

**MEETING MINUTES  
PORTSMOUTH ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION**

February 4, 2011

Conference Room A City Hall

7:30 a.m.

Members Present: Dana Levenson, Chairman; Everett Eaton, Vice-Chairman; Nancy Novelline Clayburgh, Josh Cyr, Ron Zolla, Robert Marchewka, Christine Dwyer, Lisa DeStefano  
Eric Gregg  
Excused: Tim Allison

Chairman Levenson opened the meeting at 7:38 a.m.

**Approval of Draft Meeting Minutes of January 7, 2011**

Following a motion by Commissioner Eaton and a second by Councilor Christine Dwyer, the draft meeting minutes of January 7, 2011 were unanimously approved as written.

**Old Business**

*Update from EDC Subcommittee on Film Industry*

Commissioner Marchewka reported that in January the subcommittee met and divided tasks. Assistant Mayor Novelline Clayburgh is investigating the state tax credit opportunity with Senator D'Allesandro, Commissioner Allison is connecting with the UNH Media Departments, Ms. Carmer will work with the City's IT staff to create a link on the city's webpage for the process for shooting a film in the city including a link to the NH Film Office. The group is exploring the opportunity to host the next NH Film Roundtable in Portsmouth. The subcommittee also plans to meet with representatives of media companies that work to produce advertising and documentaries for business and industry.

*High Speed Broadband Infrastructure Subcommittee Update*

Commissioner Cyr reported that the committee members have developed a set of standard questions to ask representatives of the internet service providers in the Portsmouth market. The goal is to compile a list of short and long term recommendations and determine if there should be a separate entity tasked with working on future high speed broadband needs.

*Report on January 20, 2011 Joint Work Session on Parking Focus Report*

Chairman Levenson thanked the Commissioners who attended the joint work session and stated that he felt that the meeting was productive and that the EDC was well prepared with its talking points. He feels that the EDC will have a role in promoting deeply discounted business rates in the Worth Parking Garage as an incentive to locate business downtown. He asked Mr. Bohenko to summarize the next steps. The City Manager explained that the goal is for the recommendations to be presented in omnibus format for action by the City Council in March 2011. The Parking Enterprise Fund is planned for establishment after the bond is issued. Anticipated timeline for the bond is February 2012 and July 2012 for the Enterprise Fund. The work on the Islington Street residential density requirements will be part of the overall strategy as well.

Mr. Zolla asked how the EDC can be involved in the zoning changes. The City Manager responded that the best way is to participate in the public hearings on the proposed amendments.

*EDC 2011 Action Plan Approval*

Chairman Levenson described the purpose of the EDC Action Plan as a compendium of EDC short and long term goals and intentions. Each year he has encouraged the Commission to highlight tasks in a priority list that will guide EDC efforts which can be accomplished and measured annually. Ms. Carmer distributed the 2011 EDC Priorities and the 2011 Action Plan. Chairman Levenson asked for additions and Ms. Dwyer suggested the addition of the semi-annual economic report for the City Council and the public. Another suggestion was to develop business location incentives for downtown. A brief discussion ensued about promoting business downtown and the Chair reminded the EDC that Robert Thoresen, who co-authored the Parking Focus Group Report, is scheduled to attend

the March EDC meeting to discuss the position of Downtown Manager included in the early draft of the report.

Hearing no more discussion, Commissioner DeStefano moved and Commissioner Cyr seconded the motion to approve the 2011 Action Plan and Priorities. The motion passed unanimously.

**State of NH Business Resources Presentation by Christine Davis, New Hampshire Business Resource Center Seacoast Business Services Specialist**

Ms. Davis introduced herself and described her position as Business Resource Center Specialist for Rockingham and Strafford Counties. In this capacity she acts a resource for businesses seeking state assistance for a variety of services such as securing government contracts, workforce training grants, and assistance to developing foreign markets. She provided specific information on the following programs: energy audit grants and energy equipment loans, Federal Procurement Assistance, International Trade Resource Center, Job Training Fund, Business Retention Services, Enterprise Zone Tax Credits, Broadband Service Assistance, MicroCredit Loans and Out-of-State Business Recruitment Services. Following her presentation a discussion ensued on how to disseminate the information so that local businesses can take advantage of the assistance opportunities. Commissioners Cyr and Gregg suggested local outreach effort and perhaps a series of workshops. Councilor Dwyer opined that the City's knowledge economy can and should take advantage of the training opportunities.

**New/Other Business**

*Election of Officers*

Chairman Levenson said he has enjoyed serving as Chair of the EDC, but feels it is time for a new leader. He thanked EDC members for the work and accomplishments made during his seven years as Chair and said he will remain on the Commission to participate in the city's economic development. He nominated Everett Eaton to replace him as Chair. Assistant Mayor Novelline Clayburgh seconded the motion which passed unanimously.

Newly elected Chairman nominated Lisa Destefano as Vice Chairperson and Mr. Zolla seconded the nomination. Chairman Eaton asked if there were other nominees. Hearing none, he called for a vote. The nomination was unanimously approved.

**Public Comment Period**

David Choate spoke to the topic of the municipal budget and the impact that cuts could have on future economic development and the level of services that businesses seek when deciding where to locate. He suggested that the EDC advocate maintaining the services businesses require and that make Portsmouth a great place to live and work. City Manager Bohenko responded that the budget has been flat for the past four years and many will call for decreases in services. He feels it is important to look at the City's overall economic success and its overall tax rate and ranking. Too many cuts risk the quality of life people seek here. Ms. Dwyer agreed and said that is why she feels that it is important to report regularly on the City's successes and economic standing.

**Confirm Next Meeting: March 4, 2011/ Adjourn**

With no further business the meeting adjourned at 9:15 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,  
*Nancy Carmer,*  
*Economic Development Program Manager*