Historic Resources Advisory Committee Meeting
May 16, 2025

Status: Approved by the Historic Resources Advisory Committee (HRAC) at their Fall Meeting on November 6, 2026.

The Historic Resources Advisory Committee (HRAC) is a volunteer citizen panel that provides guidance and funding recommendations for the Minnesota Historical and Cultural Heritage Grants Program. The committee met to discuss policy and procedures at the Sherburne County Historical Society in Becker.

HRAC members attending: Chair Tisha Allen, Jennifer Andries, Hillary Swanson, Melissa Ekman, Kate Dietrick, Maureen Kelly Jonason, Madelyn Sundberg, Merlin Peterson, Crystal Boyd, Milissa Brooks-Ojibway, Margaret Hedstrom, Kate Thomas

Staff: Carolyn Veeser-Egbide, Todd Mahon, Melinda Hutchinson, Gillian Maguire, John Fulton, John Beaty, Ryan Maciej, Joe Hoover, Avi Viswanathan, David Kelliher, Megan Brakob Narvey

Chair T. Allen called the meeting to order at 10:04 a.m. and asked the committee and staff to introduce themselves.

Approval of recent meeting minutes:

- September 26-27, 2024. Regular HRAC Fall Meeting. M. Kelly Jonason made the motion to approve, M. Ekman seconded. No discussion. Vote: 10-0. Motion carried. November 22, 2024. Commemorate 50 Years of Southeast Asians in Minnesota grant program. M. Kelly Jonason made the motion to approve the minutes. M. Peterson seconded. No discussion. Vote: 10-0. [Note: K. Thomas arrived after the votes.]

Chair. T. Allen read out the meeting norms. No discussion.

C. Veeser-Egbide noted a change to the agenda because D. Kelliher would not be available in the afternoon today, so he joined this morning to discuss the legislative session. D. Kelliher gave his thanks to the HRAC members for the work they do. They have discussed at the legislature the importance of a competitive grant round process. Thanked the Grants Office for their work.

D. Kelliher noted that it's a funding year for the Legacy Amendment. The legislature is supposed to adjourn by Monday May 19, but they might need to go beyond the scheduled date, meaning that they may need a short special session. He is watching the legislative process closely to make sure that there's a good bill–as he reminds them, "To preserve Minnesota's history" is in the state Constitution. Explained that there was an error in how Legacy funds were distributed at the beginning and now there's a cumulative effect of about $30 million; about $6 million from the

Arts and Cultural Heritage Fund (ACHF), meaning that there is that much less for the ACHF to spend. The State still needs to determine if the repayment will come out of the first year or will be spread out over the two years of the biennium. This correction will affect the Minnesota Historical and Cultural Heritage Grants program as well as the rest of the Legacy funds.

D. Kelliher thanked everyone for the extra work done for the Commemorate 50 Years of Southeast Asians in Minnesota (SEA50) grant program. There was a lot of demand for those grant funds. Currently there is some discussion about putting more money into that program since there were so many organizations that did not get funded.

D. Kelliher then took questions. M. Hedstrom noted that her legislator is on the Legacy committee; would it be worth it to make a pitch to him directly? D. Kelliher said yes, contacting either of her legislators or both would be helpful; same goes for everyone around the table. Send an email message through mnhs.org/historymatters. She could send an email to Roger Skraba--he is a big history supporter and is from Ely. Senator Jen McEwan from Duluth is another good contact.

Chair T. Allen turned the meeting over to C. Veeser-Egbide to discuss upcoming HRAC work and review criteria for the large round this fall. Started with the grants program manual history; 2021-2022 manual is where we started discussing how to include diversity and inclusion in the grant program/application. Discussed history of eight primary review criteria. Will talk more about professional standards later. Did some discussing at the last Spring meeting but today will be in more detail. Additional considerations could be applied. DEAI started in the 2022-2023 manual which rolled out in 2021. It started as an additional consideration, but now we are looking at moving toward having it part of the primary consideration. C. Veeser-Egbide noted that she will take questions as we move through the day.

