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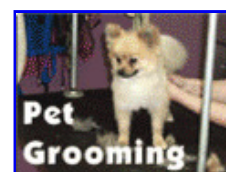
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Downtown Program To Hold Design Workshop

Ian Skotte, Staff Writer



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The Winchester Downtown Program Corp. (WDPC) has hired an architectural and urban planning firm to create a vision for the city's downtown. This firm will be holding a design workshop August 12-14 and will be open to the public for input.

"All ideas are accepted," board member, David Cowan, said. "We need as much input as possible from anyone remotely interested in future growth of the downtown area."

The Winchester Downtown Program is non-profit organization moving the downtown forward with an independent board's help.

A separate entity from the city, the WDPC is in charge of investing grant money to revitalize the downtown. Sales tax on money spent in the nine-block radius (tax rebate area) surrounding the Winchester downtown will be pumped right back into the downtown for improvements as spelled out by the Courthouse Revitalization Pilot Act of 2005.

The Act has a restricted waiver that allows its funds only to be used for that general purpose.

"This money can be used for new business recruitment, current business development as well as reconstruction of the downtown area," said board member Tim Priest. "This is a tremendous opportunity for the downtown area, and ultimately Franklin County as a whole."

The state designated a tax rebate area and is refunding state sales tax dollars in the form of a grant ear marked specifically for downtown revitalization.

"We are currently working with area banks to fund the process ahead of time," President Sean Crabtree said.

Winchester City Council signed over these funds to the group at a recent city council meeting.

The design workshop will be held on Tuesday and Wednesday Aug. 12 and 13 at San Miguel's Coffee Shop in the back conference room from 6:30 to 8:00 p.m. each night. Additionally a public presentation will be held Thursday from 6:30-8:00 p.m. also in the San Miguel's conference room.

You can contact Sean Crabtree at 967-7375 for more information.

