

The Daily Herald

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Making it easier for businesses to come to the Valley

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HALIFAX — Will there be a new addition to the Halifax Corporate Park? Halifax County Commissioners are exploring their options to construct a new shell building.

“The building would be a feasible next step in providing Halifax County with a competitive advantage with some of the industrial projects we’re working with,” said Halifax County Economic Development Director Cathy Scott.

After meeting in closed session with Scott, commissioners passed a resolution to exempt the project from the Mini Brooks Act to seek a competitive bid process for architectural services.

Later, Scott confirmed the resolution involved a shell building for the corporate park and that the commissioners agreed to find an architect.

According to Ohio State University, via ohioline.osu.edu, there are several advantages to shell building construction. The shell building in a corporate park acts much like a “spec” home in a new subdivision. It provides companies with the visual and the experiential contact with the development.

Many companies prefer to move into an existing building when relocating to another area. An existing building can provide a focus to market the entire corporate park and many times there are cost benefits to the acquiring company.

Commissioners are exempting the project from the Mini Brooks Act because they are trying to save taxpayer dollars.

According to the North Carolina Bulletin, at www.ncbels.org, the Mini Brooks Act was passed in 1987. It said it is mandatory state agencies “announce all requirements for architectural, engineering and surveying services to select firms qualified to provide such services on the basis of demonstrated competence and qualification for the type of professional services required without regard to fee other than unit price information.”

The act continues to say the contract with these “select firms” can be negotiated from that point.

Exceptions to the rule are when the professional fee is less than \$30,000 and it also allows for exceptions “in the sole discretion of the ... unit of local government.”

In both cases, the governmental entity must put in writing the reasons or circumstances concerning the exemption — thus the resolution by commissioners.

While the cost for an architectural firm exceeds \$30,000, the board has the right to exempt the project from the Mini Brooks Act. This will allow for competitive bids for services.

Scott said she’s excited about the prospect of having a shell building at the corporate park. She said when you have it all to offer a company you’re trying to recruit, it makes it a lot easier to make the sale.

Scott said, “There’s been quite a bit of interest generated and this will help improve our competitive position.”