

**CITY OF PORTSMOUTH
PORTSMOUTH ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION**

Meeting Minutes

November 2, 2001

Conference Room A

7:30 a.m.

Members Present: Mark Simpson, Chairman Scott Pafford, Steve Alie, Everett Eaton, Cliff Taylor, Dana Levenson, Tom Ferrini, John Hynes, John Bohenko, City Manager

Members Absent: Paul Harvey Sr.

Minutes of October 5, 2001

Mr. Pafford moved and Mr. Taylor seconded the motion to approve meeting minutes as written. The motion passed unanimously.

Chamber of Commerce Quarterly Report As part of the City/Chamber partnership, Tourism Manager Marge Hubbard and Business Development Manager Jennifer Quinlan presented a report on the Greater Portsmouth Chamber of Commerce tourism and technology activities for the quarter ending September 30th (see attached).

Feasibility Study for Second Parking Garage John Burke presented two feasibility options for development of a parking garage at the Worth parking lot. He prefaced his presentation of the options by reporting that City Manager John Bohenko, City Attorney Robert Sullivan, City Transportation Engineer John Burke and Community Development to discuss the feasibility of a second parking garage at the Worth Lot. The Shaines were receptive to the Program Manager Nancy Carmer met on October 31st with Robert and Stuart Shaines of the Worth Development Corporation working with the City to develop the site for additional parking. The two options discussed were:

1) A stand-alone parking facility 120' x 300' with two full bays for parking. Mr. Burke noted that this is the optimal size for a parking facility and it has the added benefit of having the length of the structure screened by the surrounding buildings, meaning less money required for facade design. Access would be a right turn only from Maplewood Avenue and two-way accesses from Hanover Street. Depending on the subsurface, it may be possible to build 4 ½ floors of parking (~162,000 sq. ft.). This would net 390 to 420 new spaces above the existing 110 surface lot spaces.

2) A second, yet very preliminary alternative to option one, is a combined parking facility/commercial building development. This option includes 4 ½ floors of parking (~129,600 sq. ft.) plus a four story commercial building (~28,800 sq. ft.) facing Vaughan Mall. This would net 256 to 280 new spaces above the existing 110 surface lot spaces and the 34 required for commercial use.

Mr. Alie favors the first option and feels a garage in this area of town would divert some demand for the High Hanover Garage and would serve to revitalize this area. For aesthetic reasons he likes that the structure can be tucked into the existing parking lot area. The next step is to prepare a RFP for the geo-technical work and have public works begin the borings.

In response to a question from Mr. Hynes about when the City Council will be approached, Mr. Bohenko responded that he will bring the matter to the Council in January when he has more information from the site work. A discussion ensued about the parking revenues and Mr. Bohenko explained the new parking and transportation budget that became effective in June 2002. The goal is to have a completely self-sustaining parking and transportation enterprise that covers all the debt on the garage and other municipal

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transportation and parking activities. This includes phasing in the parking fine revenues that currently go into the general fund.

Commissioners Pafford and Eaton spoke in favor of the Worth lot as a site for a second parking garage. Mr. Eaton said it is needed to spur development in the lower Congress Street area, westward along Islington Street and into the Northern Tier. Mr. Alie noted that, given the increase in taxes lately, it would be important to educate the new City Council and the public about the long-range economic benefit this development will have for the community.

Update on Northern Tier Meeting EDC Commissioner Ferrini reported that a subcommittee meeting was held on October 30th with Mr. Griswold and Shari Young of the Sheraton Harborside Hotel and Conference Center. Subcommittee members attending were Scott Pafford, Tom Ferrini, Cliff Taylor, John Bohenko and Nancy Carmer. The topic of discussion was development options for the surface parking lot adjacent to the hotel as a catalyst for future development in the Northern Tier. Mr. Griswold is willing to partner with the city on additional conference space and parking. Before moving ahead the City wants to research the status of tax increment financing as a means to pay for infrastructure improvements that could be part of an overall streetscape improvement to the area. The subcommittee will report back to the EDC on its findings in December.

EDC Action Plan Copies of the current plan were sent to the EDC to review. Many of the objectives have been accomplished since the plan was adopted and members were asked to come to the December meeting with suggestions for the plan starting in January 2002.

Other Business

- Commissioner re-appointments – Members whose four-year terms expired October 1, 2001 have submitted applications for re-appointment. They will be given to the Mayor for presentation at the November 19th City Council meeting.
- Regional Transportation Plan – The State held a hearing on October 22nd on its regional transportation projects. Of specific importance to the city are the re-design of the Route One bypass, improvements to the traffic circle, redesign of the Market St./I-95 interchange and the Scott Avenue Bridge.
- Update on Mayors Blue Ribbon Committee on Arts and Culture – Commissioners Ferrini and Hynes represented the EDC at the presentation of Draft Cultural Plan at October 22, 2001 City Council Work Session. The Committee has been meeting for the past twenty months holding focus groups, interviewing stakeholders in the community's arts and cultural community and gathering data about the economic impact of arts and culture on the economic vitality of Portsmouth. The City Council has scheduled a public hearing on the plan for December 3rd and the Planning Board will discuss adoption of the final plan as a part of the City's Master Plan on December 20th. A large part of the plan focuses on the role arts and culture play in the city's economic vitality and the need to include the cultural appeal of the city in its marketing efforts.
- Port Tour – Ms. Carmer provided options for the EDC to tour the Port of New Hampshire terminal in response to an invitation from Mr. Wheeler. November 17th was the most popular option as the EDC will have an opportunity to view the facility when a ship is in port.

Public Comment Session

City Councilor Whitehouse encouraged the EDC to carefully review the Action Plan as he felt it contains important objectives.

Adjourn Meeting – The meeting was adjourned at 9:00 AM.

Respectfully submitted,

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Nancy M. Carmer
Community Development Program Manager