

## MEMORANDUM

TO: City Council

FROM: David J. Deutsch, City Manager

DATE: October 10, 2008

SUBJECT: Award of a Contract to Paris Designs, Inc. for the Creation of a Permanent History Exhibit at the Bowie Railroad Museum  
Resolution R-73-08

The Historic Properties Division of the City of Bowie Department of Community Services has received grant funds from the Maryland Historical Trust, the National Railroad Historical Society and the Huntington Heritage Society for the construction of a permanent exhibit on railroad safety and life in a railroad town at the Bowie Railroad Museum located in Old Bowie.

This permanent exhibit will offer an important economic development opportunity. It will aid staff in our continuing efforts in making the museum, and Old Bowie, a tourism destination. It will greatly enhance the physical plant and interpret the history of the early beginnings of the City of Bowie, and illustrate railroad history, an important facet of the City's rich heritage. It will provide an excellent opportunity for schools and visitors alike.

Staff envisions that the exhibit will be placed in the Freight Room of the Bowie Train Station Building. The exhibit will focus on three rail history areas; technology, safety and local history that will feature antique switching equipment, interactive hands-on activities and a reinterpretation of the freight area of the depot, with a focus on life in a railroad town at the turn of the century.

The scope of this project has been evolving for the past two years. Staff anticipates a finished product that will include a raised platform to display an interactive switching station, control tower, audio program, graphics discussing train safety, workers, local Bowie history and some mounted artifacts. Some graphic panels will be included that display some mounted objects, photo images and some student activities may be incorporated into the main waiting room and office areas.

During the past two years, staff has discussed this project with several firms. One firm, Paris Designs, Inc. developed the Bowie heritage logo and led a discussion on branding for our Bowie Museums. Branding is an area that staff wishes to pursue further in the coming months. Staff believes that this project represents an excellent opportunity to showcase our local history in the exhibit and tells the story of Bowie's beginnings. Paris Designs, Inc. was the creator of the Railway Post Office Car exhibit for the "Celebrate the Century" program that commemorated the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the U.S.

Post Office's railroad mail car program. Paris Designs, Inc. also was chosen to develop interpretive exhibits and graphics for exhibit areas at Eleanor Roosevelt's Val-Kill residence in New York. Another recent similar project is the Black History Museum in Alexandria, Virginia, whose mission is to foster tolerance and understanding among all cultures. At this location, Paris Designs, Inc. worked in conjunction with Jack and Jill of America, Inc., the oldest and largest African family organization in the United States to provide an exhibit that celebrates their organization's cultural experience and focuses on providing an opportunity for African Americans to empower their children to excel through leadership and community involvement. This exhibit was designed to be re-purposed for travel to other venues. A final example of their work can be seen at Fort Ligonier, Pa, which focuses on the legacy of the Seven Years' War in North America (French and Indian War) and around the world. Paris Designs, Inc., work included exhibit design, interpretive display development and was able to condense an enormous amount of visual information and artifacts into an accessible and coherent exhibit.

When this project was first conceived, over two years ago, staff contracted Paris Designs, Inc., to assist us with the initial concept for the design of the exhibit. This was done after discussing the project with several firms in this field, however, none had the breadth of experience of Paris Designs, Inc. Their work was described by staff as exemplary, and their principal designers are well versed in the knowledge of "railroadiana" which will be essential to this project.

Paris Designs, Inc. has provided a consultant schedule to develop this project that includes the following milestones:

Phase I	Programming and Planning	8 weeks
Phase 2	Preliminary Design	12 weeks
Phase 3	Final Design and Production	10-14 weeks
Phase 4	Installation and Beyond	3 weeks

The Paris Designs, Inc. proposal includes both consulting services for planning, design construction and installation of the proposed exhibit at the Bowie Railroad Museum.

Funding for the project is as follows:

Maryland Historical Trust	\$22,000
National Railroad Society	3,000
Huntington Heritage Society	15,000
City General Fund	<u>30,600</u>
Total Revenue	\$70,600

Their cost proposal is \$59,600. There are five core service areas within their proposal and include the following:

1. Consulting Services	\$ 7,600
2. Design Services	\$16,000
3. Copywriting and Scripting	\$ 2,000
4. Graphic Production	\$12,000
5. Exhibit Component Fabrication	<u>\$22,000</u>
	\$59,600

A sixth area that may be pursued entitled “Interactive Devices” that may be used once the design, function and materials are defined.

The rest of the funding will be used as a contingency, and grant funds will be tapped first. The Maryland Historical Trust requires that the recipient agency (City of Bowie) select a consultant prior to the execution of their contract and release of funds.

**Recommendation:** Staff recommends the selection of Paris Designs, Inc. a Takoma Park, Maryland firm, for the above referenced work via Resolution R-73-08. This firm has demonstrated a continuing capacity to understand client needs and special constraints within a highly specialized field. Positive action on this recommendation will allow the execution of grant documents and the initiation of the above process so that the project may be initiated and completed for a public opening by the end of the 2009 calendar year.

RESOLUTION

OF THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF BOWIE, MARYLAND  
WAIVING THE COMPETITIVE BIDDING REQUIREMENT  
OF SECTION 61 OF THE CHARTER OF THE CITY OF BOWIE BY TWO  
THIRDS VOTE AND AUTHORIZING THE CITY MANAGER TO ENTER INTO  
A CONTRACT WITH PARIS DESIGNS, INC. FOR CONSULTING  
AND FABRICATION SERVICES TO CONSTRUCT A  
PERMANENT HISTORY EXHIBIT AT THE  
BOWIE RAILROAD MUSEUM

**WHEREAS**, the City of Bowie owns and operates the Bowie Railroad Museum located at 8610 Chestnut Avenue, Bowie, Maryland; and

**WHEREAS**, the Bowie Railroad Museum focuses on the railroad history of Bowie; and

**WHEREAS**, City staff was able to secure rare antique switching equipment and has been studying how to appropriately display this equipment at the Bowie Railroad Museum; and

**WHEREAS**, City staff successfully secured grant funding from the Maryland Historic Trust, the National Railroad Society and the Huntington Heritage Society in the amount of \$40,000 towards constructing a permanent exhibit; and

**WHEREAS**, this exhibit requires a consultant and fabricator to work with City of Bowie staff in order to feature rail history, some interactive hands-on activities and an effective interpretation of the freight area of the existing Bowie Railroad Museum Depot; and

**WHEREAS**, City staff has determined that the firm of Paris Designs, Inc., is the most capable firm that specializes in this type of work; and

**WHEREAS**, the proposal from Paris Designs, Inc. was determined to be both responsive and responsible in meeting the needs of the exhibit project.

**NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED** by the Council of the City of Bowie, Maryland that the Council, by a two-thirds vote, in accordance with City Charter Section 61, hereby waives the competitive bidding requirements for good cause shown.

**NOW, BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, by the Council of the City of Bowie, Maryland, that the Council authorizes the City Manager to sign a contract with Paris Designs, Inc. in the amount of \$59,600.

**INTRODUCED AND PASSED** by the Council of the City of Bowie, Maryland at a Regular Meeting on October 20, 2008.

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G. Frederick Robinson  
Mayor

ATTEST:

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Pamela A. Fleming  
City Clerk

