

TOWN OF PALM BEACH

Information for Town Council Meeting on: December 8, 2020

To: Mayor and Town Council

Via: Kirk Blouin, Town Manager

From: Wayne Bergman, Director of Planning, Zoning and Building



Re: Planning & Zoning Commission Recommendation to Hire a Retail Strategy Consultant

Date: December 1, 2020

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends Town Council review the information below, relative to the hiring of a Retail Strategy Consultant, and provide direction to staff.

GENERAL INFORMATION

The Planning & Zoning Commission ("PZC") previously requested permission from the Town Council to review the state of retail within the Town. Town Council approved this review and the PZC began their study at their November 17, 2020, meeting. The intended purpose of this review is to see if changes to the zoning code are needed to assist the retail marketplace of Palm Beach succeed and thrive in the changing economy.

At the PZC meeting last week the commission discussed the current state of retail, which included discussions with a Palm Beach Real Estate broker (Jeff Cloninger) and a licensed Independent Property Appraiser (Michael Vincent John Spaziani, a PZC member). After their discussion, the commission made a motion to ask the Town Council to hire a "retail strategy consultant" to assist them and the Town in the review of retail matters.

Bringing a retail strategy consultant to the Town to evaluate the state of retail, retail space allocation, commercial uses, existing parking scenarios, and other retail components would be helpful in assisting staff and the commission in preparing recommendations for positive changes to ensure a thriving retail environment within the Town.

The benefits of the consultant's evaluation will be the continued success of local retail businesses, which overall provides a quality of life issue for local residents. A successful retail environment provides for higher property values. Thriving retail and commercial uses also defines how the Town looks and how the town is perceived by visitors and residents alike.

As previously indicated, a review of the retail environment is one component of the proposed code reform project for the Town's overall zoning code. Pulling this component forward and starting it now is warranted due to the effects of the pandemic and the decrease in brick and mortar retail stores. This is an urgent piece of code reform needed now.

This project is being proposed as a public/private partnership, in terms of the funding to complete it. PZC Chairman Michael Ainslie has committed to seeking funding from the private sector to offset the cost of hiring this consultant, as the private sector will benefit from this work. It is expected that the consultant contract may cost approximately \$100,000.

The Town staff would prepare an RFP for the retail strategy consultant if approved by the Town Council. The general scope of work would include, but not be limited to the following:

- Inventory and evaluate the retail uses in Town and quantify the amount of available retail space; and
- Review the zoning code and various commercial uses and propose changes to promote retail business success; and
- Identify any over-capacity of retail space; and
- Examine the existing parking scenarios (valet parking, public and private parking, and parking identification; and
- Determine potential regional and national marketing programs for the Town retail and commercial businesses.
- Identify marketing strategies for the retail sector to leverage in the changing retail economy

If approved by Town Council, staff would draft the RFP and publish it prior to the end of this year. Proposals would be received and reviewed by a selection committee made up of Town staff, the Chairman of PZC, and a few local subject matter professionals. Their final selection could be presented to the Town Council at the March, 2021 meeting, along with the award of the consultant contract. Work could begin in mid to late March, 2021.

cc: Jay Boodheshwar, Deputy Town Manager
Planning and Zoning Commission