



Mayor Robert E. Simison

City Council Members:

Treg Bernt	Brad Hoaglund
Joe Borton	Jessica Perreault
Luke Cavener	Liz Strader

5/19/21

MEMORANDUM

TO: Mayor Robert E. Simison & City Council

FROM: Jodi St-Martin

RE: Neighborhood Grants Program

Overview

Implementation of a Neighborhood Grant Program (NGP) is modeled off of the current Participatory Based Budgeting concept and proposes to expand citizen input to develop projects that highlight neighborhood identity and pride and further Meridian's vision to be a "premier community in which to live, work and raise a family."

This program will create paths for long-term civic engagement by community members, build stronger relationships between elected officials, city staff, the community and other agencies, and to inspire projects that leave lasting impacts across Meridian's community.

After executing several previous Participatory Budgeting projects both through the Mayor's Youth Advisory Council and the Mayor's Senior Advisory Board, and interviewing eleven different cities, both in the United States and Canada, the NGP is a recommended program improvement to help the increase exposure of the City budgeting process to the general public, and improve partnerships between the City and community.

As proposed, the NGP would invite HOA Board Members, Youth Representatives, area Business Owners, etc. to develop, seek approval and implement projects located on public property for the benefit of the entire community. A mandatory workshop to explain the program and processes for application, project management, and recording would take place prior to application periods.

The attendees would then form committees (or work as an individual) to work with the Project Manager in assisting with estimating costs, feasibility, etc. Project Manager and groups would vet proposed projects before setting out to a vote by City Council.

Requirements for Individuals and/or Committees:

Any improvements or resources funded through this program must be located on public property and freely accessible to all residents.

Workshops: A workshop webinar will be held each fall to share informational updates about the program, application timelines, eligible expenses, reimbursement processes and reporting requirements. All successful applicants will be responsible for complying with all program rules and requirements.

Budgets: All applications must include a detailed budget, including line item expenses. Quotes shall be obtained for any professional services or expenses outlined in the application.

Funding: All funds will be provided on a reimbursement basis. Appropriate receipts and documentation shall be submitted to the Project Manager and projects will only be reimbursed upon completion and all expenses are validated and verified.

The program is intended to run annually and all projects approved must be completed within the City's fiscal year. An outline of the program is listed here:

- Summer launch – possibly at NNO events (August)
- Mandatory workshop (September, post City fiscal budget approval)
- Committees form and/or individuals will work with Project Manager (October & November)
- City Council to approve projects (Fall/Winter)
- Projects must be completed within the FY budget year, or on a specific date TBD in September
- Final reporting due in September. Final reporting must include: photos of project, receipts and invoices paid, list of project members, log of project activity including milestone approvals by project manager.

NGP Budget: \$50,000 budget in year one for up to two projects with a maximum of \$25,000 per project available. The program budget is expected to grow each year presuming successful execution in prior years and community support for projects that connect the community. *What dollar amount is the Council comfortable with as the program expands?

Example Projects: Through research, similar programs have implemented various projects including playground and equipment installations, picnic shelters, walking paths, community gardens, signage and flags, public art, community history reports, traffic/utility box wraps, and gathering places like chess table areas, fishing docks and memorial gardens.