

Approved September 6, 2002

**MEETING MINUTES**  
**PORTSMOUTH ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION**

August 2, 2002

Conference Room A

7:30 a.m.

Members Present: Cliff Taylor, Steve Alie, John Hynes, Edward Hayes, Scott Pafford John Bohenko, City Manager

Members Absent: Mark Simpson, Chairman (excused); Dana Levenson (excused), Tom Ferrini (excused), Paul Harvey Sr., Everett Eaton

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Commissioner Taylor agreed to act as chairman given that Chairman Simpson was not present.

**Chamber of Commerce Quarterly Report**

Robin Whittaker, co-chair of the Chamber of Commerce Tourism Committee and owner of Isles of Shoals Steamship Company provided the tourism quarterly report and Jennifer Quinlan, Chamber Business Development Manager provided the e-Coast quarterly report (see attached reports).

Following the reports, Mr. Bohenko informed the EDC that the reports would be given to the City Council at the August 5<sup>th</sup> meeting. Given that this is the third year of the partnership and that there have been some questions from the City Council about the partnership relative to increased tourism in the community, Mr. Bohenko recommended that the EDC evaluate the value and of the Chamber partnership starting in late fall. He added that he feels the partnership adds value to the City's economic development goals, but thinks it is good to review programs that have been in place three years or more.

On the same topic, City Councilor Hynes explained that the City Council also wants to take a more timely look at expenses in the context of the local economy and the city budget. Commissioner Alie agrees with the City Manager that there is value in the partnership as well as a strong interrelationship between tourism in the city and why certain businesses choose to locate in Portsmouth.

Commissioner Pafford, in response to the comment made by Ms. Quinlan that the local technology sector of the economy is improving, remarked that his sense is that the technology sector is still volatile and there may be more lay-offs in the near future.

**Minutes of June 7, 2002**

Commissioner Hynes moved and Commissioner Hayes seconded the motion to approve the June 7, 2002 meeting minutes as written. The motion passed unanimously.

**Second Parking Garage Engineering Feasibility Study–RFP update**

John Burke, City Transportation Engineer, provided a status report on the project. RFPs for the 2<sup>nd</sup> parking garage were due June 12<sup>th</sup>. The subcommittee selected the firm of Hoyle Tanner & Associates as the lead consultant for the project. Subcontractors are

Walker Parking Consultants of Boston, DeStefano Architects and R.W. Gillespie Geotechnical Engineers of Portsmouth.

The scope of the project has been slightly re-engineered to conform to the project budget. The City will complete the baseline survey and title search for the Worth Development site. Other elements of the RFP scope, including the development of three conceptual alternatives, will remain the same with the exception of the architectural renderings. The renderings will become part of the next project phase.

Mr. Taylor asked Mr. Burke to review the three alternatives for this project. They are: 1) a structure with 100% parking, 2) a structure with parking and limited retail fronting on the Vaughan Mall, and 3) a structure with parking and some office or other use on the top floor.

The project will involve five meetings with the City's subcommittee. Tentative start date for the project is August 15<sup>th</sup> with the final report due November 15<sup>th</sup>.

#### **Other Business**

##### *Vaughan Mall Improvement Project Update*

Ms. Carmer reported that the post boxes formerly located curbside on Congress Street have been relocated to the side of the Franklin Block building in order to eliminate obstructions to the mall entrance. Many of the amenities such as benches and trash receptacles have been delivered and will be installed after Labor Day when the Public Works Department is able to schedule the work.

##### *American for the Arts – Arts and Economic Prosperity Study*

Ms. Carmer reported that the results of the *Arts and Economic Prosperity Study* were presented at an informational meeting at City Hall on July 22, 2002. Randy Cohen, Assistant Research Director of the Americans for the Arts presented the findings which indicate that the non-profit arts and cultural organizations in Portsmouth contribute \$26 million to the local economy. A handout summary of the report for Portsmouth was distributed to EDC members. Ms. Carmer noted that the average expenditure by audience members, not including the price of admission to the cultural event was \$25. For non-residents the average expenditure was \$31. According to Mr. Cohen, Portsmouth's arts and cultural institutions contribute twice as much to the local economy as other communities in the study of similar size. American for the Arts will release a more detailed report for Portsmouth later this summer.

##### *Market Street Extension Project*

Ms. Carmer reported that preliminary work has begun on development of an RFP for streetscape improvements to the I-95 Exit 7 gateway to Portsmouth. This project has been funded at \$25,000 in the current UDAG budget. The Chamber of Commerce will be assisting in contacting stakeholders and property owners in the project area as the project moves forward.

#### **Public Comment Session**

No members of the public present wished to comment.

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**Adjourn Meeting**

The meeting was adjourned at 8:45 AM.

Respectfully submitted,  
Nancy M. Carmer  
Community Development Program Manager