K. Dietrick asked about the intern that our office had, and whether there has been any number crunching since that time. C. Veeser-Egbide said that there has been no additional number crunching but her work will be part of the discussion today. She noted that this is just one part of the DEAI process and there is also community outreach that needs to happen. A. Viswanathan noted that the Grants Office has worked with Community Engagement, especially during the SEA50 grants. Noted that the Grants Office does a lot of community engagement and gave kudos to G. Maguire for the Commemorate 50 Years of Southeast Asians in Minnesota grant program, M. Hutchinson for customer service, and J. Fulton for the Heritage Partnership Program.

M. Hedstrom asked for clarification on the additional considerations and what defines the phrase “may include…” C. Veeser-Egbide explained. T. Mahon asked for clarification from M. Hedstrom. Other criteria like ‘supports patriotic culture,’ for example. That is not on the list, but if someone finds it important, is that something we could apply? M. Ekman thought that this current list is trying to be more open. C. Veeser-Egbide noted that HRAC used to be big on

“urgency” but that was not part of the criteria and there wasn’t a good way to have all applicants be able to speak to it. The plan is to move toward having DEAI as part of the main conversation.

C. Veeser-Egbide explained the history of HRAC scoring; it used to be informal, total of 10 points with 1 being poor and 10 being fantastic. As long as HRAC members were consistent the scoring worked, and then there was time during the meeting to talk about wide differences in points. Now we are looking at a more formal way to score the application.

DEAI questions were implemented four years ago–initially there were three questions and one field for the applicant’s answer. Two years ago this was split into two questions, each with their own answer fields. These were open-ended questions with open-ended answers, and they were only required to be answered in the large round.

Why are we making these changes? The Grants Office wants to unify reviews across HRAC members. The process has worked well in the past but it is time to move ahead to something more unified for more unified reviews. The Grants Office has had feedback from applicants about the large grant review process. Applicants continue to give us feedback without seeing anything behind the scenes a la the iceberg meme, so hopefully a more formal system would help provide better feedback to applicants. These changes would also integrate DEAI into the application so it would not be an add-on piece.

Reportability–how are we reporting this information out? It should be easier to pull out information about which communities we serve; currently this has to be a manual process by staff. Are specific terms the best way? This process should standardize how this is done.

Accountability–we need good data to understand who we are and are not serving. What is the outreach and representation in our leadership? Who is being impacted by the grant program? It is important to be able to report on who is impacted.

A. Viswanathan noted that reportability and accountability are coming up more in the legislature. The legislature is considering a certain percentage of dollars to go toward certain communities. Jade’s work was not self-reporting, it was retroactive research. This new process would allow for self-identification so we can report on it better. This is the next step in the process.

C. Veeser-Egbide noted goals from the 2024 Spring meeting–develop a standardized scoring system and discuss. There will be training on this before the Fall HRAC meeting. M. Peterson, C. Boyd, K. Thomas, H. Hoagland were in an HRAC subgroup to discuss integrating diversity and inclusion into the program and application. Met July 2024 to March 2025. The subgroup was not as productive due to Grants Office duties, mainly the new SEA50 grant program. So, it did not meet our expectations but there was value in the meetings nonetheless. C. Boyd and M. Peterson commented on their experiences and C. Veeser-Egbide noted that we will continue to adjust and learn on the DEAI journey. M. Hedstrom shared her experience from reviewing for a science foundation (NSF). Merit criteria are put in two categories: things that are a response to

the call for proposals–quality, sustainability, capacity of organization; and a second category called “broader impacts.” The applicant needs to have a high score in both categories to be funded. C. Veeser-Egbide noted that the committee will talk more about this later today.

History–Primary Sources for consideration:

- OGM policy 08-02 Policy on Rating Criteria for Competitive Grant Review
- MN State Arts Board demographic questions
- 25-year vision, framework, guiding principles and 10-year goals

There is a large difference in how many applications HRAC reviews vs. what the Arts Board reviews. This influences how much time reviewers have. There is a Legislative statute that requires the HRAC. The Arts Board does not have this requirement and has a very different structure from ours.

