Historic Resources Advisory Committee
Commemorate 50 Years of Southeast Asians in Minnesota
November 22, 2024

Status: Approved by the Historic Resources Advisory Committee (HRAC) at their Fall Meeting on May 16, 2025.

The Commemorate 50 Years of Southeast Asians in Minnesota is a one-time, competitive grant program, supported by the State's Arts and Cultural Heritage Fund (Minnesota Session Laws 2024, Chapter 106, Article 4, Section 2, Subdivision 6(b)(2)). It will support statewide historic and cultural grants to cultural community organizations, historical organizations, and veteran organizations for activities to commemorate 50 years of Southeast Asians in Minnesota, a momentous occasion in our state's history.

Historic Resources Advisory Committee (HRAC) members attending: Chair Tisha Allen, Kate Dietrick, Hillary Swanson, Merlin Peterson, Heather Hoagland, Crystal Boyd, Melissa Christenson Ekman, Milissa Brooks-Ojibway, Margaret Hedstrom; Maureen Kelly Jonason, Anne O'Keefe-Jackson

Not attending: Katie Phillips; Kate Thomas; Judge Peter Reyes, ex-officio; Tom Forsythe, ex-officio

Staff attending for all or part of the day: Carolyn Veeser-Egbide, Todd Mahon, Melinda Hutchinson, Gillian Maguire, John Fulton, Joe Hoover, Megan Brakob Narvey, Ryan Maciej, John Beaty, Avi Viswanathan, David Kelliher

Chair Allen called the meeting to order at 10:01 a.m. and asked A. Viswanathan for an introductory statement. He welcomed attendees, noting the wonderful opportunity to celebrate 50 years of Southeast Asians in Minnesota, and extended his thanks to Representative Lee and Senator Pha for their support and work in securing this funding.

Chair Allen explained the purpose of the SEA50 grants program, noting that the funding comes from the Clean Water, Land, and Legacy Amendment. Called on HRAC members to introduce themselves and give their qualifications. She then asked staff to introduce themselves and their content review areas of expertise. C. Veeser-Egbide, Grants Manager, noted that the Grants Office appreciates the applicants and hopes for a start to a long-term relationship with our office, with the expectation of returning for many grants in the coming years.

Chair Allen explained the meeting's process for today. Forty-two final applications were submitted; 5 were found ineligible, so HRAC did not review them. The committee considered 37 applications requesting approximately $2 million; there is $400,000 available for award. Applications that are not funded will be encouraged to continue a relationship with the MNHS Grants Office. The committee started with highest scoring applications first and worked their way through the list until the funding was exhausted. This is a one-time only program with $400,000 to award from the Arts and Cultural Heritage Fund (ACHF). Motions must include staff milestones. The committee was reminded that there was 5 times the grant amount available requested, so they should speak positively about why projects should be funded.

The committee began deliberations:

R-SEA-2408-29552 **Hmong Museum**	Capturing Memories in Minnesota: Hmong American Experiences M. Peterson made a motion to recommend funding at $30,000; K. Dietrick seconded. Discussion. M. Peterson noted this was a strong application but they may need more public meetings. H. Hoagland noted that the Hmong Museum is a leader in the community and in the museum community. Vote: 10-0. Motion carried.
R-SEA-2408-29523 **Springboard for the Arts Sponsoring Funny Asian Women Collective (FAWK)**	The FAWK Hmong Super Show M. Hedstrom made a motion to recommend funding at $24,000. M. Brooks-Ojibway seconded. K. Dietrick noted that this is a strong application. H. Hoagland noted that it's uplifting women, good oral history; recommend that the applicant consider how the video will be stored and shared after the event. Vote: 10-0. Motion carried.
R-SEA-2408-29475 **In Progress**	Qhia Dab Neeg Film & Dialogue Series H. Swanson made a motion to recommend funding at $40,000; noted that the project is ready to go. M. Peterson seconded. Discussion. M. Kelly Jonason expressed concern about the low numbers expected to participate. M. Peterson also noticed but noted that the nature of film means that a larger audience may see it later. M. Hedstrom said that a small, trusted audience may be more comfortable to start with. K. Dietrick noted that the budget was well thought out; did a good job of explaining how they will accomplish everything stated in the work plan. Vote: 10-0. Motion carried.
R-SEA-2408-29517 **Yaj Neej Tshiab**	In Their Own Voices: The Untold History of the Hmong Women 50 Years Late

