

Swiss Bear, Inc.

Property Enhancement Grants

Description of Property Enhancement Grant Categories

Façade – defined as one side of a building regardless of the number of stories. Each storefront of a building can be considered a façade. The rear and side of the building may also be considered a façade, with priority given to the front of the building. Awnings are covered under façade.

Signage – includes both exterior signs and vinyl window decals

Landscape – includes foundation and container plantings, as well as private walkways

Purpose of the Program

The Swiss Bear Property Enhancement Grant is an incentive-based measure. It is intended to encourage and provide an economic incentive for the renovation of building facades in Greater Downtown New Bern, provide implementation of appropriate design standards for the rehabilitation of historic buildings, and provide a visible contribution to the Greater Downtown New Bern commercial district by displaying good design and using quality materials.

Examples of exterior improvements include:

- Removing false fronts and architecturally inappropriate features such as metal canopies
- Safe cleaning of brick and stone fronts
- Sign replacements
- Installation of canvas awnings
- Window and door repairs
- Repainting
- Structural repair
- Historic reconstructions
- Landscaping including walkways and plantings
- Replacing or adding address information

Who is eligible?

- Any property owner or business tenant in a commercial building in the project area is eligible to apply. Government facilities and private dwellings are excluded from consideration.

- Either the property owner or the business tenant of building may submit an application. If the business tenant is the applicant, the property owner must provide written consent with his or her signature giving explicit permission for the property enhancement to be completed. The property owner should also attach any provisions for renovations undertaken.

Criteria:

- All grant application proposals must meet zoning and code requirements of the City of New Bern and must comply with Property Enhancement Grant guidelines and Historic Preservation Commission (HPC) guidelines where applicable.
- Only exterior façade renovations are eligible for consideration under the Property Enhancement Grant program. The costs of limited interior alterations such as display window changes may be included only if they are a necessary part of the façade design.
- Priority consideration will be given to proposals that make highly visible and significant design contributions, and which contribute to the program goal of preserving the architectural, historic and commercial character of Greater Downtown.
- A property does not have to be occupied at the time a Property Enhancement Grant application is submitted.

Funding:

- Property Enhancement Grant *funding categories*
 - Façade - \$2500 or half (1/2) the cost of the project, whichever is less
 - Signage - \$750 or half (1/2) the cost of the project, whichever is less
 - Landscape - \$500 or half (1/2) the cost of the project, whichever is less
- Property Enhancement Grants will provide a 1:1 dollar match for approved projects up to the category limit (s).
- Grant amounts are limited to the amount of the grant category and will not exceed the amount of the estimate submitted with the grant application.
- Grants are paid only when the approved project is completed in accordance with the plans and specifications submitted with the proposal.
- The final award amount is based the documentation of actual costs, up to the amount that was awarded.
- A project that alters submitted plans without prior approval will be disqualified for payment. Designs not completed as submitted will also be disqualified.

Approval:

- Where appropriate, the project should follow the “Secretary of Interior’s Standards for Rehabilitation” of commercial buildings (see attached.)
- All applicants’ design proposals must meet the building code requirements for the City of New Bern.
- An applicant may apply for multiple categories, however an applicant will not be considered for funding for the same or similar project for a minimum of five (5) years.
- All applicants must obtain at least two cost estimates of labor and materials and provide copies of each estimate with the application.
- Applications should be submitted no later than March 31, 2019.

Post-approval:

- Applicants, after approval, have up to 90 days to start their projects. Projects should be completed within 12 months from the time the application is approved.
- If the applicant needs more time to start or complete their project, a written statement with a reasonable explanation for the extension must be submitted and approved.
- The business or property owner (depending on who paid for the project) will receive reimbursement once the project(s) is completed, deemed consistent with the submitted project proposal, and approved by the building inspector, if applicable.
- Payment of the grant is contingent upon proof provided of the expenditures and payment thereof.

Swiss Bear, Inc.
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Type of application (check all that apply):

Facade Signage Landscape

Information

Property owner name: _____

Business owner name: _____

Applicant name: _____

Business name: _____

Phone: _____

Street address: _____

Business mailing address: _____

Email address: _____

Use of Building

Current use of building: _____

Proposed use of building: _____

Description of proposed enhancement (attach or email drawing, sketch, or photo specifically identifying changes and paint color for each detail of the enhancement along with a photo of the building in its current condition): _____

Total estimated cost of enhancement (attach 2 estimates): _____

Estimated project completion date: _____

Checklist for completed application:

_____ I have read the Property Enhancement Grant documentation and fully understand the agreement

_____ I have submitted a letter with the building owner's permission and signature, if applicable

_____ I have complied with the Secretary of Interiors Standards for Rehabilitation, where applicable

_____ I have submitted drawings, sketches and/or photos, including color scheme

_____ I have submitted a photo of the building in its current condition

_____ I have submitted two (2) estimates for the proposed project

_____ I have written approval from HPC or have submitted an application to HPC for the project, where applicable. I understand that the Property Enhancement Grant cannot be fully approved until written approval is received from HPC

_____ I agree to hold Swiss Bear, Inc. harmless of any defects in workmanship, liability, damages or other costs associated with this project

Applicant signature and date: _____

Building owner signature and date: _____

For Office Use Only

Date received: _____

Date reviewed – staff: _____

Date reviewed – committee: _____

Date reviewed board (if applicable): _____

Action taken: Approved _____

Not Approved _____

Executive Director: _____

Date: _____