

Approved June 6,  
2003

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

May 2, 2003

City Hall Conference Room A

7:30 a.m.

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

Members Absent: Mark Simpson

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**Minutes of April 4, 2003**

Commissioner Cliff Taylor moved and Commissioner Hynes seconded the motion to approve the April 4, 2003 meeting minutes as amended. The motion passed unanimously.

**Chamber of Commerce Quarterly Report on Tourism and e-Coast**

Peter Hamelin, Chamber President presented for Ms. Hubbard who was attending the Governor's Conference on Tourism. He reported on a variety of tourism promotion activities including a successful ad campaign for the *Guide to the Seacoast*, the successful Tourism Summit held at the Sheraton Hotel in March and the Tourism Committee's marketing plan. He also informed the Commission of recent tourism-related trade shows attended by Ms. Hubbard including the Seatrade Shipping Convention in Florida for cruise ship and the sales mission to Canada.

Ms. Quinlan reported on e-Coast activities including the appointment of new slate of directors for the eCoast Technology Roundtable and the initiatives of the Board for the upcoming year including Connections to Ideas, Connections to Capital and Connections to People. She also highlighted the welcome program for new technology programs and upcoming events such as the MIT Enterprise Forum.

**Portsmouth Office Market Study – Steve Berg, MAI, SRA**

Mr. Berg presented copies of his recently released analysis of the Portsmouth Office Market Study. He commented on office vacancy rates of buildings over 10,000 square feet in three areas of town including Downtown, Pease Tradeport and the suburbs. The increase in total inventory of new space for the year was a modest 3% and was concentrated in two complexes. Existing inventory increased 7% and is 80% occupied,

Citywide existing empty space has increased from 7.6A% to 12.4%. The area where vacancies increased the most from last year is downtown where it went from 9.2% to 17.1%. Generally this was due to Bottomline Technologies and Bow Street Software leaving the downtown. Net absorption of existing space increased by roughly 3%. Although Mr. Berg's figures illustrate the economic downturn, the numbers are still below the national average of 16.2%. Mr. Berg feels that as the broader economy improves, the office market will improve as well. The outlook is excellent for jobs in the service and finance, insurance and real estate sectors so Portsmouth should fare well as it has a high concentration of these types businesses.

**Other Business**

*Recent CIP Approval* –Ms. Carmer reported that the CIP has been approved and reviewed the capital projects in the EDC budget.

*Master Plan Phase II Study Circles*- Ms. Carmer said that Phase 2 of the Portsmouth Listens Study Circles kicked off last week and will run through the end of May. Participants have signed up to participate in one or more of the eight topic areas including: Economic Development, Downtown, Arts, History and Culture, Natural Resources, Transportation Alternatives, Diversity and Affordability, and Making the rest of Portsmouth as Special as Downtown.

**Public Comment Session**

No members of the public present wished to comment.

**Adjourn Meeting**

*Next Meeting* –June 6<sup>th</sup> most likely to be held in conjunction with a tour of Flextronics facility at Pease. More information to follow.

With no other business, the meeting was adjourned at 9:00 AM.

Respectfully submitted,  
Nancy M. Carmer  
Community Development Program Manager

EDC Master Plan Discussion Notes  
April 4, 2003

I. Business Retention/Attraction

A. Factors to Address

- 1) Diversity of Business
- 2) Quality of Business
- 3) Sustainable Businesses
- 4) Parking
- 5) Commute Issues
  - (a) To urban core
  - (b) To outer area
    - (a) Impact of train service
    - (b) To “live here/work here”
- 6) To increase in housing \$
- 7) small business Newburyport vs. Portsmouth
- 8) Tradeport-Pease
- 9) Proximity to University
- 10) Maintain overall high quality of life

II. Land Use Potential

- 1) Vacant land minimal
- 2) Pease build out

III. Opportunities

- 1) Revitalize shopping center outside downtown (i.e. Southgate Plaza)
- 2) Possibility of increasing height limit outside in these areas outside of the CBD – maximize the land to allow preservation of open space elsewhere.
- 3) Infill
- 4) Northern Tier
- 5) Re-development (Islington/ Route 1)
- 6) Employ design review standards in revitalization of these areas to create attractive commercial nodes

IV. Workforce Housing

- 1) Challenge locally
- 2) Regional co-op needed
- 3) Fair share
- 4) Lag in housing has negative impact on economic development potential
- 5) Transportation is a factor – must coordinate with intermodal transportation

V. Downtown

- 1) Sense of scale is critical – can it be greater?
- 2) Maintain Sense of place
- 3) Enhance Ambiance
- 4) Preserve and enhance walkability and pedestrian ease

EDC Minutes  
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- 5) Mixed use
- 6) 1<sup>st</sup> Floor Retail
- 7) livability/services needed-drug store & grocery store

#### Design Review Citywide

- a) Via zoning – creates desired visual impact in all parts of city  
    Signage (ex. Hilton Head)  
    Historic Review vs. Architectural review
- b) Contract zoning-“mini master plan” for specific areas
- c) Site specific
- d) Legal in NH?
- e) Other innovative zoning (overlay districts, performance standards)

#### Working Waterfront favored

- 1) Issues-
  - a) Dredging
  - b) Size of ship serviced

#### Commercial Nodes

- 2) Include essential services (retail)
- 3) Reduces traffic to other areas

#### Transportation Access

- 1) Nuclear City/Satellite concept
- 2) Gateway aesthetics
- 3) Pedestrian
- 4) Vehicular
- 5) Need for wayfinding cohesiveness
- 6) Recreational opportunities with connectivity
- 7) Schools-Bus. Attraction
- 8) Business Retention
- 9) Efficiency of Use  
    Downtown-direct other development to outskirts
- 10) Encourage flexibility re: entrepreneur design – let private entities be creative with options
- 11) How? Incentive through zoning

#### 2<sup>nd</sup> parking garage

- Need it
- Need an attractive one

McIntyre Building- encourage mixed use / incorporate public open space/ public sculpture