

Approved
December 3,
2004

MEETING MINUTES

PORTSMOUTH ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION

November 5, 2004

Conference Room A

7:30 a.m.

Members Present: Dana Levenson, Chairman; Paul Harvey Sr., William Gladhill, Cliff Taylor, Everett Eaton, Mark Simpson, John Hynes, John P. Bohenko; City Manager
Absent: Scott Pafford, Edward Hayes (excused)
Staff present: David Holden, Planning Director; John Burke, Transportation Director; Nancy Carmer, Economic Development Program Manager

Minutes

Commissioner Taylor moved and Commissioner Eaton seconded the motion to approve the meeting minutes of October 8, 2004 as amended. The motion passed unanimously.

Old Business

City Council Referral: Parking Impact Fee Subcommittee Update

Chairman Levenson reported that the subcommittee has completed its work on the City Council request to review the city's current parking impact fee. Copies of the draft report and recommendation were distributed to commissioners for review. He summarized the report noting that although he initially thought that the task would be straight forward, it amounted to a much more complex analysis of alternatives for a parking impact fee. Aside from evaluating other communities' fees and exploring several impact fee options tailored for Portsmouth, the subcommittee met with stakeholders to gather feedback on the proposal to raise the fee. While no one wants to see impact fees increase, the stakeholders agreed that the current fee was too low and had not discouraged development in the city's central business district. The stakeholders made several helpful suggestions, including that any increase in the impact fee be earmarked for a parking facility and tied to a capital plan.

As a result of the subcommittee's work, the recommendation to the EDC and City Council is that the fee be increased to \$1,200 per unmet parking space. This fee is tied to the annual debt service cost for construction of one parking space. The subcommittee also recommends that the fees collected be earmarked for a future parking/transit facility and that the construction of the facility be included in the city's capital plan.

Chairman Levenson thanked the members of the subcommittee and the staff for their hard work on the parking impact fee and asked for a motion. Commissioner Taylor also commended the subcommittee on the work and moved to accept the recommendation and to send the report to the City Council. Commissioner Hynes seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

Graffiti Subcommittee Update

Commissioner Taylor reported on the Graffiti subcommittee progress to date. The group has heard from the Deputy Police Chief, the Director of Public Works and the City Attorney about the scope of the graffiti problem in the city. It has also met with Downtown Business Association members Bob Hassold of Tugboat Alley and Leigh Burns of Celtic Crossing to get their input on the situation. Based on this input they will contact representatives of Newburyport, MA to do some fact-finding on Newburyport's partnership with the Chamber of Commerce to eradicate graffiti. Also, the committee will meet with the Dick Ingram of the Greater Portsmouth Chamber of Commerce to determine if

there are any opportunities for collaboration.

EDC Action Plan – Priorities for action (Tabled from the October 8th EDC meeting)

A summary of the EDC Action Plan priorities was distributed. Chairman Levenson stated that he wanted to revisit the plan to determine if there are items in the plan that the EDC feels are more urgent and important than others, and if so, establish subcommittees to work on the initiatives. Commissioner Eaton said that he feels very strongly that the EDC should keep focused and involved in any opportunity to expedite the redevelopment of the General Sullivan Bridge as it is critical to attracting and maintaining employers in Portsmouth.

Sheraton Hotel & Conference Center Expansion Subcommittee Update – City Council Work Session

City Manager Bohenko said that a draft Memorandum of Understanding has been sent to the City Council for discussion at a City Council work session to be held on November 15, 2004. At that time the owners of the Sheraton will provide a conceptual plan of the proposed 200-room hotel and 18,000 square foot conference center with associated parking facility. Members of the EDC Sheraton Expansion subcommittee will be present, but all members of the EDC are welcome to attend.

New Business

Potential EDA Grant for Industrial Park Road

Ms. Carmer reported that the city has been contacted by the Rockingham Economic Development Commission and a local real estate developer about the possibility of applying for a federal EDA grant to construct a city-owned road for a small-lot industrial development off Greenland Road. Determination of eligibility and feasibility of this project will be established when the city, county and federal representatives convene. EDC members will be kept updated on this project.

Commissioner Hynes stated that the project area contains much wetland and abuts the Great Bog and therefore may not be the best site for small industrial development sites. He noted that there is still undeveloped industrial land off Lafayette Road near Ocean Road which should be marketed for small industrial enterprise.

EDC Vacancy

Several people have submitted applications for the EDC vacancy left by Steve Alie. Mayor Sirrell is scheduled to make a recommendation for appointment of one of the applicants at the November 8th City Council meeting. It was suggested that she select downtown businesswoman.

Next Meeting

The next meeting is scheduled for December 3, 2004.

Public Comment

No members of the public were present.

With no further business, Commissioner Hynes moved to adjourn the meeting at 9:00 AM. Seconded by Commissioner Harvey. Vote to adjourn is unanimous.

Respectfully submitted,
Nancy M. Carmer
Community Development Program Manager