



Agenda Item Summary

File #: RES 21-269, **Version:** 1

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Agenda Item Title

A Resolution Adopting the Village of Oak Park Energy Efficiency Small Rental Grant Program Guidelines

Overview

On April 19, 2021, the Village Board approved a budget amendment of \$200,000 from the Sustainability Fund to expand CDBG/Sustainability Residential Energy Efficiency Retrofit Grant Fund programs to all residents including homeowners, income-eligible tenants and landlords for the direct benefit to renters.

Recommendation

Approve the Resolution

Fiscal Impact

The FY21 Sustainability Fund Budget had \$220,000 for the income-eligible single-family rehabilitation energy efficiency grant program. The \$200,000 budget amendment on April 19, 2021 increased the fund to \$420,000.

Background

The energy efficiency small rental grant program guidelines were modeled after a successful energy efficiency grant program that the Village participated in with the Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning as part of President Obama's federal stimulus program in 2010. Applicants were able to apply for additional funds to optimize energy efficiency. The small rental rehabilitation program is designed to provide financial assistance for owners to rehab their buildings to improve safety and ensure basic liveability standards. Energy efficiency improvements are often not able to be funded. Simple efficiency enhancements can improve occupant comfort and reduce energy costs. This new small rental energy efficiency grant program was established to incentivize owners of multifamily dwellings to schedule a free energy assessment offered by the regional utilities to identify opportunities to save energy for tenants, and optimize building performance with energy-saving upgrades.

The program guidelines are designed to motivate owner/applicant(s) to install energy efficient measures that will provide a direct benefit to tenants and reduce energy costs. As an example, newer LED lights use about 75 percent less energy and last 15 times longer than incandescent bulbs. Heating and cooling upgrades improve and reduce energy costs while providing more efficient temperature control, all while utilizing less energy.

The proposed energy efficiency guidelines are intended to benefit very-low and low income households with

energy-saving installation upgrades. These guidelines extend the benefits of the program in a manner that would provide additional direct benefits to tenants living in up to 7-unit buildings. As an example, new LED lights use about 75 percent less energy and last 15 times longer than incandescent bulbs. Heating and cooling upgrades improve energy costs while providing more efficient temperature control, all while utilizing less energy. Installation of solar panels provides a renewable energy source to reduce emissions and fossil fuel consumption.

The proposed energy efficiency guidelines will allow owner/applicant(s) to apply for reimbursement of the total cost of energy improvements up to a maximum of \$10,000, for purposes of energy upgrades that increase building energy efficiency, reduce energy use and create savings by adding any or all of the following weatherization, cooling and heating, direct installs and efficient lighting measures: 1.) The installation of insulation; 2.) The installation of energy-efficient lighting, including automatic light sensors or timed light sensors; 3.) The installation or upgrade of heating, venting and air conditioning (HVAC) including geothermal installation, and high efficiency shower/faucet upgrades, including thermostat upgrades; 4.) Upgraded water heater; 5.) Air sealing; and/or; 6.) Installation of solar panels to provide an alternative energy source.

Alternatives

Direct staff not to proceed with guidelines.

Previous Board Action

On March 22, 2021, the Board approved a motion for the use of sustainability funds and directed staff to create additional energy efficiency programming for the benefit of all residents including the expansion of income-eligible programs.

On June 28, 2021, staff presented a report on energy efficiency grant program development and the Board directed staff to ensure the resulting grant programs expanded reach to income-eligible residents and their landlords.

On July 19, 2021 and August 2, 2021, the Board approved three resolutions (SFR-091, SFR-092, SFR-090) authorizing single family housing rehabilitation loans that included a cumulative total of \$10,800 in energy efficiency grant funding.

Citizen Advisory Commission Action

As advised previously by the EEC, all energy efficiency grant program activity will be captured quarterly and reported on the Oak Park Sustainability website dashboard along with existing Energy Assessments, Community Solar, Weatherization and Rooftop Solar information.

Anticipated Future Actions/Commitments

NA

Intergovernmental Cooperation Opportunities

NA

