Agenda # 6.7
Meeting Date: March 20, 2007

CITY COUNCIL AGENDA REPORT

TO: Honorable Mayor and Members of the City Council

FROM: James DeStefano, City Manager

TITLE: Approve contract with EDAW, Inc. to provide environmental consulting services to the City for review of the Aera Energy LLC project ($307,435) and authorize a 10% contingency to be approved by the City Manager for a total authorization of $337,435

RECOMMENDATION:

Approve

FINANCIAL IMPLICATION:

The project proponent, Aera Energy LLC, has entered into an agreement with the City to reimburse the City for all costs associated with this contract.

BACKGROUND:

Aera Energy LLC is the owner of approximately 2,935 acres of land immediately south of the City's Municipal boundary. For the past 100 years this land has been operated as a working oil field. Now that the oil field is nearing the end of its useful life the property owner has proposed a development project to replace the oil operations.

For a considerable amount of time, the Aera Energy LLC (Developer) has been processing its proposed project with the counties of Orange and Los Angeles to develop entitlements for the entire 2,935 acres. The Developer is now seeking to process entitlements for a portion of the total acreage (1,940 acres) through the City. The Developer intends to process the remaining acreage, approximately 995 acres, for entitlements through development applications with the Counties of Los Angeles and Orange.

DISCUSSION:

The Developer has asked the City for consideration of several entitlement requests to permit the Construction of 2,800 homes, a 20 acre commercial shopping center, public parks, public open spaces and related public facilities. Prior to any consideration of the project and public decision making regarding the merits of the proposal, an environmental impact report must be prepared as

required by City Code and State Law and completed in the manner required by the California Environmental Quality Act.

In December 2006 the City Council approved a pre-annexation agreement with the Developer. The agreement outlined a lengthy review process for the requested entitlements leading to possible annexation of the 1,940 acre portion of the overall project area. A critical first step in that process is the development of the project's Environmental Impact Report. The Developer has previously prepared environmental information (e.g. traffic report and biological studies). The City must determine whether or not the information has been prepared properly in order to accept the data and incorporate the material into the environmental impact report. EDAW will review the data submitted and assisted by City staff, will cause correction to the information, as necessary. EDAW will prepare the environmental Impact report which will be distributed by the City, as Lead Agency, for public review.

The Developer's proposed project is very large and complex. The City awaits the developer's environmental information and has not commenced a review of the proposed project components. The City development requirements and requested project revisions may cause additional studies to be undertaken which may require additional costs and will extend the scheduled completion of the Draft EIR presently anticipated for July 2007.

Upon completion of the Draft EIR the document will be transmitted to public agencies for review and made available to the general public for review and comments. All comments provided to the City will be documented and responses prepared. Changes made to the Draft EIR as a result of comments received during the public review process will be documented and incorporated within the Final EIR. It is presently anticipated that the Final EIR will be completed in November 2007 however, the environmental documentation and review process is expected to require several additional months of preparation time prior to any City public hearing decisions on the merits of the developers' proposal.

The City solicited proposals from experienced environmental consulting firms to review and analyze the technical studies submitted by the Developer and create the Environmental Impact Report in accordance with the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA). The consultant proposals are on file with the City Clerk. After a thorough review of all the submitted proposals, City staff recommends the City Council approve the contract with EDAW in the amount of $307,435 and authorize a contingency of $30,000 for additional work authorized by the City Manager for a total contract authorization of $337,435.

PREPARED BY:

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David Doyle,
Assistant City Manager

ATTACHMENT - Consulting Services Agreement