

BOARD OF ALDERMEN

ITEM NO. D(3)

AGENDA ITEM ABSTRACT
MEETING DATE: January 10, 2006

TITLE: A Request to Select an Economic Development Consultant

DEPARTMENT: Economic and Community Development	PUBLIC HEARING: No
ATTACHMENTS: A. Resolution B. Request for Proposal: Regional Technology Strategies C. Request for Proposal: The Sanford Holshouser Business Development Group D. Selection Committee Members	FOR MORE INFORMATION: James Harris, 918-7319 Richard White, 918-7314

PURPOSE:

On September 6, 2005, the Board of Aldermen approved the Economic Development Request for Proposals (RFP) and appointed a selection committee to review the responses and to recommend or to select a firm or individual to carry out the work specified in the RFP. The Selection Committee reviewed the respondents' proposals. The Board is requested to select a firm and to authorize staff to negotiate a contract.

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 draft RFP.

Seven firms responded: The Community Land Use and Economics Group, LLC (CLUE); CHMURA Economics and Analytics; Leak – Goforth Company LLC; Market Street; Reiter & Associates; Regional Technology Strategies (RTS); and The Sanford Holshouser Business Development Group, LLC. The Selection Committee met on November 1, 2005. At that meeting, the committee decided to narrow the respondent list to three firms which would be invited to Carrboro for interviews. On November 30, 2005, the committee heard presentations and interviewed the top three firms as determined by committee vote – Market Street, Sanford – Holshouser, and RTS. At the conclusion of the interviews, the committee discussed the three firms. By a vote of seven to two, the committee decided to recommend RTS to the Board. Two committee members were in support of the Sanford – Holshouser proposal which is provided as information.

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.

FISCAL IMPACT:

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

STAFF RECOMMENDATION:

Staff recommends that the Board of Aldermen award the consultant contract to Regional Technology Strategies to carry out the work specified in the RFP and to authorize staff to negotiate a contract.