Discussion around Jade’s report. C. Boyd said this current idea does not use her data. C. Veeser-Egbide noted that it’s more for outreach to communities. She will share the report with HRAC members. She also mentioned the X Stories report and noted that it was not grant-funded through our office.

At 11:13 a.m. Chair T. Allen called for a 5-minute break. The meeting reconvened at 11:22 a.m.

C. Veeser-Egbide referred to the documents she emailed to the HRAC on data collection. We are trying to solve the following issues: integrating diversity and inclusion, reportability, and accountability. Hopefully this process will make it easier to pull data out of the system. C. Veeser-Egbide gave post-its to HRAC members for them to record their feedback on their likes and concerns about data collection (new information for the manual and application). Fielded questions. C. Veeser-Egbide walked through the document, noting that if the applicant marks an answer, they must include an explanation in their application; the evidence should be in the application. K. Thomas suggested moving this new requirement to the top of that section so it is easier for the applicant to see.

H. Swanson stated that she was happy to see that the “rural” option was included in a couple sections. M. Sundberg noted that rural is often low-income; discussion. C. Veeser-Egbide noted that this section is self-reporting so it will be how the applicants see their communities. J. Andries likes that the section is easy for applicants to check the boxes but is concerned that they won’t have the opportunity to further explain and might not do so in the application because they will be focused on the project itself. Reminded HRAC to write down their comments. K. Dietrick noted that “Other–please specify” is only under the last section. This option might be beneficial to add to all sections. C. Boyd thinks that the options for each question should be the same for each question. C. Veeser-Egbide noted that Caucasian/White is not in all the questions because in Minnesota the projects will affect white people regardless because they are the majority.

M. Hedstrom noted that she takes issue with these questions and thinks this is identity-focused and excludes disability and low-income. C. Veeser-Egbide noted that we can't collect everything but these are the priorities right now and we can add others later. This is a starting point. Example–K. Dietrick noted that Jewish people are not just a religious group but also an identity. M. Hedstrom stated that these questions are problematic. C. Veeser-Egbide noted that these questions are based on applicant feedback. M. Hedstrom suggested using the census categories for identities. This would be a baseline because of the information gleaned from the census. Then find some other standardized metrics to add. C. Boyd noted that this degree of detail is great but the questions need to be short. M. Kelly Jonason noted that question three should be broadened or should use a different verb tense or time frame to allow for a larger time frame.

M. Ekman asked if the answers will come out in the Enduring Value question. M. Sundberg asked how this affects consultants or contractors. Is this also a community that is being directly impacted? C. Veeser-Egbide thinks this would come out in the HRAC discussion; they could check the boxes and then elaborate in the application. M. Sundberg thought that this could be called out so the applicant knows that they can include this in their DEAI explanation. Needs clarification. K. Thomas said that the document confuses data collection and reportability with what needs to be in the grant application so HRAC can evaluate it. Demographics are usually separate from the application. Thinks applicants will make their applications more competitive if they can click more boxes. Suggested a data collection sheet that is separate so the Grants Office can see it but not HRAC. Applicants need to know that clicking more boxes is not going to make the application more fundable. M. Kelly Jonason noted that these questions will help organizations understand that they need to change; there are steps to this continuous work. It is a process and these questions help teach. K. Thomas thinks that could go into the manual instead of the application. M. Hedstrom thinks this is a hard way to get people who don't understand diversity to change. K. Dietrick felt that this is confusing the review process and the review criteria that HRAC needs to follow. This is not the only information that HRAC is reviewing.

J. Andries noted that HRAC in a way will be scoring this even though it says on the sheet that HRAC doesn't score it. C. Veeser-Egbide noted that this sheet will help HRAC see if the information is actually in the body of the application. There might be more onus on the Grants Office to check this information.

M. Hedstrom noted that it is important to separate technical process elements from broader impacts. Regardless of who the intended community is, if their project doesn't have merit or significance, it is not fundable. If there's a project that is very strong but there's not a broader impact, the process will work in reverse regarding diversity. Some of the technical aspects can be scored numerically. Impact on the community is in narrative form. How are we going to get where we are trying to be? C. Veeser-Egbide noted that the criteria will be discussed later. M. Hedstrom asked when they see the information in the application, what do they do with it? C.

