

**City of St.Catharines**

**Community Improvement Plan (2015CIP)**

**Guidelines**

**For the**

**Façade Improvement (FIP) Program**

# **Façade Improvement (FIP) Program**

## **Guidelines**

This program offers a grant to offset a portion of project costs for a building facade improvement project.

This program is only available to commercial or mixed use buildings located on most streets in the City's Downtown Core, and along a portion of Queenston Street and St. Paul Street West. The properties that are eligible for this program are set out on Appendix 1.

The 2015CIP sets out the details and parameters of the FIP Program. These Guidelines are a companion document, providing answers to frequently asked questions and assistance to prospective applicants on how the program works.

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## 1. How does the FIP grant work?

This City offers a one time grant to offset a portion of eligible project costs spent on a building façade improvement project.

Project costs eligible for the grant are listed in Section 13.

After completion of a project, the City provides a grant equal to 50 % of the eligible project costs spent on the facade, up to a maximum of \$10,000, whichever is less. Also, the grant cannot exceed the eligible costs incurred.

For example, Paul spends \$25,000 in eligible project costs to improve a façade. He can claim 50% of those costs (\$12,500). However, the maximum grant permitted is \$10,000. Paul receives a grant for \$10,000.

If Paul spends \$15,000 in eligible project costs, he can claim 50% of those costs (\$7,500). However, the grant cannot exceed the eligible costs incurred. Although the maximum grant available is \$10,000, Paul receives a grant for \$7,500.

The following chart illustrates the above examples.

	<u>Eligible Project Costs</u>		<u>Maximum Eligible Grant Value</u>	<u>Grant Amount</u>
	<u>Total</u>	<u>Grant Value (total x %)</u>		
Example 1	\$25,000	\$12,500	\$10,000	\$10,000
Example 2	\$15,000	\$7,500	\$10,000	\$7,500

## 2. What Facades are eligible?

- a) The grant is only available to Commercial and Mixed Use buildings located in the City's Downtown Core, and along a portion of Queenston Street and St. Paul Street West. The buildings that are eligible for this program are set out on the map in Appendix 1.
- b) The type of building facades that are eligible are as follows:
  - i) a street-facing building facade with ground floor commercial;

- ii) the rear facade of a building located on the south side of St. Paul Street between Ontario Street and Carlisle Street;
- iii) the front and exterior side facade of a building on a corner lot, where both facades have ground floor commercial;
- iv) where a building has street-facing ground floor commercial, the side yard façade adjacent to and facing a public space is eligible.

### 3. Can I apply for more than one Façade at a time?

Certain buildings may be eligible for more than one façade improvement. A maximum of 2 façades may be approved under one project, in which case, the same grant values set out in Section 1 apply to each façade.

### 4. Is there a matching grant from the Region of Niagara?

For certain facades, the Region of Niagara typically matches the value of the grant given by the City. The type of facades that typically receive a matching grant are those set out in Section 2 a) i) and ii) above. During the application evaluation stage, the City will seek confirmation of the matching grant from the Region.

With confirmation from the Region, the amount of the grant given by the City is effectively doubled. Using the examples from Section 1 above, this is illustrated in the following chart.

	<b>City Grant</b>	<b>Matching Regional Grant</b>	<b>Total Grant Amount</b>
Example 1	\$10,000	\$10,000	\$20,000
Example 2	\$7,500	\$7,500	\$15,000

### 5. How do I apply?

The FIP application form is attached to these Guidelines as Appendix 3.

Complete Applications are to be submitted to the Planning and Building Services Department at City Hall, 50 Church Street, St.Catharines between the hours of 8:30 a.m. and 4:30 p.m.

Complete Applications may also be mailed to the following:  
City of St.Catharines

Planning and Building Services Department  
PO Box 3012, 50 Church Street  
St.Catharines, ON  
L2R 7C2

Receipt of an application in no way implies that it satisfies Complete Application Requirements or that it will be approved.

## **6. Is there an application fee?**

There is no application fee.

## **7. Do I need to consult with staff before submitting an application?**

It is not required but strongly encouraged to meet with Planning and Building Department staff prior to submitting an application.

In addition to these Guidelines, staff is available to assist prospective applicants and answer any questions on how the program works.

