

**CITY OF GAUTIER  
MEMORANDUM**

**To:** Samantha Abell, City Manager  
**From:** Patty Huffman, Grants and Projects Manager  
**Through:** Chandra Nicholson, Director of Economic Development and Planning  
**Date:** August 24, 2015  
**Subject:** Submission of an Application to the Mississippi Department of Archives and History for a 2<sup>nd</sup> Community Heritage Preservation Grant for the former Gautier Colored School

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**REQUEST:**

The Economic Development and Planning Department requests City Council authorization to submit a grant application to the Mississippi Department of Archives and History (MDAH) for a second Community Heritage Preservation Grant for the *Mississippi Landmark*, the (former) Gautier Colored School also known as the West Pascagoula Colored School. The building is located at 902 De La Pointe Drive at the entrance to George Martin City Park. The grant application must be received by MDAH by October 2, 2015.

**BACKGROUND:**

The Mississippi Legislature has approved the eleventh round of funding for the Community Heritage Preservation (CHP) Grant Program. This program authorizes the Mississippi Department of Archives and History to make grants available for the preservation, restoration, development and interpretation of historic courthouses and school buildings. To be eligible, a building must be designated a *Mississippi Landmark* under the Antiquities Law of Mississippi prior to application. The former schoolhouse was originally built in 1921 by patrons of the school as a one-room school for Gautier's African-American children and was used as a school until 1946. Later, the building was used as a community center, senior citizens center, and voting place. The schoolhouse was designated as a *Mississippi Landmark* by MDAH on October 19, 2012 for both its historical and architectural significance and was also named in 2013 as one of the *10 Most Endangered Historic Sites* in Mississippi by the Mississippi Heritage Trust.

**DISCUSSION:**

The Gautier Historic Preservation Commission has identified the Gautier Colored School as an important historic site for preservation and future use as a Historic Schoolhouse and Cultural Museum. The City received a CHP grant of \$80,000 in December 2013 with a \$20,000 match for phase one to stabilize the building. This process is currently underway, and a Steering Committee has been established to assist with fundraising. A \$50,000 grant has also been submitted to the Mississippi Department of Marine Resources. In order to complete the project, an additional \$220,000 will be needed in CHP grant funding which will require a \$55,000 local match. Applicants will be notified in December 2015 of the MDAH Board of Trustees' decisions. These grants are reimbursement based after completion of the project. All projects must be completed by December 1, 2018.

**RECOMMENDATION:**

The Economic Development and Planning Department recommends that City Council authorize submission of a grant application to MDAH for the Community Heritage Preservation Round XI funding for the next phase of rehabilitation of the former Gautier Colored School as outlined above. City Council may:

1. authorize submission of a grant application, signed Statement of Understanding, and commitment for the required match up to \$55,000 as described; or
2. authorize submission of a grant application with changes; or
3. disapprove submission of a grant application.

**ATTACHMENT(S):**

Community Heritage Preservation Grant Program Documents (Round XI):  
Certification of Matching Share  
Statement of Understanding