

(Note: Originally, we were only asking for a 180 day (~6-month) extension and were tentatively scheduled to be in front of the FPRA board in April, but the City Attorney requested some changes of the Amendment & there was not enough for official notice to make the April Agenda.)

March 7, 2025

Dear Miriam,

I am writing to request a 210-day (~7 month) extension for obtaining our building permits for our Façade Grant as well as completing the project that does not include building permits (installing security cameras). We have every intention to move forward and complete all improvements, but we will not make the March 10, 2025, deadline for obtaining our building permits due to scheduling, supply issues and giving our tenants time to work through an "issue." I will be at the FPRA meeting on May 13<sup>th</sup> & can go into more details if needed but below is an overview for the request.

The initial game-plan was to have the plans drawn & submitted right away (after receiving Grant approval) to obtain the building permit for the lower-level total remodel, including new impact windows and ADA compliant doors; then start the renovation mid-January (after hurricane & holiday season).

### **Reason for Request:**

#### **1. Sourcing Challenges:**

We have very large, plate glass windows, and it is not easy to find a company that stocks impact windows of this size that are "affordable," have doors that we like & good overall turnaround time.

While the impact windows & doors were available at the time of our grant submittal (July), not all were available when we were ready to start/awarded the grant (September). Our choices were to wait for an uncertain amount of time or pick smaller windows.

We did not want to "settle" & be forced to down-size the windows, which would vastly alter the building's current appearance. It is very important to us to maintain our building's historical characteristics and charm as much as possible. We would rather wait/ask for the extension vs do something "wrong" just to make a deadline. (& hope the City feels the same way.)

Also, if we opted to downsize, we would risk investing the money on plans just to most likely be denied by the Historic Board. (You can look around downtown and see the differences the window sizes make; seeing those that are now smaller.)

We waited and when the windows became available the lead time for the architect to complete the designs was ~16 weeks, due to an active hurricane season. ~16 weeks was pushing it to make the deadline, but "doable."

#### **2. Working with our Tenants**

However, around the same time that we went to start, we found out our Tenant (who occupies the entire lower level) was providing services they were not licensed to provide, which triggered several issues. We decided to pause the design plans to wait on our Tenant to figure out how they would move forward since their decision could have an impact on our overall designs.

Legally, we had to give the Tenant a certain amount of time to cure the violations of their Lease; plus, we are good Landlords and rather work with the Tenant vs terminate their Lease. (**Note:** by the time we are in front of the FPRA on May 13<sup>th</sup>, we will know what direction our tenants are going & our design plans will be finalized).

#### **3. Repairing Recent Storm Damage**

Our fence was severely damaged during a recent storm (which is not part of the Grant since it is in the back courtyard), but our Contractor is in the process of replacing that, which does take away time for him to work on the other projects. (Building permit attached for fence for reference). Not that this really impacted us, "per se;" since he really cannot do any of the other improvements or order supplies/turn in plans for the upper façade improvements until the lower Façade windows & doors are finalized. (Changes to the downstairs could affect the design for the upstairs). I am bringing this up to show "good faith" & that we are working on the building in other ways until the windows/doors are finalized & tenant issues are resolved.

#### 4. Security Cameras

We would also like to request an extension on the one improvement that does not require building plans & is supposed to be completed by March 10, 2025; which is installing the security cameras. We were waiting to purchase the new security cameras closer to the time the renovations begin in case there were any issues/they weren't working, we could exchange them. Also, the warranty starts from the time of purchase. By delaying the purchase, the cameras would be covered longer and as much as technology changes, this helps ensure we have the newest model.

#### **Moving Forward & New Timeline:**

We found another glass company (Superior Glass, located in Vero) that has the products we want available, and the lead time for plans to be completed is not as long, they anticipate ~8-9 weeks from the time the contract is executed until they turn in the plans for building permits. (While we would love to start the plans right now & ask for a shorter extension, we prefer to wait in case we are not granted the extension since unfortunately, we are only able to complete these improvements with this grant.)

Our extension request is going in front of the FPRA on May 13<sup>th</sup>, 2025.

If we are given approval for the extension, that gives us ~21 weeks from the FPRA meeting to complete plans, obtain Building Permit & Historic COA. Even if it takes 10-11 weeks for plans to be designed & submitted, that leaves us 10-11 weeks which should be enough time for plans to be reviewed/approved by the building department.

It is our intention to start the renovations once building permit is received. (We understand it will be hurricane season, but plan to still do the remodel as long as there are no active storms).

We are very excited to move forward with this project & hope you will agree to extend the deadline for obtaining the building permit for another project 180 days (~6 months). This extension is very important, for multiple reasons:

- It allows us to work with our Tenant, giving them time to cure their violations vs terminating their lease and having another empty storefront downtown.
- It allows us to deliver a stunning final product, like we are known for doing! (Look at how our building has transformed over the years. We were flattered to see our building on the cover for the Façade Grant. We plan to continue raising the bar & hopefully inspire others!)
- Most importantly, starting the path to becoming ADA compliant, which is why we initially applied for this grant. It is not easy and requires the full renovation of our entire lower level for the storefronts to have accessible entranceways.

As many know, ADA accessibility is near & dear to my heart. Even though it is not “required,” we have been wanting to redo the front of our building to make it ADA compliant for several years now, but it is an expensive capital improvement where we most likely will not see a ROI until we sell the building (which we don't plan to do anytime soon). Without this Grant, we just would not be able to justify the cost when we have many other necessary improvements to consider. At the end of the day, these historical buildings are expensive to maintain, let alone bring up to the current code. There is only so much money you can put towards these improvements when the overall rental income is a little on the “lower” side. It is a delicate balancing act; while we would love to do more major projects asap, we need to stay fiscally responsible. Thank you for providing these grant opportunities in general. It is the grant opportunities like this that allow us to keep improving our building while maintaining affordable rents = Win-Win for Downtown patrons, tenants, our building & its' future.

Thank you for your time & consideration. Please feel free to reach out to me if you have any questions.

Sincerely,



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