

After some 65 meetings taking up more than 100 hours over the last 3 years, the Village Study Committee is at critical stage in its work. We are here tonight to explain our June 20 report on activities since March and to make an important request of the Board.

For the benefit of people watching at home, all our reports (including this most recent one) along with many other documents can be viewed at the committee's website www.yorkvillage.org. The request, as you know, is to negotiate a scope of services proposal including a schedule of fees and a timetable for completing a Master Plan for the revitalization of York Village.

Our previous report, filed at the end of March, described a Request for Qualifications (RFQ) process we proposed to use in identifying a firm that would have the right qualifications to make a solid proposal for a Village Master Plan.

Six firms responded — with 20 page briefs — to our RFQ. Using an evaluation form included with our June 20 report (Appendix B) we selected four of these firms to invite for interviews. Those interviews took place between June 5 and June 9. Using a second evaluation form included with our report (Appendix C) we identified the firm which most inspired our confidence. It is this firm — The Downtown Revitalization Collaborative (TDRC) — with which we request authorization to negotiate now.

The RFQ process was new to some of the committee just as the concept of a Master Plan for the Village was new to some as well. Buying an array of multi-disciplinary professional services is not like buying a snow plow for the DPW or a van for the Senior Center. The product we are seeking is not a standardized basket of services in which price might be the only thing separating one vendor from another.

The RFQ process differs from the RFP (Request for Proposals) process which may be more familiar to some people. In an RFP, you tell the firms exactly what you want and they propose to do the work at a certain cost. In the RFQ process, you look for the partner who is best qualified to help you figure out what the project requires before costing it out. In this case, we think TDRC has the best skill set to help us with this project.

There are many variables in the type of planning process we are developing: landscape architecture services, traffic and civil engineering services, economic development and financing proposals, historic preservation, public outreach and community engagement activities, etc. We don't know, for example, how many meetings should be scheduled with stakeholders (including the public-at-large) or exactly who should be included among the major stakeholder groups. We need to figure these things out. The number of such meetings will determine the cost.

In the absence of information like this, it is difficult to know how much the planning work is going to cost. Cost proposals will be determined as we work with the firm we believe understands the process and the product we are pursuing. Once we have that, we will come back to the Board with a proposal and a funding request.

We would like to begin to meet with TDRC, sorting out what their proposal should contain. We have a sense of the scope of services — described as well as we could in the RFQ and to a lesser extent in our June 20 Report — but the VSC doesn't possess all the qualifications needed to develop that scope of services. This is why we went with the RFQ route in the first place.

What we are asking tonight is for your permission to begin working with TDRC on a proposal for a Master Plan for York Village; a proposal which will be brought back to the Board to consider and approve (or reject).

We will be happy to take any questions. Thank you.