## **8. Who can apply for the grant?**

A property owner, or an authorized agent, can make application for the FIP grant.

If an agent is making application on behalf of a property owner, please ensure that Part A of the application form and the necessary authorization for Consent of the Owner in Part G are completed.

An application with Original signatures is required.

## **9. Who can receive the grant?**

The FIP grant may be given to the owner of the subject property, or to an authorized agent upon Consent of the Owner.

## **10. Are there minimum eligibility requirements to apply?**

The following are minimum requirements necessary to be considered for FIP approval.

- The subject building is located on any of the streets as identified on the map in Appendix 1.
- The property owner must not be in arrears of any municipal financial obligation including, without limitation, property taxes and water/wastewater charges, for **any** property owned within the City.
- Any outstanding work orders on the subject property, and/or any orders or requests to comply from the Planning and Building Services Department, Fire Services or any other municipal department, must be satisfactorily addressed prior to any program approval.
- Not more than one FIP application per lot will be considered for approval within any 2 year period
- No approval will be given for improvements to the same façade, or parts thereof, that has previously received a grant under the FIP program. .
- Projects must in conformity with the City's Official Plan (Garden City Plan) and Zoning By-law No. 2013-283.

## **11. What is required for a Complete Application?**

The application form, attached as Appendix 3, sets out all the required information and attachments necessary to be submitted for a Complete Application, and includes:

- detailed and itemized cost estimates for the entire project;
- current digital photograph(s) of the entire façade or facades that are the subject of the application;
- regardless of whether only a portion of a façade is proposed for improvement, detailed elevation drawings of the entire façade(s) are required that clearly identify proposed works and alterations. The drawings are to be prepared by an Architectural Technician or equivalent qualification;

Applications which are incomplete will not be processed.

## **12. Can I apply for another program at the same time?**

- i) Applicants applying for the FIP program may also apply for the 2015CIP Residential / Office Conversion (ROC) Program, subject to meeting the eligibility requirements of that program, but are not eligible to apply for the 2015CIP Tax

Increment Finance (TIF) Program or the Brownfield Tax Assistance (BTA) Program.

### **13. What project costs are eligible for the grant?**

i) Eligible project costs are generally described as follows:

- doors;
- windows;
- exterior paint;
- stone;
- brick;
- restoration of surfaces;
- accessibility improvements;
- light fixtures;
- awnings;
- signage frame or backdrop;
- qualified contracted labour.

Ineligible costs include the following:

- signs;
- spandrel panels;
- reflective or darkly tinted glass, any movable elements (e.g. planters, patio furniture);
- maintenance work;
- incidental costs;
- exterior cladding.

ii) Only eligible costs determined and prepared by a Qualified Person(s) will be accepted.

iii) Eligible costs that are paid for by the property owner or the authorized agent are eligible for the grant.

iv) If a grant or other financial incentive has or is being secured for the same project from another government agency, non-profit group, or association, the amount, duration and provider of the grant or incentive must be declared on the application.

If the amount of such grant or incentive, combined with the FIP benefit, is greater than the total of all eligible project costs, the grant will be revised accordingly so that the total incentive provided does not exceed the total of eligible project costs.

#### **14. Can I start the project before applying for or receiving grant approval?**

No grant is provided retroactively for any works undertaken on the subject lands, or project costs incurred, prior to formal agreement with the City.

#### **15. What are projects evaluated on?**

Projects must be consistent with the City's urban design guidelines, and shall be evaluated based on the 10 criteria below. Each eligible facade must satisfy at least 8 of the criteria to qualify for approval. An eligible facade as set out in Section 2 b) ii) or iv) will only need to satisfy 5 of these criteria.

The evaluation criteria are as follows:

- Comprehensiveness - Façade improvements should represent a holistic restoration and improvement strategy for the entire eligible façade, including entrances, ground floor, upper floors and rooflines.
- Entrances - Ground floor facades should include a prominent, well-defined pedestrian entrance for each ground floor use or lobby, which is oriented to the sidewalk.

Where new entrances are proposed, they shall be recessed from the sidewalk. Each principle entrance shall be flush with the sidewalk or ramped in order to minimize barriers for people with disabilities or mobility challenges in accordance with Facility Accessibility Design Standards (FADS).

