

**CITY OF KIRKLAND****City Manager's Office****123 Fifth Avenue, Kirkland, WA 98033 425.587.3001****www.ci.kirkland.wa.us**

MEMORANDUM

To: Marilynne Beard, Assistant City Manager

From: Ellen Miller-Wolfe, Economic Development Manager

Date: September 6, 2007

Subject: Extension of Contract with Chamber of Commerce Regarding Business Retention Services

RECOMMENDATION:

It is recommended that the City Council approve the extension of the contract with the Chamber of Commerce for the delivery of business retention services until December 31, 2008.

BACKGROUND DISCUSSION:

The City Council authorized \$98,400 in the 2006-7 budget for this purpose. The Council asked for a check-in at or around the mid-point of the budget cycle to determine whether this was the best means of delivering services to local businesses. Staff, together with the Economic Development Committee (EDC), suggests that the service is valuable for business retention purposes, and also, that by coordinating on assistance to local businesses, the helpful ties and communications between the City and the business community (Chamber) are maintained. City economic development policy incorporated in the Economic Development Element of the Comprehensive Plan recognizes the important role that business plays in the community; enabling government to provide necessary services, contributing to the unique identity that is Kirkland and providing necessary goods, services and jobs for residents. Noting that good customer service can be a key rationale for a business to stay or locate in Kirkland, the Plan suggests that the customer needs of businesses be given careful consideration and that assessment of customer service to business and open communication to assure that business needs are met should be encouraged.

The decision by the City to fund business retention service was one feature of the Kirkland Economic Partnership (KEP), established by the City and Chamber several years ago. While KEP has been replaced by the Kirkland Business Roundtable, the need for a business retention consultant, especially for the smaller businesses in Kirkland, remains. These businesses often need help finding new locations in Kirkland to meet expansion requirements. They often seek help with sign permits, home occupation permits, etc., and information about other resources available to them. Currently Duncan Milloy, a consultant to the Chamber of Commerce, fills the part-time position funded by the City which is focused on: welcoming new and returning businesses; helping them to navigate city processes; delineating and resolving issues that touch many businesses, and assisting the Economic Development Manager with a variety of projects. Information about Duncan's performance is attached for your reference.

In the coming year, retention services will be enhanced. An economic gardening program (in partnership with the UW Bothell, Chamber and KDA) will provide a series of seminars on small business issues to Kirkland small retailers, with the Business Retention Consultant helping to promote and facilitate these classes. The Retention Consultant will provide more in-depth marketing assistance to businesses as needed and will also assist the ED Manager with preparations for Roundtable meetings.

In the Fall of 2008, as part of the 2008-9 Budget discussions, Staff recommends a comprehensive review of the program and partnership and a determination whether it meets Kirkland's needs or should be returned. Purchasing policy would likely require re-bidding if the decision is to continue contracting retention services.

Attachments:

1. Business Retention Consultant Accomplishments (October '06 – July '07)
2. Letter from Jan Link, Academic Link (June 19, 2007)
3. Existing Scope of Work (September 15, 2006)
4. Proposed (Enhanced) Scope of Work

Business Retention Consultant Duncan Milloy
October '06 – July '07

- Case Work Breakout
 - 46 clients served to date
 - Real estate searches/relocations (14)
 - Signage (13)
 - Business Planning (12)
 - Permitting (7)
- Monthly Business Orientation Seminars
 - Began in 5/07
 - 13 participants in first three seminars
- Other Projects/Programs
 - Juanita Village parking utilization study
 - Economic gardening for downtown retail
 - Revise Planning & Bldg. Dept. checklists for new businesses
 - Welcome calls to newly licensed and renewing businesses

ACADEMIC|Link

June 19, 2007

Ellen Miller-Wolfe
Economic Development Manager
Kirkland City Hall
123 Fifth Avenue
Kirkland, WA 98033

Re: Duncan Milloy

Dear Ms. Miller-Wolfe,

My name is Jan Link and recently moved my business of three years, Academic Link, to a new location in Kirkland. When we heard that our present business site was for sale, we dreaded the thought of finding a place, preparing for the move, and making the move. Although we preferred to stay in Kirkland, we also seriously considered Bellevue, Woodinville, and even Mukilteo since that is where my home is. Our first reaction was to ignore the problem. Our second reaction was to realize that a move was a reality and that we needed to deal with it.

At a Chamber Business Information meeting, I spoke of my 'not so far in the future' major problem. I was immediately put me in contact with Duncan Milloy, who had recently been hired by the Chamber of Commerce and the City of Kirkland. Instantly, he set up a meeting, talked us through our problem, and developed a plan for our search. He showed us how to locate alternatives, and even went with us to a few prospective locations. Not once did he give up on us as he walked us through it step-by-step. Needless to say, he made all the difference in our lives. We did meet up with a number of issues, but they were nothing like they would have been had we not had Duncan's support. His knowledge, humor, organization and negotiation skills are amazing!

