



Staff Report

RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING APPROVAL OF A NEW PROFESSIONAL SERVICES AGREEMENT WITH AIMEE SWANSON CONSULTING FOR DESIGN, IMPLEMENTATION AND ADMINISTRATION OF THE FAÇADE IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM FOR AN AMOUNT NOT TO EXCEED \$16,000 FOR PHASES I AND II, AND 3% COMMISSION NOT TO EXCEED \$4,500 FOR PHASE III

Honorable Chair and Board Members:

Summary

Approval of the attached resolution would authorize the Executive Director to engage a special consultant to design, implement and administer a Façade Improvement Program (FIP) for the Agency.

The purpose of the report is to provide the basis needed for a FIP as a complement to the City's economic development efforts.

Background

The Agency's current FIP sets forth several Program Rules:

1. *Qualifying Areas* – All commercial buildings with frontage on El Camino Real, on Ralston Avenue from U.S.-101 to South Road, or on Old County Road. Village Center does not qualify.
2. *Qualifying Improvement* – Street façade improvements qualifying for rebates shall be: painting, stucco, repair, wood siding and trim, windows, doors, façade tile work, awnings or canopies, molding / reliefs / etc., signs, landscaping and irrigation, sidewalks (when required by the City), associated improvements, and related architectural fees.
3. *Rules* – The following procedure shall apply in approving rebates:
 - a. Improvements must be consistent with applicable General Plan or Specific Plan.
 - b. Applicants must receive the required facade design review approval from the Planning Commission or staff, as applicable, and the improvements must be for a complete tenant facade.

- c. Application for a rebate must be submitted with the design review application together with a cost estimate.
 - d. The Planning Commission will make a recommendation to the Agency for funding the rebate at the same time as its approval action on the design review.
 - e. The funding recommendation will be considered by the Agency for approval and, if approved, an agreement shall be executed committing the recipient to complete the improvements according to approved plans and committing the agency to a rebate upon completion. Costs of façade improvements must be verified prior to rebate.
 - f. All rebates shall apply only to existing buildings and shall be administered on a first come first served basis until the budgeted funds are depleted.
 - g. Buildings on corner lots with frontages on both a qualifying street and another street not qualifying will qualify for rebates for improvements of facades along both streets.
 - h. Either property owners or tenants may apply for rebates. Buildings with multiple tenants qualify for multiple rebates. Total rebates for any single building shall not exceed \$15,000.
 - i. No tenant façade or building façade will qualify for a rebate more than once in five years.
4. *Rebate Limits*
- a. Projects approved for funding qualify for rebate of the first \$1,000 of improvement cost. After the first \$1,000 the Agency will rebate 50% of the next \$4,000.
 - b. Façades for new businesses moving into Belmont will be rebated 100% of the first \$3,000 of improvements.
 - c. When three or more contiguous tenant façades are simultaneously improved under the FIP, each completed façade improvement will qualify for a \$500 rebate in addition to that allowed by the application of the above rebate amounts.

In addition to the approved rebate amount, the program allows for reimbursement of the design review and building permit fees.

Discussion

Staff believes the FIP to be underutilized in meeting program objectives and has therefore sought out the assistance of a consultant to redesign the program to improve utilization and begin marketing the revised product to businesses.

During the last marketing of the plan, only two grants were authorized. A common complaint the Agency received was that the grants were inadequate and that the process was too complex. Staff has discussed how to redesign the FIP to address these concerns in depth with the consultant.

The consultant proposes to divide the work into 3 phases: Design, Implementation and Administration.

Design & Start-up

During the Design and Start-up phase, the consultant proposes to accomplish the creation of a Marketing Plan, design of the FIP Implementation plan, and an Application Assistance plan. Once these proposals are presented to the Agency for approval, necessary/requested changes will be made and the final program will be presented to the Agency for adoption and implementation in the community. The consultant proposes this work to be done within 4-6 weeks following Agency direction.

