$4,022.

EXHIBITS

Exhibit 1 – Agenda Information Sheet

Exhibit 2 – Grant Application

Exhibit 3 – HPO Review

Exhibit 4 – Presentation

Respectfully Submitted:

Christina Davis

Business Development Administrator