A strength that we really appreciate about Duncan is his sense of humor. We actually looked forward to our meetings with him and continue to enjoy him in our lives. He kept us from getting too close to the issue and helped us make decisions when we started to drag our feet. He helped us analyze alternatives and see the positive in negative situations. He focused on 'what do you want' and 'let me show you how we can get this to work for you'. It was easy to see that he really enjoyed what he was doing and was extremely skilled at it.

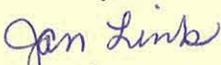
An additional strength of Duncan's was his ability to keep us on a timeline. This made it so our business dealings never stopped. The move went like clockwork. One day we were on 85th Street, and the next we were on 68th Street. He provided us options, talked us through the pros and cons, and gave us the time to make decisions. He also called and checked to see the progress we were making. He gave us the motivation to keep going at an even pace which facilitated the move.

Duncan has an outstanding knowledge of the city, the policies of the city, and the people to network with. All of this added to the success of our move.

We love our new location. It has so many advantages over the previous place. It just feels right. And, we are in Kirkland. We also were able to maintain our current customers from Kirkland, Redmond, Woodinville, Bothell, Bellevue, Mercer Island, etc., which was one of our goals. This was all made possible because of our help from Duncan.

Now that we have moved, we actually miss our connections with him. We highly recommend that the Chamber and the City continue using him to help others like us. Everyone wins...the business and the city. That is success!

Sincerely,



Jan Link
Academic Link

Job Description: Business Retention Specialist

Overview: The Greater Kirkland Chamber of Commerce (Chamber) is seeking a part time Business Retention Specialist to assist Kirkland, Washington businesses. The position is funded by the City of Kirkland through a contract it has with the Chamber. The position is a Chamber consultant that reports directly to the Executive Director of the Chamber, but will also works closely with the City of Kirkland Economic Development Manager.

There are a wide range of businesses operating in Kirkland, a small sampling of which include: Evergreen Healthcare, the Lake Washington School District, Google, Filenet, Camwest Development, AMEC, Costco and Costco Home, and Kenworth Truck Company.

The majority of businesses in Kirkland are small businesses averaging seven employees. Typical issues range from: opportunities to expand in Kirkland; parking needs; visibility; tenant improvement permits; sponsorships and other marketing opportunities; challenges related to City street improvement projects and other public infrastructure projects.

Role: The role of the Business Retention Specialist is to provide outreach services to businesses and assist with problems including directing them to City staff that work with them on solutions. A more detailed list of job duties follows:

Job Duties

1. Respond to business requests for assistance with City permits and related concerns.
2. Provide on-site service to business to best determine the nature of their issues
3. Provide information to businesses about potential business resources.
4. Dispatch customers to appropriate City departments
5. Advise City Economic Development Manager, through the Chamber Executive Director, of more complex issues and perform additional duties as required to resolve them
6. Maintain detailed electronic records of casework that can be easily aggregated and explained. Include contact information; problem definition; outcomes; time records. Data will be summarized and reported monthly.
7. Research strategic options for addressing most frequent issues and other subjects as required.
8. Schedule monthly retention visitations with Kirkland businesses via the KEEP program, a Chamber/City collaboration. Work with the City and Chamber to determine business list and appropriate attendees. Prepare briefing materials for attendees prior to meetings including business information and any outstanding business/government concerns.
9. Design and conduct workshops for potential and existing business owners to orient them to procedures for starting a business in Kirkland and other areas of general interest.
10. Market the availability of business retention services

Qualifications: Bachelors degree (MBA preferred) or equivalent experience in ownership and operation of a business to include knowledge of diverse areas of business such as business start-up and acquisition, business plan development, operations, financial analysis, marketing, and human resource management. Knowledge of government/business interactions including land use, permitting, building, taxation and enforcement processes. Familiarity with commonly used software applications such as Microsoft Word, Excel, Powerpoint and Outlook. Familiarity with the Puget Sound region, (particularly the Eastside of Lake Washington) and business climate issues that characterize it.

CONTRACTED SERVICES
Retention Consultant
DRAFT

Scope of Work

Consultant will provide outreach services to businesses and assist with problems including directing them to City staff that work with them on solutions. Job duties include the ten categories listed below:

1. Assess business needs to best determine the nature of their issues and provide services
2. Respond to business requests for assistance with City permits and related concerns.
3. Provide information to businesses about potential business resources and dispatch customers to appropriate City departments.
4. Advise City Economic Development Manager, through the Chamber Executive Director, of more complex issues and perform additional duties as required to resolve them including Business District meeting support/collaboration.
5. Report bi-monthly casework that can be easily aggregated and explained. Include contact information, problem definition, outcomes, and time records.
6. Research strategic options for addressing most frequent issues and other subjects as required.
7. Conduct and refine workshops for new and existing business owners to orient them to procedures for starting a business in Kirkland and other areas of general interest.
8. Market the availability of business retention services.
 - a. Prepare welcome communications (including those from the Mayor) for newly licensed businesses and renewing businesses.
 - b. Write monthly column for the Chamber newsletter.
 - c. Prepare press releases about program services, initiatives and business successes.
9. Assist clients with marketing plans, networking strategies and public relations.
10. Assist economic gardening program.
11. Provide support to Business Roundtable as needed.
12. Prepare quarterly reports for City Council.

