

Montgomery Economic Development Corp.  
**AGENDA REPORT**

<b>Meeting Date:</b> August 20, 2024	<b>Budgeted Amount:</b> N/A
<b>Department:</b> Administration	<b>Prepared By:</b> G. Palmer

**Subject**

Discussion of Economic Development Services by Lacy Beasley of Retail Strategies

**Recommendation**

Listen to what Ms. Beasley, President of Retail Strategies, has to offer regarding the retail industry and her experience in economic development. Discuss the merits of contracting economic development services out to a private firm vs in-house. Consider services offered by Retail Strategies.

I recommend engaging the services of Retail Strategies.

**Discussion**

**History**

Shortly after my arrival in the City, the City Council undertook at priority setting session to determine the priorities of the City for the next 1-3 years. One of the priorities identified was getting an Economic Development Strategic Plan drafted, adopted and priorities set for the EDC. To that end, early on I contacted several private firms that offer local government planning services. I worked successfully with Retail Strategies (Lacy) in Tennessee, so I reached out to her for guidance. Retail Strategies had expanded and now has Texas offices, so I asked her to put me in touch with that office. You may recall Chris Bontrager from the Retail Strategies Dallas Office presented their services this past May (Strategic Planning and Retail Development/Recruitment) and the guidance coming out of that meeting was to get the agreements drafted. We needed to issue an RFQ so Between May and July, the city issued a Request for Qualifications (RFQ) for ED planning services. We received several responses with Retail Strategies being the most qualified firm for the City of Montgomery work.

The EDC seems to have “cooled” on the idea of contract services and is reconsidering hiring a full time ED Director (city employee). At this time in the City’s ED evolution, I recommend against this for many reasons.

**August 20<sup>th</sup> Presentation**

I asked Lacy to come for a discussion with you all regarding the national economic development industry, trends in local government economic development, Retail Strategies specific services as it relates to the City of Montgomery, and some of the work they have done in Texas.

**Recommendation:**

You may recall from the May presentation; we have the ED work divided into two scopes. One is for Strategic Planning Services and the other is for Retail Development/Recruitment. Lacy will review that work in depth. Should the EDC decide they want to engage the services of Retail Strategies, consideration of those corresponding contracts will be on the August 20<sup>th</sup> agenda. We have the money in this year’s budget and have programmed funds for consulting services for next year.

<b>Approved By</b>		
City Administrator	G. Palmer	Date: 08-09-2024

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