

**MEETING MINUTES
PORTSMOUTH ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION**

June 1, 2012

Novocure 195 Commerce Way

7:30 a.m.

Members Present: Everett Eaton, Chairman; Lisa DeStefano, Vice-Chairman, Tim Allison, Philip Cohen, Ron Zolla, Eric Gregg, Josh Cyr, Jack Thorsen, John P. Bohenko

Excused: Dana Levenson, Christine Dwyer, Robert Marchewka

Chairman Eaton opened the meeting at 7:35 AM and thanked Novocure Chief Operating Officer (COO) Mike Ambrogi for hosting the meeting.

Approval of draft meeting minutes

Following a motion by Commissioner DeStefano and a second by Commissioner Cyr, the draft meeting minutes of May 4, 2012 were unanimously approved as written.

Old Business

Parking Omnibus Update

The City Council will conduct a work session on June 18, 2012 at 6:30 PM on the parking strategies included in the parking omnibus. Because it is a work session, there will be no opportunity for public comment or input from Board and Commissioners. It can be viewed in person, on Channel 22 or online. A copy of the final strategy report will be provided to the EDC when available.

City Council action on Heritage and Constitution Economic Revitalization Zone

Ms. Carmer informed the EDC that, at the May 21, 2012 meeting, the City Council authorized the City Manager to submit an Economic Revitalization Zone application for the City's Industrial Park at Heritage and Constitution Avenues.

Update on May 21, 2012 Chamber Retail Gathering

Ms. Carmer informed the EDC that she attended the May 21, 2012 Chamber Retail Gathering at Jumpin' Jays Restaurant. Approximately 30 people attended and the Chamber Retail Committee members did an excellent job explaining the value of being a Chamber member.

Tax Increment Financing (TIF) Subcommittee

City Staff have reached out to property owners regarding potential opportunities and are awaiting responses.

Public Comment David Choate reported that current real estate figures are positive and indicate that there has been a significant amount of absorption in the real estate market.

As a follow up to the discussion at last month's meeting on escalating rents in the downtown, Mr. Choate reported that he and some others retailers have discussed speaking to property owners downtown about the negative impact of charging "extravagant rents" as well as working to retain and attract a mix of tenants. This spawned a general discussion about what the city can do as incentives to attract a specific type of business such as a drug store downtown. Mr. Cyr suggested that the EDC invite representatives of Seacoast Local to come to a meeting and discuss crowdfunding for small entrepreneurs or for specific

types of business. Mr. Cohen suggested inviting retailers and restaurateurs to a meeting to learn about their customer base with respect to local patrons versus visitors. Mr. Thorsen spoke about the mechanisms government can use to influence the mix of uses in the downtown.

In order to allow for the Novocure representatives to have enough time for their presentation, it was suggested that this topic should be scheduled for a different meeting and to include the Planning Director.

Confirm Next Meeting: Friday, September 7, 2012

When polled, the Commission expressed interest in a summer on-site visit to another Portsmouth business. Ms. Carmer will explore potential dates in August.

Business presentation and tour of Novocure facility

Mike Ambrogi gave a power point presentation on the company and the medical device it produces for treatment of virulent, solid brain tumors. The device creates tumor treating fields (TTF) which use alternating electrical fields to prevent the splitting of cancer cells. It is an alternative to chemotherapy, radiation and surgery for the treatment of these deadly tumors without the negative side effects. Thus far, it has been used for end stage brain cancer patients and provides roughly the same life expectancy as other treatment modalities. However, the firm has received permission to conduct trials for earlier stage patients which are proving positive.

Novocure is an international company with primary corporate offices and manufacturing facilities in Israel. Portsmouth is home to the US headquarters. The office has 15 employees and the primary functions are order fulfillment, billing and reimbursement, US technology support, quality assurance and US-based human resources. The US operations oncology staff is based in New York City and there is a small product finishing facility in California. The firm plans to hire 10 more Portsmouth-based employees by the end of the year. Typical salaries are in the \$60,000- \$80,000 range. The company chose Portsmouth for its proximity to the Boston medical device industry and for the lower operating costs and quality of life in Portsmouth. The firm is currently funded through venture capital and private equity.

In discussions about what the City can do to help retain and expand Novocure, Mr. Ambrogi responded that a major factor will be finding the skilled workers needed to meet the company's growth plan. Some zoning regulation modifications that allow light assembly and distribution uses in Commerce Way would be essential for them to grow at that location. He said that recruiting other medical device firms would be good for attracting the labor needed to grow these companies. Ms. Carmer suggested exploring a the a job training grant to create a pipeline of qualified workers such as Lonza Biologics has in partnership with Great Bay Community College.

Following the presentation and question and answer session, Mr. Ambrogi provided a tour of the facility.

With no further business the meeting adjourned at 9:20 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Nancy Carmer
Economic Development Program Manager