

MEETING MINUTES
PORTSMOUTH ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION

May 3, 2002

Conference Room A

7:30 a.m.

Members Present: Mark Simpson, Chairman; Cliff Taylor Dana Levenson, Scott Pafford, Steve Alie, Everett Eaton, Paul Harvey Sr., Tom Ferrini, John Hynes, Edward Hayes, John Bohenko, City Manager

Members Absent: None

Minutes of April 5, 2002

Commissioner Pafford moved and Commissioner Taylor seconded the motion to approve the April 5, 2002 meeting minutes as written. The motion passed unanimously.

Chamber of Commerce Quarterly Report on Tourism and eCoast

With the aid of a summary handout, Marge Hubbard, Tourism Director of the Greater Portsmouth Chamber of Commerce, reported on tourism activities during the past quarter. She touched on sales of the Portsmouth Harbour Trail flags, the Granite State Ambassador program, sales of brochure slots at the Seacoast Welcome Center and promotion of the seacoast in regional newspapers and magazines and planning for the upcoming 100th anniversary of the Portsmouth Peace Treaty in 2005

Chamber Business Development Manager Jennifer Quinlan and Jack Santos, principal of Bow Street Software, provided an overview of “eCoast Strategy Assessment,” a plan for realigning the efforts of the Chamber to serve the technology and entrepreneurial community. The plan is a result of a series of four meetings of the eCoast Strategy Assessment Task Force chaired by Mr. Santos and facilitated by The Taylor Research and Consulting Group. Mr. Santos said there are two main objective themes that drive the strategy:

- 1) Creating a business community that benefits both small, entrepreneurial start-ups and large established technology companies. This can be accomplished a variety of ways including access to business, educational resources, contacts and events.
- 2) Marketing development by increasing exposure of the eCoast to the region using several initiatives such as target marketing, website activity, incubator/tech park.

Eleven specific initiatives have been established to carry out the strategic objectives ranging from community collaboration to establishing an eCoast index to measure the economic strength and growth of the eCoast. Governance of the eCoast Roundtable will be accomplished through a board limited to nominated representatives with a minimum on-year term. All eCoast members must be members of the Chamber.

Mr. Bohenko asked if the strategy recognizes the City/Chamber partnership. Ms. Quinlan responded that Ms. Carmer had attended one of the task force meetings to discuss the partnership and the group acknowledged the city’s support. They understood that Ms. Quinlan’s position and her work are a direct result of the City’s support of the eCoast.

Mr. Taylor commented that he believes that the new strategy is critical for sustaining and growing the local technology community and complimented the Chamber on its efforts. Mr. Alie concurred and noted that it reassured him that the partnership is an appropriate use of economic development funds.

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Report on 2nd Parking Garage Subcommittee Meeting

City Manager Bohenko reported that the City Council recently approved the \$25,000 feasibility study for a 2nd parking garage at the Worth Lot. It also included in the City Capital Improvement Plan \$100,000 for design work in FY 2004 and additional funds for construction of a second parking garage in FY 2005. Yesterday the EDC Subcommittee for the 2nd parking garage met to review a draft RFP for the feasibility prepared by John Burke, the City's Transportation Engineer. The subcommittee also discussed the need to include an economic impact analysis of the structure in an analysis of the Worth Lot as a site for the next municipal parking garage. The subcommittee concluded that it would be best to separate the physical feasibility of the structure and the economic analysis into two phases for the following reasons:

- ◆ the economy is slowly rebounding and it would be best to allow for additional recovery time before assessing the economic impact of a structure scheduled three years from now.
- ◆ the geotechnical feasibility study will most probably consume most of the study funds .
- ◆ the geotechnical study may find some unforeseen reason why the Worth Lot is not well suited for a parking garage, thereby negating the need for an economic analysis.

City Manager Bohenko said that if the EDC concurred with phasing the work, then the study schedules would be as follows.

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| ◆ Complete Phase 1 Feasibility Study | October 2002 |
| ◆ Conduct Phase 2 Economic Analysis | Winter2002/Early Spring 2003 |
| ◆ Report findings to City Council | April 2003 for FY 04 Budget Development |

Mr. Levenson asked if there was a need to adjust the budget if the geotechnical and economic portions are separate phases. City Manager Bohenko said not at this time. It may be possible for the City to apply for grants for the economic analysis as well as to partner with the Shaines, principals of the Worth Development Corporation. Mr. Hayes asked if there were any legal obstructions with the lease of the property between the City and Worth Development Corporation to cover the study cost. The City manager felt that the Shaines have been very supportive of the concept to date and hopes that a mutually beneficial agreement can be reached to develop the site for parking and perhaps limited retail.

Mr. Levenson moved and Mr. Ferrini seconded a motion to proceed with the development of the RFP for phase 1 of the parking garage study. The motion passed unanimously.

Downtown Business Survey

The City does not have an accurate database of the businesses in the community and finds that it would be beneficial to have one. It currently has a list of 100 businesses in the downtown that it uses to inform merchants of city activities or to assess company feedback. A brief discussion ensued about the benefits of such a survey or database and it was agreed that staff would revisit the idea and put it on a future EDC agenda.

Public Comment Session

No members of the public present wished to comment.

Adjourn Meeting

The meeting was adjourned at 9:00 AM.

Respectfully submitted,
Nancy M. Carmer
Community Development Program Manager