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Business grants help Northville merchants

Scott Spielman
Editor

Several businesses in downtown Northville will get help from the Downtown Development Authority (DDA) this year.

They'll have to do a little additional work in order to get Business Assistance Program (BAP) awards next year, however. The DDA board members voted to award six grants totaling more than \$10,000 to downtown businesses. The grants are designed to help business or property owners make improvements to their buildings and, next year, applicants will have to seek at least two bids for the work they've planned as part of the process.

Jim Long, a member of the DDA board, said the new rule is to ensure that the DDA money is being well spent.

"We should run this like we run our own household or business," he said.

The funds will go to 117 E Main, where owner Bill Richardson is planning front and rear façade improvements totaling about \$4,915; he'll receive \$2,457. The Le George restaurant, a new Mediterranean eatery opening soon, will get \$1,425 for a new sign; the 2nd Street Hair Salon will receive \$3,192 for new signs, a front door, and a new porch and railing.

Violets are Purple, a store that opened on May 13, received \$1,550 for a new awning and paint. Center Street Wealth Strategies at 134 Main Centre received \$890 for new signage and Broughton Music at 141 N. Center St. received \$1,059 for a new sign, as well.

The only project that was rejected was a requested \$2,650 from Kim Guenther, owner of Buckminster's, because he has not yet received a license to do business in the city, said DDA Director Lori Ward, and has outstanding utility bills on the property.

The DDA awards BAP grants for commercial improvements and technical assistance; the technical assistance grants are geared toward the cost of architecture or other consulting expenses.

The commercial grants are for half of the overall project, so a \$5,000 project is eligible for \$2,500 in grants.

"It's a maximum for the business address, whether it's for the merchant or building owner," said Ward. "It's one pool of money."

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