

**CITY OF ALBANY
CITY COUNCIL AGENDA
STAFF REPORT**

Agenda Date: 06/02/08
Reviewed by: *BP*

SUBJECT: **Contract Approval for Neil Mayer and Associates and Start-up of City Economic Development Program**

REPORT BY: Judy Lieberman, Assistant City Administrator

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Authorize the City Administrator to approve a one-year contract with Neil Mayer and Associates for start up of the City of Albany's Economic Development program, in an amount not to exceed \$50,000.

BACKGROUND

As part of the City Council goal setting that took place in 2007, Council identified economic development as a high priority goal. In the summer of 2007, staff began the process of gathering information regarding the formation of an economic development program in the City of Albany. Meetings were held with representatives from the Chamber of Commerce, the Solano Avenue Association, the Clean and Green Business Task Force, and other community members. Staff also met with staff from the East Bay Economic Development Alliance (EDA), reviewed the recommendations of the Clean and Green Task Force, and reviewed the "economic gardening" concept recommended by the EDA.

Originally, a 75% employee position was considered. However the needs identified covered a wide range of tasks and different kinds of expertise, from financial and planning considerations in the redevelopment zone, to business retention and attraction on Solano and San Pablo Avenues. Subsequently, staff returned to Council in the fall of 2007 to request one year of consultant services that could bring a variety of levels of expertise to Albany, before committing to a permanent position. Council approved this approach at the meeting of October 15, 2007

DISCUSSION

A Request for Proposals was issued in December of 2007, and the responses were reviewed by the Sustainability Committee in February of 2008. The Committee

recommended that three firms be interviewed. Panel interviews were held in March of 2008, and included representatives from the Sustainability Committee, Albany Chamber of Commerce, and Solano Avenue Association, as well as city staff. The panel process resulted in the recommendation to hire Neil Mayer and Associates, in conjunction with Darlene Rios-Drapkin from Urban Transformation. Mr. Mayer and Ms. Drapkin, whose resumes are attached, provide the variety of skills needed by the City to address our two areas of focus. Mr. Mayer will concentrate on the redevelopment zone, while Ms. Drapkin will be working “hands-on” with our local business associations to assist in maintaining and enhancing the Solano and San Pablo Avenue areas.

FINANCIAL IMPACT

Originally, \$100,000 was set aside to fund a 75% Economic Development position (half from general fund and half from reinvestment funds). This has been adjusted downward to a total of \$50,000 for FY08/09 (again, half from general fund and half from reinvestment funds). Some additional reinvestment funds are still available if needed for specific studies related to the Cleveland and Eastshore redevelopment zone.

Attachments

1. Scope of Work
2. Resumes of Neil Mayer and Darlene Rios-Drapkin