Administration

During this phase, the consultant will send out marketing materials (with staff support), follow-up with all inquiries, present the program to the Belmont Chamber of Commerce, present a staff report to the Agency Directors with a roll-out update, and provide quarterly updates to both the Finance Director and Community Development Director. This phase is expected to be in place approximately 4-6 weeks upon completion of the Design & Start-up Phase.

Application Assistance

The consultant expects to provide all necessary support to the applicant throughout the entire application process during this phase. This includes guidance in completing the FIP application, attending Planning Commission and RDA Meetings to assist the applicant, and providing any additional support the applicant requires, etc.

General Plan/Vision Statement

The objective of this program redesign and implementation is consistent with the City's Vision Statement in priding itself on a *Thriving Economy*:

- A charming, vibrant town center is the heart of our civic and economic life.
- Our economy prospers with a mix of attractive, successful businesses that fit with our community character.

Fiscal Impact

Phase I – Design & Start-up - \$7,500 (fixed, one-time cost) – 60 hours

Phase II – Administration - \$8,500 (fixed annual compensation) – 64 hours

Phase III – Application Assistance - 3% commission on all approved FIP applications up to \$150,000 in approved grants. \$4,500 maximum in commission payments – hours will vary depending on number and complexity of applications.

Public Contact

Posting of City Council agenda.

Recommendation

It is recommended that the Agency Directors approve the attached resolution authorizing approval of a Professional Services Agreement with *Aimee Swanson Consulting* for Design, Implementation and Administration of the Façade Improvement Program for an Amount Not to Exceed \$16,000 for Phases I and II, and 3% Commission Not to Exceed \$4,500 for Phase III.

Alternatives

1. Pursue professional services agreement with another consultant.
2. Deny recommendation and provide direction to staff.

Attachments

- A. Resolution Authorizing Approval of a New Professional Services Agreement with *Aimee Swanson Consulting* for Design, Implementation and Administration of the Façade Improvement Program for an Amount Not to Exceed \$16,000 for Phases I and II, and 3% Commission Not to Exceed \$4,500 for Phase III
- B. Consultant Proposal

Respectfully submitted,

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Jack R. Crist
Executive Director

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REDEVELOPMENT AGENCY RESOLUTION NO. _____

RESOLUTION OF THE REDEVELOPMENT AGENCY OF THE CITY OF BELMONT AUTHORIZING APPROVAL OF A NEW PROFESSIONAL SERVICES AGREEMENT WITH AIMEE SWANSON CONSULTING FOR DESIGN, IMPLEMENTATION AND ADMINISTRATION OF THE FAÇADE IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM FOR AN AMOUNT NOT TO EXCEED \$16,000 FOR PHASES I AND II, AND 3% COMMISSION NOT TO EXCEED \$4,500 FOR PHASE III

WHEREAS, the Agency’s current Façade Improvement Program is underutilized in meeting the program objectives; and,

WHEREAS, the Agency finds it necessary to redesign the program to improve utilization and market the revised product to businesses; and,

WHEREAS, the Agency seeks assistance from a consultant to perform consulting services in connection with redesign, implementation and administration of the Façade Improvement Program; and,

WHEREAS, Aimee Swanson Consulting responded to the Agency’s solicitation for proposals for performing the required services; and,

WHEREAS, staff recommends the proposal submitted by said consultant for the services stated above to be accepted by the Board;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Redevelopment Agency of the City of Belmont hereby authorizes approval of a new Professional Services Agreement with Aimee Swanson Consulting for the design, implementation and administration of the Façade Improvement Program for an amount not to exceed \$16,000 for Phases I and II, and 3% commission not to exceed \$4,500 for Phase III.

* * * * *

I hereby certify that the foregoing Resolution was duly and regularly passed and adopted by the Redevelopment Agency of the City of Belmont at a regular meeting thereof held on July 10, 2007 by the following vote:

AYES, DIRECTORS: _____

NOES, DIRECTORS: _____

ABSTAIN, DIRECTORS: _____

ABSENT, DIRECTORS: _____

Secretary, Redevelopment Agency

APPROVED:

Chair, Redevelopment Agency