Veeser-Egbide noted that we will be discussing that later today. K. Dietrick brought up the example from last year's meeting w/ the church that didn't mention LGBTQ in their application.

Chair T. Allen called a break for lunch at 12:05 p.m. and called the meeting back to order at 1:05 p.m.

C. Veeser-Egbide continued with discussing review criteria. What the HRAC reviews, which is listed in the grants manual, is still the same. Asked for feedback on likes/dislikes/comments. The amount of points awarded for each graded section can be changed. For the project activity with descriptors, how does HRAC want to score–see all 5 descriptors, or are the applicants not required to meet all of them? There are 13 bullet points; is that too many for the time the HRAC has to read and score?

K. Dietrick requested clarification on the difference between a product of enduring value vs. long term impact. C. Veeser-Egbide explained that the enduring value is what has been produced and long-term is how the product will be cared for and used after the life of the grant–its value into the future. M. Ekman noted that sustainability means something different to architects. Use a different word? C. Boyd noted that as long as we define the terms should be OK. General agreement. M. Hedstrom–meets professional standards effectively–what does this mean, because either it does or it doesn't; it is qualitative. C. Veeser-Egbide noted that it is not an all-or-nothing. K. Thomas said it means that HRAC can take into consideration whether it is a small or large organization. M. Ekman noted that when grants staff has already put conditions on the applications, she likes to see that because it helps her know that it's already been reviewed. M. Hedstrom–if a project meets standards but not effectively, is that zero points? What does that mean? M. Kelly Jonason notes that the staff has already reviewed and made comments. C. Veeser-Egbide notes that HRAC can make their own comments. M. Hedstrom–what are "all related costs"? C. Veeser-Egbide explained that if there is something missing in the budget, HRAC should be able to tell how the applicant will pay for that item. K. Dietrick notes that all HRAC members bring their own expertise and then the committee can discuss at the meeting.

M. Peterson suggested moving "positively impacts diverse community groups" to Public Benefit, not Project Activities. Some projects are very focused on one group. The public will have the benefit in a different way. He noted that the applicants need to know how to write their application from the beginning of the application."Please try to infuse your entire application with how your project impacts diverse groups."

M. Hedstrom felt that "demonstrates the relevance of Minnesota history" does not make sense. M. Kelly Jonason explained that it's straightforward; does the project include Minnesota history–yes or no? M. Sundberg asked if project activities–for example, construction documents–are being used as those as they start the construction process? Should add something about following up on previous planning projects.

K. Dietrick wanted to discuss the point spread; why is public benefit assigned 15 points? C. Veeser-Egbide explained that it means how your organization is impacting communities that it may not have before. M. Ekman asked about the ability to continue planning and use past planning to do future work. M. Kelly Jonason asked if a list that ends with “or” means you only need one of the four things. C. Veeser-Egbide stated yes, that is correct. Should we keep it like that or remove the “or”? M. Brooks-Ojibway questioned matching funds; not required, correct? C. Veeser-Egbide noted that it goes back to the two schools of thought about how to rate the applications. M. Peterson noted that community support can be a letter of support or matching funds. M. Ekman noted that the match shows that there’s momentum to keep going on the project. Discussion.

M. Hedstrom noted that the significance of the resource produces a product of enduring value. Both imply a tangible project. What about a community that wants to organize a conversation between communities? Cannot be recorded because they want it to be open. Enduring value is that it creates a shift in understanding. C. Veeser-Egbide noted that we don’t fund intangibles right now; something like that is better for the Heritage Partnership Program grants. For the Minnesota Historical and Cultural Heritage Grants program it might be coming but it is not there yet. That is a deeper conversation that would require a policy change. This program must have a tangible product that will be publicly available.

