

## *Press Release--For Immediate Release*

### **“Downtown Façade Grant Program Helping Lexington Property Owners Make Improvements to Downtown Buildings”**

Visitors to downtown Lexington will soon see a number of building improvements thanks in part to the Historic Lexington Foundation-administered façade grant program. The façade grant committee recently awarded grants for exterior work to be done on the buildings at 14 and 18 East Nelson Street and 123 South Randolph Street. Named after the late Washington and Lee University math professor Robert S. Johnson, the grant fund is a partnership between HLF and the City of Lexington.

Once the Nelson Street Bridge is re-opened, the East Nelson Street properties will become even more visible to visitors to the downtown and to the Rockbridge County Courthouse on South Randolph Street. “HLF has been gratified with ongoing building improvements on Main Street, including the Alexander-Withrow Building, the Dold Building, and the McCampbell Inn on North Main Street”, notes HLF executive director Don Hasfurther. “We are now expecting major improvements along Nelson Street as well”, adds Hasfurther, who also serves on the façade grant committee.

Theresa and George Bezold, owners of the East Nelson Street properties, recently appeared before the façade grant committee to explain their planned improvements to the two buildings. Plans for 14 East Nelson Street include repointing of brick and mortar and repainting of previously painted exterior brick and wood trim. The Bezolds will remove the awning frame and boards covering the historic window transoms on 18 East Nelson Street and repair the glass. They will also repoint the mortar in accordance with the Secretary of Interior’s Standards and leave the brick unpainted. The two buildings date from the mid-1920s.

The Bezolds also received approval from the Lexington Architectural Review Board for their planned façade improvements. Board member Sallie Sebrell was especially enthusiastic with respect to the project. “As a member of Lexington’s ARB, I was thrilled to have an opportunity to vote to approve the façade improvements that the Bezolds are planning. They are being very sensitive to the historic integrity of their buildings, and that section of Nelson Street will benefit greatly from this renovation. It is marvelous that the City and HLF are offering incentives for this sort of project, which hopefully will encourage others to improve their properties.”

In addition to the grants for the Nelson Street properties, the committee approved a grant application from Irene Townsend for 123 South Randolph Street. According to Townsend, the building was built prior to 1915 by Dr. B.B. Glover as the office and stables for his veterinary practice. The grant is for carpentry and painting. The building is visible from the regional library following the replacement of the fence

and adjoining wall. The façade grant committee welcomed the planned improvements.