

**BOARD OF ALDERMEN**

**ITEM NO: D(2)**

**AGENDA ITEM ABSTRACT**

**MEETING DATE: September 6, 2005**

**SUBJECT: A Request to Approve the Economic Development Consultant Request for Proposals**

<b>DEPARTMENT: Economic and Community Development</b>	<b>PUBLIC HEARING: No</b>
<b>ATTACHMENTS: A. Resolution B. Request for Proposal</b>	<b>FOR INFORMATION: James Harris, 918-7319</b>

**PURPOSE:**

On April 12, 2005, the Board appointed a subcommittee to discuss the development of a Request for Proposal (RFP) process to hire a consultant to work with the Town to help focus its economic development initiatives. The subcommittee met on August 30th to review the RFP draft. The purpose of this item is to present to the Board of Aldermen a RFP to hire an economic development consultant to assist the Board of Aldermen and staff in creating a clear road map for future, sustainable economic development within the Town of Carrboro taking into consideration the three triple bottom line sustainability principles and to appoint a selection committee.

**INFORMATION:**

At the February 14 and 15, 2005 Board of Aldermen retreat, the Board identified the town's proximity to UNC-Chapel Hill, its reputation as a creative community, and the existing rail system as some of its strengths that could be utilized to develop a niche in the regional economy and to attract new businesses. On April 12, 2005, the Board appointed a subcommittee to discuss the development of an RFP process to hire a consultant to work with the Town to help focus its economic development initiatives. The subcommittee met on August 30 to review the RFP draft.

Carrboro has continually emphasized the downtown as the economic engine for the Town. Much care has been given by prior and the current Board of Aldermen to protect this most valuable resource and its surrounding neighborhoods. The Town has frequently engaged in evaluations of the town's development, during which the residents have expressed strong support. During each of the studies, the Town emphasized maintaining the commercial vitality of the downtown. Carrboro has a solid record of economic development and has a high potential for future enhancements with good planning and execution.

Projected continued growth makes it necessary to refine the town's economic development strategies. Over the years since the 1983 report and even with a thriving downtown, the town's commercial tax base remains less than 12 percent of the overall tax base. The ultimate outcome

of this effort will be an implementation plan that assists the Town to fine tune its economic development initiatives to increase its commercial tax base.

The consultant will assist the Board in developing a plan to cultivate commercial growth, development, and redevelopment that corresponds with the town's sustainability goals. The Town would like for the selected consultant to 1) provide a town profile based on the existing demographics and economics; 2) review land use regulations for consistency with economic development policy goals; 3) propose and manage an inclusive process to discuss ideas, issues, best practices and policy and program gaps to set clear and obtainable goals and objectives; and 4) assist the Town in developing a specific action plan and timetables, benchmarks, and measures after the goals are established based upon the research and confirmed through an open and inclusive process.

Staff is requesting that the Board approve the RFP and appoint a selection committee consisting of two members of the Board of Aldermen, the Town Manager, the Economic and Community Development Director, the Planning Director, the Assistant to the Town Manager, and a member from the Economic and Sustainability Commission, the Planning Board, and the Transportation Board.

**FISCAL IMPACT:**

The Board has allocated \$50,000 for consulting services.

**STAFF RECOMMENDATION:**

Staff recommends that the Board of Aldermen approve the Request for Proposals and appoint the steering committee to review the responses and recommend or select a firm or individual to carry out the work specified in the RFP.