- Ground floor - Ground floor facades should include an appropriately designed bulkhead panel; large clear glass display windows; glazed transoms, clear glazed or decorative door, and a cornice.
- Cultural Integrity - All original architectural elements should be retained and restored. This includes but is not limited to cornices, brickwork, window moldings, pilasters, bulkheads, parapets and other details. If a specific architectural element cannot be retained due to irreparable deterioration, replacement elements shall be compatible with the original to the greatest extent possible. Original architectural elements, including windows and doors, should not be covered, filled or obscured.

- Materials and Cladding - The façade should primarily be clad in brick or stone which is in a good state or repair or shall be restored. Unpainted brick or stone should not be painted or covered. Previously painted masonry may be repainted or stripped. Masonry and mortar that must be repaired or replaced should match the existing material in colour, style and texture as closely as possible. Façade and accent colours shall be selected that reflect and enhance place character.
- Ground Floor Windows - The surface area of the ground floor façade should be covered by at minimum percentage of clear glass windows in compliance with Zoning By-law 2013-283 and which provide views to active interior space or lobbies. To allow people to clearly see in and out, tinted or reflective glazing is not permitted. Use of security grills or bars over windows is also not permitted. While limited traditional painted or decal window signs may be appropriate, signage and posters will generally be avoided.
- Upper Windows - Original upper storey window openings should be retained, along with the traditional configuration of window panes and sashes. This includes retention or existing round head windows. Where new windows are proposed, they should reflect the size and spacing of original windows and those of adjacent buildings. Original window sills, surrounds and shutters should be retained and restored where possible, or replaced with a compatible alternative. Any window box air conditioners and wall-mounted satellite dishes shall be removed.
- Compatibility and Proportions - Large walls should be broken down through vertical and horizontal articulation which reflects the characteristic proportions established by adjacent facades and other facades on the block, including typical widths and height, cornice heights, window and door composition, awning design, and rooflines. The composition of the façade should be consistent with the established rhythm and spacing of the surrounding facades.
- Signage - All signage is appropriately sized to compliment the character and proportions of the façade and the established character of the block. Signage is generally limited to a dedicated sign band above the ground floor or storefront and will compliment, not clutter the streetscape. Signage should not occupy more than 15% of the surface area of the façade nor cover or obscure any architectural elements.
- Streetscape Vibrancy - Facade improvements should include design elements that will improve the vibrancy and pedestrian experience of the streetscape. These elements include but are not limited to the provision of awnings, canopies, flower boxes, decorative lighting or art installations. Note that some of the elements may require additional approvals
-

## **16. When will I know if my application has been approved?**

The Director of Planning and Building Services Department, or delegate, is the approval authority for applications under the FIP Program. Once a Complete Application is submitted to the satisfaction of the municipality, the approximate timeline for approval or denial by the Director of Planning and Building Services Department, and notification of the decision to the applicant, is 30 days.

## **17. Is there an appeal process if my application is denied?**

The decision of the Director of Planning and Building Services Department for approval or denial of a FIP application is final. There is no appeal process.

## **18. Are there timelines to start and complete the project?**

A project cannot be started until written approval is received from the Director of Planning and Building Services, or designate.

The project must be completed within nine (9) months of the written approval to be eligible to receive the grant.

## **19. When do I start to receive the grant payment?**

The payment of the grant commences only after completion of the project and upon satisfaction of the conditions of the FIP approval with the City, as set out in Section 20 below.

## **20. What conditions need to be satisfied before receiving the grant?**

The approval by the Director of Planning and Building Services Department sets out conditions that must be satisfied prior to receiving the grant.

The following provides a general outline of the minimum requirements that must be met prior to receiving the grant.

