

Board nears agreement on new office building

Facility at Corporate Business Park would add as many as 1,000 new jobs

By JIMMY SETTLE
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A draft contract is in the hands of the Clarksville-Montgomery County Industrial Development Board, which would formalize the agreement for developers to build a speculative back-office facility potentially employing 500 people or more within the southern extension of the Corporate Business Park.

"We have a draft contract to formalize the agreement for them to move forward on the office building," IDB Executive Director Mike Evans told the full board in a regular monthly session Wednesday morning.

"We're reviewing the draft ... of the contract, and hopefully will approve it in a week or so. It's in the works," he said.

Already, the Regional Planning Commission has given site plan approval to the plans from Three C Group LLC (DBS and Associates/Chris Fielder, agent) for Fre Resources warehouse, an industrial warehouse at 1551 Resource Drive, on at least eight acres.

Assuming the property develops according to Fre Resources' hopes, the first major tenant of the expanded industrial park could be a call center or back-office operation, rather than a manufacturer or distributor.

"They are moving forward on the architectural phase of the project now," Evans said.

Business consultants and developers from Dallas and Cincinnati have already shown the IDB conceptual drawings of a call center or back-office speculative building they'd like to build within the newer portion of the industrial park.

The single-story building they presented, likely to measure around 52,000 square feet, could attract back-office or satellite operations for employers such as DirecTV or Verizon Wireless, among others.

As many as 500 to 1,000 new jobs paying an average of \$10 an hour could be created through the venture, developers have said.

King White, president of Dallas-based Site Selection Group, and James McCarthy, vice president of the developer, Fre Resources of Cincinnati, have both said that, because of its rapid growth and skilled labor pool, Clarksville consistently ranks among the most-eligible U.S. cities for back-office projects.

They've said Fort Campbell and Austin Peay State University are two of the leading assets that make Clarksville attractive.

However, because Clarksville doesn't have a speculative office building available for corporate scouts to see, it has consistently missed out on opportunities. Most companies that would occupy such a facility are on a fast track for expansion and relocation, and need a building in place quickly.

Evans said Wednesday that Clarksville is already gaining inquiries from undisclosed tenant prospects, before the proposed building is even erected.

Fre Resources has analyzed more than 923 metropolitan and micropolitan communities across the nation for this project, McCarthy has said.

Clarksville was tapped because of its "low call center saturation, Central Time zone, accessibility to Nashville International Airport, the cost of doing business here and the quality of life."

He has said the plan to build a 52,000-square-foot building could be expanded over time by 25,000-square-foot increments.