	A. O'Keefe-Jackson made a motion to recommend funding at $24,572; noted that this is a great project for women. M. Hedstrom seconded. Discussion. M. Peterson noted it's a strong, well-planned project. C. Boyd asked how many interviews are included. H. Hoagland thought the stipend was low. Discussion of numbers. C. Boyd recommended doing a small pilot project first because 54 interviews is a lot; should this be a condition or recommendation? C. Veeser-Egbide said it's up to the committee to recommend or condition. H. Hoagland preferred to trust the applicant and leave it as a recommendation. A. O'Keefe-Jackson agreed. M. Hedstrom noted the request is on the low end of costs, about $400 per interview; give them leeway if they can't get to all the interviews. Chair Allen noted that this will be a recommendation. Vote: 10-0. Motion carried.
R-SEA-2408-29538 **The Urban Village**	Myanmar to Minnesota: Stories of "Resettlement, Resilience, Repair" M. Brooks-Ojibway made a motion to recommend funding at $74,984. H. Hoagland seconded. Discussion. K. Dietrick noted strength in diversity in the project itself. Vote: 10-0. Motion carried.

Funding check: $193,556 funded; $206,444 left to fund.

C. Veeser-Egbide asked the Chair to take a pause and explain this program a bit more for people listening, so they can understand why this is moving so quickly. Chair Allen explained that staff reviewed the applications, then HRAC reviewed and scored the applications. The committee is looking at the cumulative average score, ranked high to low. C. Veeser-Egbide added that the total amount available and the amount requested is significant in how engaged the community was with this grant program. The HRAC probably can fund only 20% of the applications this time (as opposed to about 50-60% in the regular large round). She wanted applicants to understand that this is a struggle for the HRAC because the scores are high, but the money is not available to fund the majority of the projects. C. Boyd noted that discussions come when they get to the scores in the middle, which they won't get to today because of the amount of funding available.

R-SEA-2407-29421 **Hmong Cultural Center of Minnesota**	50 Years of Hmong in Minnesota Publication M. Kelly Jonason made a motion to recommend funding at $24,750. C. Boyd seconded. Discussion. M. Kelly Jonason thought this project would have a long-term impact and availability. M. Hedstrom noted that the publication will have a wide

	circulation through research libraries. M. Peterson noted the breadth of projects that are being approved; this project fits in well. Vote: 10-0. Motion carried.
R-SEA-2408-29498 **Lao Assistance Center of Minnesota** **Sponsoring SEALIT Center**	American Laodyssey at 50 C. Boyd made a motion to recommend funding at $24,500; A. O'Keefe-Jackson seconded. Discussion: M. Peterson noted that it is a strong application. Vote: 10-0. Motion carried.

C. Veeser-Egbide asked the committee to read out the grant number also since there are a number of projects with similar names.

Funding check: $157,194 remaining.

R-SEA-2408-29539 **Transforming Generations**	Hmong LGBTQ+ and Advocates Timeline K. Dietrick made a motion to recommend funding at $50,000. M. Peterson seconded. Discussion. K. Dietrick thought this application had a really strong description of the gap this project will fill. Vote: 10-0. Motion carried.

K. Dietrick mentioned that usually when the committee gets to the end of the funding they will look at diversity of location, diversity of projects; wanted to clarify that they are focusing on the score for this program. Chair Allen confirmed that they are funding from the top scores down and encouraged other applicants to reach out to the Grants Office for funding through the other grant programs.

R-SEA-2408-29537 **Springboard for the Arts** **Sponsoring The Paper Lantern Project LLC**	Healing Histories: Uplifting Women and Femmes Who Created the Path from Southeast Asia to Minnesota A. O'Keefe-Jackson made a motion to recommend funding at $48,947, noting that this is an important project. M. Hedstrom seconded. Discussion. K. Dietrick noted that this application had a really well thought-out budget and had topics that need to be

	uplifted, and appreciated that attention. Vote: 10-0. Motion carried.

Funding check: $58,247 left to award.

