

**Lexington Downtown Revitalization Task Force
Progress Update and Phase 1 Recommendation
Tuesday, January 26, 5:30 p.m.
City Council Chambers, 406 E. 7th Street, Lexington, Nebraska**

Following the announcement of a Department of Economic Development award to Lexington for Downtown Revitalization grant funding, I assembled a Task Force to shepherd the project through the various phases. The Task Force includes:

- Dennis Burnside, City of Lexington
- Deb Jensen, Dawson Area Development
- Susan Bennett, Lexington Area Chamber of Commerce,
- John Whittington, downtown retailer (Barmore's) and CED member
- Kellie Rieke, downtown restaurateur (Madeline's)
- Richard Johnson, immediate past president, Chamber of Commerce, and banker
- Terrie Baker, newspaper publisher
- Dr. Chelsa Winheim, chiropractor and young entrepreneur
- Jim Lauby, downtown building owner
- Hugo Tobias, downtown Hispanic business owner
 - in addition, Hugo brought another Hispanic business owner, Roberto Lopez

The Task Force held an inaugural organizational meeting December 28.

Meanwhile, we (Deb Jensen) sent out requests for proposals from consulting firms for conducting the Phase 1 study for the project. We received five written proposals by the deadline January 19. The Task Force met January 20 and reviewed the proposals and made a preliminary ranking. We chose the top three, which were essentially tied, and invited them to Lexington January 25 for personal interviews. Afterward the Task Force rescored the proposals and present their ranking as follows:

	Grasp of the problems and solutions, responsiveness to terms and conditions.	Demonstrated professional experience and evidence of good organizational & management practices	Personnel Qualifications and past record of performance	Schedule and anticipated completion date	Cost Proposal	Total
Max. Points Possible	10	10	10	30	40	100
RDG Planning & Design (Omaha) \$36,000	10	10	10	28	38	96
Hanna Keelan Assoc. (Lincoln) \$35,000	8	10	10	27	39	94
Miller & Associates (Kearney) \$37,000	9	10	10	26	37	92
JEO Consulting Group (Lincoln) \$27,000	9	9	5	25	40	88
Marvin Planning Consult's (David City) \$38,500	9	9	5	11	36	70
Olsson Associates (Lincoln)	X	X	(combined w/ Marvin)	X	X	X
Schemmer Associates (Omaha)	X	X	Did not submit	X	X	X
Other:						
				(max grant)	\$30,000	

Before the interviews we sent all candidates the same six questions to address:

- Please describe your experience and strategies for reaching and maximizing rapport with diverse populations such as Lexington's. Be specific.
- Besides diversity, what do you anticipate as being the most difficult part of the Phase 1 process, and what will you do to overcome the difficulty?
- What must the Lexington DTR Task Force do to ensure a successful Phase 1 completion?
- What would you tell downtown businesses about this Downtown Revitalization Process to answer the question, "what's in it for me?"
- What changes do you expect will happen in the community upon successful completion of a Downtown Revitalization project? Discuss the area in question as well as the larger community.
- What are some of your ideas for attracting business and consumers to Lexington's downtown from outside a 10-minute radius from Lexington?

The Task Force felt RDG's responses to these questions were the most concise and demonstrated experience and strategies that most closely matched Lexington's downtown at this time. Our Hispanic representatives were particularly impressed with RDG's answers to the first question about relating to the diverse business cultures.

We also appreciated RDG's well-thought-out timeline and aggressive schedule that addresses question #2: of which they replied the most difficult aspect of the project is the short turnaround time. DED has set a deadline of April 30 for completion of the Phase One study. I have copies of RDG's interview presentation, as well as the first proposal document they submitted.

So, with approximately 90 days remaining, Lexington's Downtown Revitalization Task Force confidently recommends contracting with RDG Planning & Design to complete the Phase 1 Planning Study.

Respectfully Submitted,

Dennis Burnside on behalf the of DTR Task Force