

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY



**To:** Bogdan Vitas, City Manager

**Through:** Donald Leland Craig, AICP, Planning Director

**From:** Enid Torregrosa de la Rosa, MSHP, Historic Preservation Planner

**Meeting Date:** **February 20, 2013**

**RE:** HARC Guidelines for Minimum Requirements for Submissions for a Certificate of Appropriateness Application.

### **ACTION STATEMENT:**

Request: **AN ORDINANCE OF THE CITY COMMISSION OF THE CITY OF KEY WEST, APPROVING AN AMENDMENT TO THE HISTORIC ARCHITECTURAL REVIEW COMMISSION GUIDELINES FOR MINIMUM REQUIREMENTS FOR SUBMITTALS FOR A CERTIFICATE OF APPROPRIATENESS AS REFERENCED IN SECTION 90-142 OF THE CITY OF KEY WEST LAND DEVELOPMENT REGULATIONS; AND PROVIDING AN EFFECTIVE DATE.**

Location: Key West Historic District and Significant Historic buildings outside the Historic District

**BACKGROUND:** During the past months the historic architectural review commission (HARC) initiated modifications to the Historic Architectural Guidelines to clarify and expedite the review process when a citizen submits a Certificate of Appropriateness application. HARC's main objective is to offer informative guidance to citizens and the general public based on a set of minimum essential documents to expedite a Certificate of Appropriateness. However, the diversity of proposed projects and the variety of building and site situations makes each project unique. Page 56 of the illustrative guidelines identifies general documentation but does not precisely address the supportive information required to allow informed decisions by staff or HARC. When staff or HARC requests more information the review process is delayed creating frustration for applicants and building owners. After two public meetings where draft language of the revised submittal standards was reviewed and discussed, HARC recommended approval of the proposed guideline changes. The Planning Board has also recommended approval of the guidelines changes.

Throughout the process of drafting the proposed minimum requirements, staff and HARC reviewed past applications and processing experiences with previous applicants. HARC recognizes that each project is different and that some may require additional information from that which the list requires by development type as a minimum. Nevertheless the new minimum requirements by project type will be an informative useful tool for all citizens requesting a Certificate of Appropriateness that will save citizens and the City both time and money.

Since 2002 the HARC Guidelines have been incorporated by reference into the Land Development Regulations, Sec. 90-142, and therefore are regulatory tools. Any amendment to the Guidelines must follow the same process as an amendment to the Land Development Regulations.

**Previous City Actions:**

Planning Board Approval	January 17, 2013
HARC Recommendation of Approval	July 10, 2012

**Planning Staff Analysis:** The number of Certificate of Appropriateness applications received in the Planning Department has dramatically increased in the past three years (over a 40% increase). With this increase in the number of applications, HARC staff has encountered numerous instances of incomplete and inadequate applications leading to confusions during HARC meetings and delays for applicants. Presently the HARC guidelines provide a general *one size fits all* guidance for applications. Therefore most applications lack crucial documents. The proposed new guidelines will guide applicants through the approval process, relying upon the minimum required documents.

**Options/Advantages/Disadvantages:**

- Option 1:** Approve the proposed changes to the HARC guidelines.
- 1. Consistency with the City’s Strategic Plan, Vision, and Mission:** This action would provide enhanced services consistent with the mission and vision of the City.
  - 2. Financial Impact:** There will be no direct finance impact. Nevertheless the approval of the proposed Ordinance will improve the efficiency of staff and the HARC members when reviewing an application, which will streamline the City’s plans review process.

**Option 2:** Do not approve the proposed change to the HARC guidelines.

1. **Consistency with the City's Strategic Plan, Vision, and Mission:** This action would not be consistent with the City's strategic plan as applications will be deferred due to incompleteness.
2. **Financial Impact:** There will be no direct finance impact. Nevertheless by not approving the proposed Ordinance there will be a backload of HARC applications that cannot be process on a timely manner.

### **Recommendation**

The Planning Department recommends **approval** of the proposed Ordinance setting the new minimum requirements for a Certificate of Appropriateness.