



CITY OF NOVI CITY COUNCIL
APRIL 22, 2024

SUBJECT: Approval to award a two-year Environmental Services Consulting Services Contract to Merjent, Inc. (with the option for three additional one-year renewals), effective immediately, and for the adoption of revised fee schedule, subject to final approval of the form and terms of the contract by the City Manager and City Attorney.

SUBMITTING DEPARTMENT: Community Development Department - Planning

BACKGROUND INFORMATION:

A Request for Proposals (RFP) was issued to seek the services of an independent firm to provide environmental consulting services for woodlands and wetlands. The Environmental Consultant will provide woodlands and wetlands evaluation and advisement services to the City Council, Planning Commission, the Community Development Department, and the Department of Public Services.

The scope of work for the consultant includes reviewing wetland and woodland plans, preparing reports and inspections; conducting field inspections and verifications; reviewing conservation easements and legal documents; preparing woodland and wetland permits, and acting as a resource to the Plan Review Center for coordination of phone calls, staff meetings and attendance at meetings. Additionally, the Environmental Consultant reviews plot plans for single family residential for woodlands and wetlands, and assists with enforcement of woodland and wetland violations.

One firm submitted a proposal which was reviewed by staff for qualifications of the assigned personnel, understanding of the requirements, related experience, ability to perform and conflicts of interest. Staff interviewed the representatives and determined that the firm has qualified people currently available to work in Novi with representatives located in Ann Arbor, Grand Rapids and Detroit. The firm also demonstrated an understanding of the work required, with representatives possessing more than ten years of experience in the field and having no conflicts of interest working for the City of Novi.

The staff team selected to complete the reviews of the responses included the following members of the Community Development Department: Rick Meader, Lindsay Bell, James Hill, and Barbara McBeth. Tracey Marzonie provided assistance throughout the process and with the final staff reviews and discussion.

The City's previous consultants, Mannik & Smith and Davey Resource Group (DRG), had significant changeover in personnel over the three years of their contract with the City, and declined to submit a bid in response to the RFP or to continue to provide services after the middle of January, 2024. Given the need for the city to continue to provide woodland and wetland site plan reviews and inspections during this timeframe, a short-term agreement for Environmental Services was entered into with Merjent in January. During this time, staff has worked closely with the consultant team and has been very satisfied with the work that is being performed.

Environmental fees have not increased for the reviews, inspections, and hourly rates for three years. Due to the number and complexity of services required of the environmental consultant a "fill-able fee template" was included with the RFP, which includes the current fees for various services.

Merjent's proposed fee schedule, which is attached and will be made part of the contract, includes increases from \$40 to \$200 for most services. The most frequent increase is \$150 per service, representing an increase of about 25% over the current fee schedule. Most of the costs are pass-through costs from the developer to the consultant, with a 15% administrative fee customarily attached to each of those fees. The City will pay the costs for the consultants to attend meetings or for activities requested outside of the specified tasks. It is Staff's opinion that the increases are reasonable, given the increasing costs of labor over the last few years, and that the fees have not increased since the beginning of 2021. There will not be additional budget appropriation for the revised fees.

If approved by the City Council, the attached contract would be effective immediately and run for a period of two years, with the option for three additional one-year renewals at the end of that timeframe.

RECOMMENDED ACTION: Approval to award a two-year Environmental Services Consulting Services Contract to Merjent, Inc. (with the option for three additional one-year renewals), effective immediately, and for the adoption of the revised fee schedule, subject to final approval of the form and terms of the contract by the City Manager and City Attorney.