- i) The project must be completed within 9 months of application approval, and all required municipal approvals are obtained.
- ii) All property taxes, local improvement charges, and any other charges of the City have been paid in full prior to and throughout the duration that the program is in effect.

iii) Submission of:

- A written declaration of the total project cost.
- A properly executed Statutory Declaration together with the Eligible Costs Form, attached as Appendix 2, and setting out a complete itemized accounting of **all** eligible project costs incurred , and not just those enough to cover the grant amount, and must include the following;
  - Name of the Supplier of Service
  - Invoice date
  - Invoice Number
  - Dollar Amount of Invoice before HST
  - Amount of HST
  - Total Invoice Dollar Amount with HST
  - Brief Description of Expense
  - Cheque Number to Pay Invoice
  - Dollar Amount of Cheque
  - Date of Cheque
- A copy of all contracts, invoices, purchase orders, materials supplied, receipts for fees and other costs incurred by the approved applicant, proof of payment, and copies of processed cheques front and back, for the corresponding items listed on the Eligible Costs Form.
- Only eligible costs determined and prepared by a Qualified Person(s) will be accepted.

The Eligible Costs submitted may be subject to verification, third party review or independent audit at the expense of the Applicant, if required by the City.

- Digital photographs of the subject building façade after the project is complete.

## 21. PROCESS - from beginning to end.

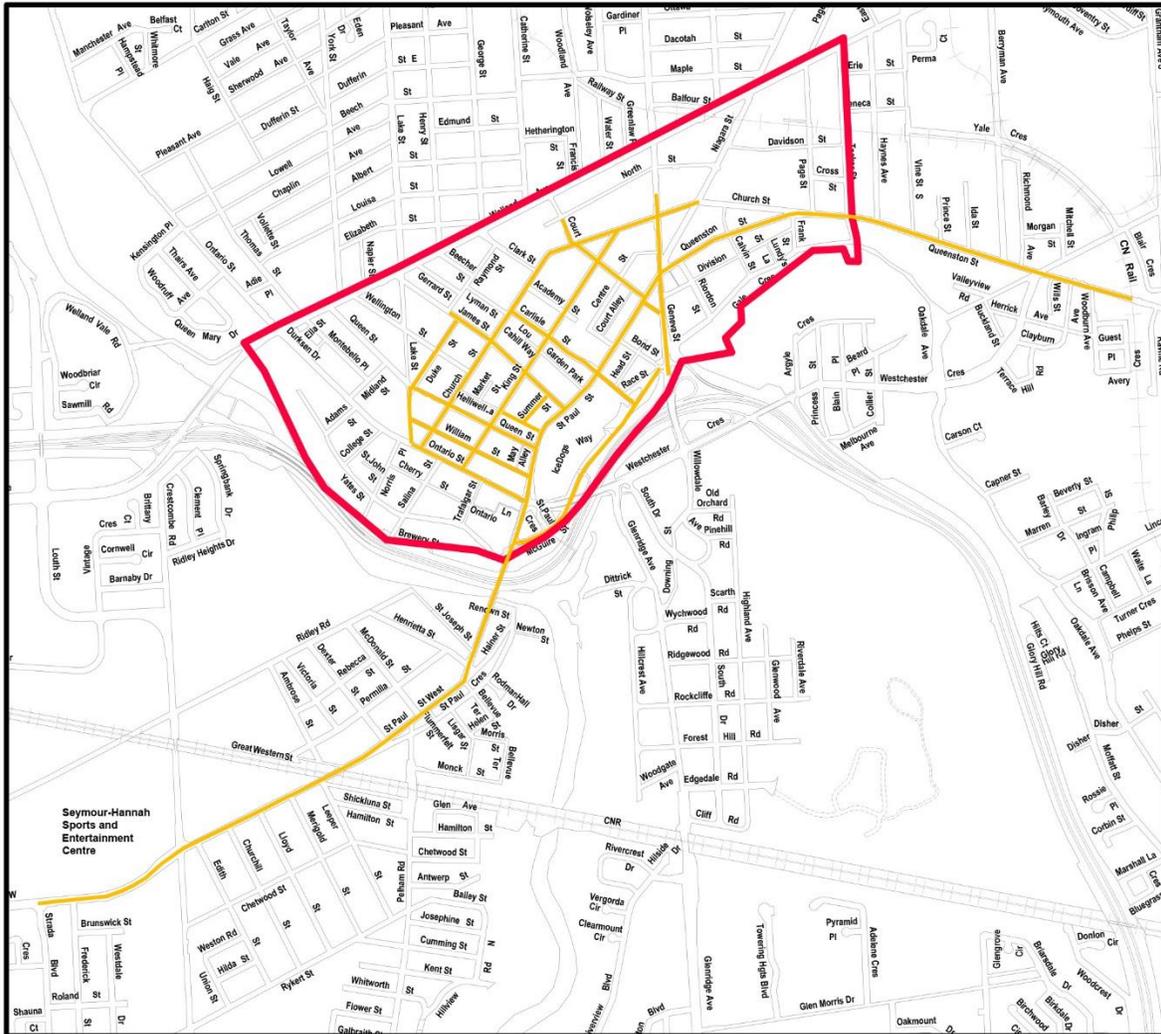
- Step 1 - Consult Planning and Building Department staff before applying.  
    ▼
- Step 2 - Submit Complete Application.  
    ▼
- Step 3 - Staff review and evaluation of Complete Application.  
    ▼
- Step 4 - Confirmation of matching Region of Niagara grant .  
    ▼

