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CLEVELAND
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Cleveland-Cuyahoga County Port Authority seeks federal stimulus money

By **JAY MILLER**

2:07 pm, April 7, 2009

The Cleveland-Cuyahoga County Port Authority is seeking \$15 million in state and federal stimulus money to reconfigure its existing dock facilities as part of a plan to bring new business to the lakefront over the next several years.

The plan includes filling in two existing docking slips, constructing a 140,000-square-foot warehouse/manufacturing building and buying a new mobile crane to help unload ships.

At a meeting this morning, the Port Authority's real estate committee also recommended spending as much as \$495,000 for two consulting firms to help the Port Authority with its long-term plans.

The committee forwarded to the agency's board of directors a recommendation to apply for \$10 million in grants from the Ohio Department of Development and a \$5 million federal Economic Development Administration grant to fund the project. The Port Authority will add \$1 million of its own money that it has set aside for ongoing and planned improvements.

Representatives of a Spanish company, M. Torres Group, are talking with Port Authority officials about bringing a wind turbine manufacturing operation to Port Authority land on the lakefront. Port Authority president Adam Wasserman said no lease has been signed with the firm.

Consultants to study lakefront land

The Port Authority is planning these improvements to the downtown docks even as it's preparing a long-term plan to move its operations to a site along the lakefront at East 55th Street. However, that move would not begin for another decade.

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers is studying the East 55th Street location for use as a disposal site for river dredgings, which would be built up to create land for a 200-acre dock operation.

The committee also approved a recommendation to hire two consulting firms to assist the organization in redeveloping the lakefront in anticipation of the dock relocation. Ehrenkrantz Eckstut & Kuhn Architects of New York City will be paid no more than \$365,000 for a master plan and development strategy for the 100 acres of downtown lakefront land owned by the Port Authority and the city of Cleveland. The land now is used for shipping.

PA Consulting Group of London has been selected to do a market analysis of the downtown property so the Port Authority can maximize its financial value. The firm will be paid no more than \$130,000 for its work.

The Port Authority is taking care to make the downtown docks it plans to leave behind as attractive as possible to developers because it will need the proceeds to finance its move to East 55th Street, a project that will cost more than \$500 million.

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