



## *CITY COUNCIL AGENDA ITEM STAFF REPORT*

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**MEETING DATE: JULY 24, 2017**

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**TITLE: NORTHEAST BUSINESS DISTRICT SIGN GRANT APPLICATION: ORCHARD SHELL (1900 VANDALIA)**

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**DEPARTMENT: ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT**

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**PROJECT MANAGER: CRISTEN HARDIN, ASSOCIATE PLANNER**

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**REQUESTED ACTION: APPROVE EXPENDITURE OF NORTHEAST BUSINESS DISTRICT FUNDS**

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**STRATEGIC PLAN GOAL(S): GOAL #4: STRONG & DIVERSE ECONOMY**

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**ATTACHMENTS: APPLICATION, BIDS + ARCHITECTURAL PLANS, APPROVED SIGN PERMIT APPLICATION**

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### **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:**

Northeast Business District (NEBD) Sign Grant funds are being requested by applicant – Steve Suess of Orchard Shell Service LLC located at 1900 Vandalia Street. Orchard Shell plans to undertake a complete façade improvement project with a total value estimated to exceed \$100,000. The current application refers only to the renovation of the existing freestanding pole sign. The proposed improvements to the sign include new sign facings, an LED price sign, and an electronic message board. The total of the lowest bid for the improvement is \$21,806.21. Orchard Shell is requesting a reimbursement of 50% of their investment, which equals \$10,903.11. It should also be noted that the applicant has submitted a sign permit application, all required architectural specifications, and applicable permit fees. The sign permit has been approved as proposed by the applicant.

### **BACKGROUND & HISTORY:**

In April of 2017, the applicant Steve Suess of Orchard Shell Service LLC contacted the Economic Development Department to share planned improvements to the business and inquire as to how he might apply for a Northeast Business District Grant. Associate Planner Cristen Hardin gave the applicant a general overview of the grant program and recommended a scheduling a pre-application review meeting. In May 2017, staff met with the applicant to discuss in further detail the planned improvements to the property located at 1900 Vandalia Street; how the Northeast Business District Grant Programs might positively impact the applicant's investment in the proposed project; as well as provide guidance in completing the grant application and submitting required documentation. In June 2017, Orchard Shell Service LLC submitted a completed Northeast Business District Sign Grant Application, Sign Permit Application and Bids for the renovation of an existing freestanding sign. The Sign Permit Application was approved on June 22, 2017.

### **STAFF REVIEW & ANALYSIS:**

The proposed sign improvements are the first phase of their overall plans to undertake a complete façade improve project to include, addition to the improved sign: improved fuel pumps and islands, lighting, canopy, painting, electrical and concrete work. The overall project has a value estimated to exceed \$100,000. Tentatively, the applicant plans to also submit an application for the NEBD Business Improvement Grant for the non-sign project improvements.

The current application makes reference only to the proposed improvements to the existing freestanding pole sign. The proposed sign improvements include: installation of a new VP fuel brand top sign face; two LED gas price signs; and an electronic message board.

**Bids Received for Proposed Improvements:**

Bill Yount Signs	\$21,806.2
Ace Sign co.	\$22,044.46
Eberhart Sign & Lighting Co.	\$52,678.73

The total of the lowest bid for the proposed sign improvements is \$21,806.21. Orchard Shell is requesting a reimbursement of 50% of their investment, which equals \$10, 903.11.

**ALTERNATIVES:**

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**PROS & CONS:**

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**RECOMMENDATION:**

Staff recommends the City Council approve Northeast Business District Sign Grant Application submitted by Orchard Shell Service LLC based upon the following findings of fact:

- ✓ The project is located within the boundaries of the Northeast Business District.
- ✓ The proposed sign improvements are generally consistent with the objectives of the Northeast Business District Plan which affords the City a tool for leveraging new investment along the Vandalia and Beltline corridors by assisting in the financing of certain public and private improvements to achieve the objectives set forth in the Northeast Business District Plan.
- ✓ Total grant request of \$10,903.11 is 50% of the total cost project of \$21,806.21 which is consistent with the maximum allowable reimbursement under the NEBD Sign Grant Program.
- ✓ Potential increase in Sales Tax
- ✓ Potential increase in Motor Fuel Tax
- ✓ Potential increase in attractiveness, marketability, and development opportunities of surrounding properties and the Northeast Business District in general.

**CONCLUSION:**

The Northeast Business District Plan and established grant programs afford the City a tool for leveraging new investment along the Vandalia and Beltline corridors by assisting in the financing of certain public and private improvements. The applicant has submitted the completed sign grant application, three bids, and all other required documentation. The applicant has also been approved for a sign permit – required before approval of a sign grant application – for the specifications as proposed. The applicants proposed improvements are generally consistent with the established Northeast Business District Plan. It is by this successful application process and the previously mentioned findings of fact that Staff recommends the approval of the approve Northeast Business District Sign Grant Application submitted by Orchard Shell Service LLC.