- Step 5 - Approval / denial by the Director of Planning and Building Services Department.  
    ▼
- Step 6 - Commencement of the project.  
    ▼
- Step 7 - Completion of the project within 9 months of written approval.  
    ▼
- Step 8 - Disbursement of grant upon satisfaction of conditions of approval (see Section 20).

## **APPENDIX 1**

**Map of the  
Streets where properties located thereon  
are eligible for the Façade Improvement (FIP) Program**

# The St. Catharines Community Improvement Plan (2015)



## Community Improvement Plan (2015)

- Street Segments to which Properties Located thereon are Eligible for the Facade Improvement Program (FIP)
- Downtown Priority Neighbourhood



**APPENDIX 2**

**STATUTORY DECLARATION**

**And**

**ELIGIBLE COSTS FORM**

City of St.Catharines Community Improvement Plan (2015CIP)

**Statutory Declaration and Eligible Costs Form**

CANADA	)	IN THE MATTER OF the work undertaken
	)	under the Community Improvement Plan
PROVINCE OF ONTARIO	)	described as a _____
	)	_____ Project
	)	at the property municipally known as
	)	_____
	)	_____
REGIONAL MUNICIPALITY OF NIAGARA	)	in the City of St. Catharines, in the
	)	Regional Municipality of Niagara
	)	
To wit:	)	

I, \_\_\_\_\_, of the \_\_\_\_\_ of \_\_\_\_\_, in the Regional Municipality of Niagara, and Province of Ontario, DO SOLEMNLY DECLARE that:

1. I am the Owner/Agent of the Owner, of the property identified above, and am a resident of \_\_\_\_\_, hereby swear and declare that as such, I have personal knowledge of the facts hereunto declared and that all accounts for labour, subcontracts, products, construction, machinery, and equipment and other indebtedness which may have been incurred by myself for the performance of costs set out in the attached Eligible Costs Form, and for which I am responsible, all accounts have been paid in full.
2. Further, that I have personal knowledge of the facts hereunto declared and swear that there are no outstanding work orders, or orders or requests to comply from any municipal department, Regional Department or other regulatory authority in respect of the conversion, upgrade or rehabilitation on the property and the business of the Owner conducted on the lands herein identified. Further, I do swear that all accounts that have become due and payable in connection with the Project on the subject property, and construction, installation, and maintenance of the building, services and requirements of the Construction Lien Act have been complied with.
3. And I make this solemn declaration conscientiously believing it to be true and knowing it is of the same force and effect as if made under oath.

DECLARED before me at the City	)	
of St. Catharines, in the	)	
Regional Municipality of Niagara,	)	
this day of 20 .	)	_____
	)	
	)	

A Commissioner, etc.



**APPENDIX 3**  
**APPLICATION FORM**

THE CORPORATION OF THE  
CITY OF ST. CATHARINES

www.stcatharines.ca

PO Box 3012, 50 Church Street  
St. Catharines, ON L2R 7C2  
Tel : 905.688.5600 | Fax: 905.688.5873  
TTY: 905.688.4TTY (4889)

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**PLANNING AND BUILDING SERVICES  
DEPARTMENT**

**COMMUNITY IMPROVEMENT PLAN (2015CIP)**

**APPLICATION FOR  
THE FAÇADE IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM (FIP)**

1. If an Agent is acting on behalf of a property Owner, please ensure that Part A of the Application form has been completed and signed authorization by the Owner has been given in Part G. An application with a photocopied Owner's signature is not acceptable.
2. Please type or print legibly the requested information on the Application form.
3. Please ensure that all of the required information and attachments are provided to ensure it is a Complete Application. Any application which is incomplete will not be processed.