C. Veeser-Egbide would like to have a conversation about weighting. K. Thomas asked why both points and weighting. C. Veeser-Egbide noted that they’re the same. M. Kelly Jonason would like to see 10-10-10 because they are equally important. M. Peterson wants the project to be weighted heavily because as an applicant it is the project that is important. M. Ekman noted that both are important. M. Hedstrom is concerned about the public having 50% of the weight going toward criteria the HRAC is guessing at. What will the long term impact be? We don’t know that yet. What does public benefit mean? Value will be made by people in the future. Building purpose for the audience is related to doing something for a diverse community. Doesn’t want a large percentage to go to something HRAC is guessing at. K. Dietrick stated that legislators are focusing on public benefit because of the source of funding–taxpayer dollars. M. Hedstrom noted that there needs to be an evaluation process. The community needs to tell HRAC if there’s an impact. It should be a condition of the grant to give this evidence. Doesn’t have to be a survey. Smaller organizations would learn more about their communities. C. Veeser-Egbide doesn’t want MNHS to dictate to the grantees. M. Hedstrom questions long-term impact. M. Kelly Jonason said her historians understand this because of their expertise. Will use this information in future articles, exhibits, etc. Historians interpret and share.

C. Boyd asked about the Office of Grants Management (OGM)--would they be a resource? C. Veeser-Egbide said it’s a difficult question to answer because we are a quasi-state entity; we follow OGM but we don’t have full access. C. Boyd thought maybe we need an external consultant. C. Veeser-Egbide said that this round will be a lesson-learning experience; it is a pilot and for new things it’s hard to make changes. K. Dietrick noted that this is better than we had; is it perfect? No. What about M. Kelly Jonason’s proposal of a 10-10-10 point spread over

sections. K. Thomas agreed that equal weighting makes sense. C. Veeser-Egbide noted that there will still be conversations among HRAC members for scoring. M. Hedstrom asked why there are categories if the scoring is equally weighted? C. Veeser-Egbide noted that applicants want more information about how scoring was done. Chair T. Allen noted that if the goal is to make fair categories, the HRAC needs to be clear during the meeting about how they are scoring and discussing.

C. Veeser-Egbide discussed federal funding. Organizations like IMLS, NEH, and Save America's Treasures have lost funding, which impacts MNHS and statewide colleagues. There is less of an impact on MNHS because we have other sources of funding. The grant programs could open up to fund projects that have lost federal funding. Minnesota legislators have been having this conversation about projects that have not started yet.

C. Veeser-Egbide noted that there are still outstanding questions:

- Do we ask about mission?
- Does the organization have staff?
- Should we shorten the proposal template so reviewers can get through reviews more efficiently?

C. Veeser-Egbide noted that the Grants Office has been in discussions to increase the cap on the small round. No answers yet but will update HRAC when decisions are made. The manual will be a little later because we are waiting to hear about the MNHS board's decision on the small round cap. Should the ⅔ large vs. ⅓ small round split in funding amounts remain the same or change? These conversations are still happening.

C. Veeser-Egbide discussed next steps: continue to evaluate review criteria; incorporate diversity and inclusion; review comments from today; have internal conversations; make adjustments; issue manual in (late) June; provide training for staff, applicants, and HRAC.

The next HRAC meeting will be November 6-7, 2025 from 10 am to 4 pm each day.

M. Peterson asked about direct Legacy appropriations (organizations that receive appropriations directly from the legislature); stated that they should be ineligible to apply for a competitive round (MHCHG). M. Hedstrom thinks this is problematic because when competing for direct appropriations, organizations are competing against many other organizations (not all history), and to say that they are not eligible for competitive funds is not appropriate. M. Peterson clarified that he is talking about Legacy Arts and Cultural Heritage Fund money only. Those organizations asking for direct appropriations should not apply in the regular grant rounds as well. This is an ongoing question of who can put this into the guidelines. C. Veeser-Egbide noted that this would be a recommendation that would come from HRAC to MNHS board. A good example of the time these changes take is the small grant round increase, which has been in the works for at least four years. C. Boyd asked for clarification–are these earmarks taking funds away from other organizations? Yes.

Chair T. Allen thanked the HRAC and staff for good conversations and called for other announcements. G. Maguire reminded committee members about turning in their reimbursement forms. M. Hedstrom made a motion to adjourn the meeting. M. Peterson seconded. Motion carried 12-0. Meeting adjourned at 2:02 pm.

Respectfully submitted,
C. Veeser-Egbide
Grants Manager