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Entertainment
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Redevelopment authority approves contract to market business park

By Amy Karpinsky, Herald-Standard
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The Fayette County Redevelopment Authority Tuesday approved a contract with a Pittsburgh firm to market the Fayette County Business Park.

In approving the \$10,000 contract with Synergy Real Estate Crop., authority members said the corporation will have the capability to bring companies to the 277-acre business park far beyond those of local real estate agents.

To date, the business park includes a Super 8 Motel, the Terry McMillen Engineering Firm, the Fayette County Career Link building and will also house the new locations of the county's Mental Health/Mental Retardation building and a relocated doctor's office.

Executive director Raymond C. Polaski said the timing is perfect for the 12-month contract. He said the authority has to reach out beyond local companies to fill the park. Polaski said that since the county became a full member of the Southwestern Planning Commission (SPC), the planning organization has been looking for a way to help with economic development for Business Park and the historic Springer Farm.

Since the SPC had Synergy do the work, the organization has the marketing information for the park. Polaski said Allan Wampler, the former Allegheny County director of economic development, is the owner of the firm, and Mark Smith is the local contact.

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Although the contract is for \$10,000, Polaski said any new clients that agree to sign will deduct the commission.

Authority member James S. Wolessagle said the contract cost will include advertising costs.

Authority assistant director Andrew French said the firm will develop a target list and then whittle it down to potential tenants. Authority member Paul Bortz Jr. said Synergy will have a target list a lot bigger than what anyone can do locally.

Polaski said any current clients, who are either in the park or negotiating with the authority, are not part of the new contract.

"We want new people in there. We've done our part to get local people," Wolessagle said. Solicitor Herb Margolis said the key is looking for outside development.

Polaski said, as an example, if they are going to reach targets such as an Olive Garden, they have to go through an agency. "They're not going to walk into this door," Polaski said.

In other action, the authority voted to apply for a \$750,000 line of credit with First National Bank of Pennsylvania in Uniontown to be used, if necessary, for site development work at the Fayette County Business Park.

Polaski said the line of credit is necessary according to state regulations, which stipulate that the authority must have money "arranged for or in the bank" equal to the amount of a contract before entering into a contract.

Since the authority was prepared to enter into a contract for site work at the business park with Penn Development Services L.P. of Uniontown for \$984,837.40, the line of credit was necessary. The contract with Penn Development includes construction of the access road into the business park and all the related infrastructure work, Polaski said. He said the contract came in at approximately \$130,000 less than the engineer's estimates. "If we don't take advantage we will be out that money," he said. After approving the motion for the line of credit, the authority voted to enter into the contract with Penn Development.

Polaski said if the authority approves the contract, they will have \$724,000 less than what they need to cover the cost of the contract. He said there are pending settlements of \$960,000 in land sales, so the money is on the way. "I have no doubt the money will more than cover what we need," he said.

Since the authority won't have to draw down from the line of credit until the first payment to Penn Development in December, Polaski said by then land payments will have occurred. "I feel that we will never have to draw down that money but we have to make arrangements to have the money available," he said.

In searching for a line of credit, Polaski said he got quotes from five institutions. The National City quote is for 67 percent of the prime rate, which is currently 2.68 percent. He said the rates ranges from 2.68 to 4 percent.

The authority is waiting for money from the sale of 31.76 acres in North Union Township to Superior Ford Inc. to develop into as many as four automotive dealerships. Margolis said Superior Ford wants the property but the big problem now is making sure they have a right of way. He said negotiations are underway daily with Crown American Corp. for the right of way.

Polaski said he is very optimistic they will have it in the near future. Margolis said that Superior signed a sales agreement and sent with it \$25,000 which is proof how much they want the property. He added that the developer agreed to foot the entire bill for the right of way.

In other action, the authority approved a right of way agreement with Columbia Gas of Pennsylvania for a pipeline together with service connections and communications cables at the business park for \$25,000.

The authority approved a contract for architectural assessment services for the Springer Farm Homestead in North Union Township to Hanson Design Group LTD of Pittsburgh. The \$7,500 contract will include information about how to restore the building, what the cost will be and what will be needed. Polaski said since the building is on the National Register of Historic Places, tax credits could be a nice incentive for a developer.

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