**Part A: Applicant, Agent Information**

**Applicant Information**

Name of Registered Property Owner (s):

\_\_\_\_\_

Address of Registered Property Owner:

\_\_\_\_\_

Phone Number - Primary: \_\_\_\_\_

Secondary: \_\_\_\_\_

Fax Number:

\_\_\_\_\_

Email Address:

\_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Agent Information (if applicable)

Name of Agent:

\_\_\_\_\_

Address of Agent: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Phone Number - Primary: \_\_\_\_\_

Secondary: \_\_\_\_\_

Fax Number:

\_\_\_\_\_

Email Address:

\_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**Part B: Application Information**

1. Is a concurrent application also being made for:

- the 2015CIP Residential / Office Conversion(ROC) Program - Yes [ ] No [ ]
- other non 2015CIP incentive - Yes [ ] No [ ]

**Part C: Property Information**

1. Address of subject property:

\_\_\_\_\_

2. Legal Description (Lot and Plan No):

\_\_\_\_\_

3. Property Size: \_\_\_\_\_ hectares

4. Existing Official Plan Designation: \_\_\_\_\_

5. Existing Zoning:

\_\_\_\_\_

6. Is the property designated under Part IV or Part V of the Ontario Heritage Act?  
- Yes [ ] No [ ]



## **Part E: Project Schedule**

Estimated commencement date of project: \_\_\_\_\_

Estimated completion date of project: \_\_\_\_\_

## **Part F: Complete Application Requirements**

**The following information is required to be attached to and submitted with this form as a Complete Application**

1. Two (2) detailed cost estimates prepared by two (2) separate Qualified General Contractors or equivalent professionals, for the following:
  - i) the total cost of the project; and
  - ii) detailed, itemized, cost estimates for the entire project including the following, where applicable:
    - doors;
    - windows;
    - exterior paint;
    - stone;
    - brick;
    - restoration of surfaces;
    - accessibility improvements;
    - light fixtures;
    - Awnings;
    - Signage frame or backdrop;
    - Qualified contracted labour.
  - iii) Current digital photograph(s) of the entire façade or facades that are the subject of the application;
  - iv) Regardless of whether only a portion of a façade is proposed for improvement, detailed elevation drawings of the entire façade(s) are required that clearly identify proposed works and alterations. The drawings are to be prepared by an Architectural Technician or equivalent qualification;

**The City reserves the right to request additional information as deemed necessary on a site specific basis.**

**Part G: Acknowledgement / Authorization / Declaration**

**Acknowledgement**

I, \_\_\_\_\_ as the Owner of the land that is the subject of this  
(Name of Owner – printed)

application, acknowledge that **I DO** [ ] / **I DO NOT** [ ] have a pecuniary interest in the  
“Cost Estimates” as is required and provided with this application. (Please check the  
appropriate box).

**Authorization**

I, \_\_\_\_\_ as the Owner of the land that is the subject of this  
application, (Name of Owner – printed)

authorize:

\_\_\_\_\_ of  
(Name of Applicant – printed)

(Name of Company – printed)

of the City of \_\_\_\_\_, to make this application on my/our behalf.

Declared before me at the \_\_\_\_\_ )

of \_\_\_\_\_ )

in the \_\_\_\_\_ )

of \_\_\_\_\_ )

this \_\_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_ 20\_\_ )

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
A Commissioner

**Declaration**

I, \_\_\_\_\_ of the City of \_\_\_\_\_,  
solemnly

(Name of applicant - printed)

declare that:

All statements contained in this application are true, and I make this solemn declaration conscientiously believing it to be true and knowing that it is of the same force and effect as if made under oath and by virtue of the *Canada Evidence Act*.

Declared before me at the \_\_\_\_\_ )  
of \_\_\_\_\_ )  
in the \_\_\_\_\_ )  
of \_\_\_\_\_ )  
this \_\_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_, 20 \_\_\_\_ )

Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
A Commissioner