R-SEA-2409-29628 **Theater Mu**	<u>Performance Recording and Process Making of Video documenting HMONG FUTURES, a new play by Katie Ka Vangat Theater Mu, to Celebrate 50 Years of Southeast Asians in Minnesota</u> M. Peterson made a motion to recommend funding at $27,538. M. Christenson Ekman seconded with staff conditions. M. Peterson accepted staff condition as part of the motion. Discussion. M. Christenson Ekman clarified that the staff concern was the ticketing software as it is already installed and in use–and it may not be part of the grant project period. It needs a budget clarification. Vote: 10-0. Motion carried.

Funding check: $30,709 available

Chair Allen noted that funding the next project on the list would put the total over $400,000. Asked for guidance on next steps; can a project be partially funded? C. Veeser-Egbide recommended that they fund all of the money available and the Grants Office will reach out to the grantee to work with them and their budget to have a successful project. C. Veeser-Egbide reminded the committee and applicants that the spreadsheet on the screen is accurate; this information is being double and triple checked by the grants staff.

R-SEA-2408-29579 **Asian Economic Development Association**	<u>Celebrate Southeast Asian American Diaspora and Experiences</u> M. Kelly Jonason made a motion to recommend funding $30,709, which is the remaining available funding. M. Peterson seconded and added a condition to submit a revised budget. M. Kelly Jonason agreed to the condition. Discussion. M. Hedstrom noted that she liked this project because it includes

	the SEA community as a whole. M. Christenson Ekman liked that they are using art as storytelling and thinks that will be more successful with younger generations. K. Dietrick appreciated the thought put into their diversity statements. Vote: 10-0. Motion carried.

Funding exhausted.

Chair Allen noted that it is difficult to stop here with so many great applications left. HRAC was able to fund 11 of 37 applications. Encouraged applicants to stay in touch with the Grants Office for other funding opportunities. A. O'Keefe Jackson appreciated the diversity in how to tell their stories; excited to encourage relationships with MNHS and hoping this is the beginning of a grant relationship.

C. Veeser-Egbide noted that the committee does have time even though the funding is gone, but they can discuss other applicants to encourage them to apply for small Legacy grants or Heritage Partnership Program grants in January. This is the committee that looks at the large round applications; do they have words of encouragement for them at this time? Could do that now before lunch break.

Chair Allen opened the floor for discussion. K. Dietrick spoke about budgets. She said that having clear budgets is very helpful for the committee. They like to see that people are being paid adequately for work that they will do on the project.

M. Hedstrom noted that this kind of work is very hard work, and tricky work because of issues around memory, trauma, intergenerational dialogue. It is a truism in immigration studies that the second generation is more interested in assimilation; intergenerational work is good but hard work. Expectations are high in these projects. Her second comment was for MNHS and the Grants Office. Many applicants struggle with the sustainability of their products. A project being findable on YouTube or Google is not the same thing as sustainability. Some guidance or additional services to support this material could be in order.

M. Peterson commented on other ways to archive and make products available long-term; this is a strong group of applicants and they may be able to collaborate on projects. M. Hedstrom agreed; there were several projects that were similar; together they would be stronger.

M. Peterson noted that the applicants should not be shy; they are encouraged to come back and apply again in other grant programs. C. Boyd recommended that the applicants reach out to resources in the community and resources like Todd in Local History Services, the Grants Office, and local and national resources. If these projects are planning events, let the Grants Office know; HRAC would like to support and attend.

Chair Allen asked for a motion to adjourn. M. Hedstrom made a motion to adjourn the meeting. M. Peterson seconded. Vote: 10-0. Motion carried. Adjourned 11:21 a.m.

C. Veeser-Egbide offered her thanks to HRAC for their extra work, thanks to colleagues for their work, thanks to the applicants for their diligence in understanding a grant program in a short period of time, being critiqued on their applications, and coming back with a final proposal. There are many opportunities for grants and partnerships, and she encouraged continuing these relationships.

C. Veeser-Egbide then thanked H. Hoagland and A. O'Keefe-Jackson for their service, as they are cycling off the committee. Stated appreciation for all the work they have put in and for the influence they have had during their years on the HRAC. She never worries about having a quorum because the committee members are so dedicated.

Respectfully submitted,
Carolyn Veeser-Egbide
Grants Manager