

**MEETING MINUTES
PORTSMOUTH ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION**

February 1, 2013

Service Credit Union Offices, 3003 Lafayette Rd.

7:30 a.m.

Members Present: Everett Eaton, Chairman; Dana Levenson, Robert Marchewka, Christine Dwyer, Josh Cyr, John Bosen, John Pratt, Jack Thorsen, Eric Gregg, John P. Bohenko

Excused: Philip Cohen, Ron Zolla

Chairman Eaton opened the meeting at 7:35 a.m. and thanked Michael Bergeron, Vice President of Logistics for Service Credit Union for hosting the meeting.

Approval of draft meeting minutes of January 4, 2013

Following a motion by Commissioner Bosen and a second by Commissioner Cyr the draft meeting minutes of January 3, 2013 were unanimously approved as written.

Report back on Greater Portsmouth Chamber of Commerce Partnership Renewal Request

Chairman Eaton reported that he met with Chamber President Doug Bates and Tourism Manager Valerie Rochon and advised them that the EDC voted to approve level funding of \$40,000 for the Chamber partnership on tourism. He said the Chamber shared the financial pressures of reduced membership and other budget cuts, but understood the Commission's rationale for not increasing the grant to \$45,000 in FY 13/14.

Other Business

Vote on amended 2013 EDC Action Plan

The Commission discussed the complete EDC 2013 EDC Action Plan. Commissioner Gregg suggested that the goals regarding the planning for redevelopment McIntyre Federal Building and the promotion of green business being moved from long-term to short-term goals. The City Manager agreed with the suggestion on the McIntyre block and provided an update on the federal governments plans to break ground on the new building at Pease Tradeport in spring 2013 with a target completion date and relocation in 2014. Following ground breaking at Pease, the Manager intends to ask the City Council to refer the project to the EDC for initial work. He mentioned certain requirements related to the transfer such as inclusion of open space. He said redevelopment of this 2 acre parcel in the Central Business District is a significant economic development opportunity and he hopes that parking does not drive the redevelopment discussion. Commissioner Dwyer added that the timing coincides well with the Master Plan update and provides an opportunity to focus on economic vitality goals. Following discussion, Commissioner Cyr moved and Commissioner Thorsen seconded the motion to adopt the 2013 EDC Action Plan as modified. Motion carried unanimously.

Parking Traffic Safety (PTS) Committee January 8th Work Session

City Manager Bohenko told the EDC that the PTS Committee held a work session to allow staff to educate members on the findings and recommendation of the CC Parking Garage Site Selection Committee. He urged the EDC to keep engaged as the Committee proceeds with its task to review the materials and recommend an alternate parking garage site. EDC members agreed with the City Manager's concern that the McIntyre Block should not be considered the "silver bullet" solution for additional structured parking downtown. This is because redevelopment of the block will likely generate additional parking demand. Also, the access to the site is not optimal for a large parking facility.

Agreement for new surface parking at 299 Vaughan St.

City Manager Bohenko advised the EDC that the City Council approved an agreement with Cathartes

Investments, the owners of Portwalk, to lease and manage 86 surface parking spaces at 299 Vaughan St.

Citywide wayfinding project – upcoming consultant presentation

Ms. Carmer advised the EDC that the City has hired wayfinding consultants Merje LLC from Pennsylvania to create a wayfinding plan. The company has experience in municipalities throughout the US including cities with similar historic character as Portsmouth including Savannah, Georgia and Annapolis, MD. The consultants will be providing an Introduction to Wayfinding presentation at the Portsmouth Public Library on February 13th from 6-7:30 PM in the Levenson Room.

February 4, 2013 Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) - City Council Public Hearing and EDC Advocacy Letter

In accordance with the 2013 EDC Action Plan, the EDC agreed to send a letter to the City Council encouraging them to approve the updated CIP and to specifically mention the importance of keeping up the City's infrastructure city wide including the improvement projects for the Exit 7 Gateway, the Islington Street Corridor and Pease Tradeport roads and facilities.

February 7, 2013 Chamber of Commerce Tourism Summit

Ms. Carmer advised the EDC that the Chamber of Commerce's Annual Tourism Summit is scheduled for Thursday February 7, 2013 at the Harbor Events Conference Center. The theme is "Collaboration for Success." It will be an interactive program to develop three initiatives for improving the destination visits and business revenues.

EDC/Chamber Op-Ed Letter

Chairman Eaton said he was contacted by Shari Donnemeyer, the current Chair of the Chamber of Commerce Board, about co-authoring an op-ed letter regarding the need for a second parking downtown garage. The goal would be to provide facts and public education on the need for the garage. The letter is in process and will be sent to the EDC for review before being sent.

Public Comment

David Choate indicated the US Postal Service Distribution Center off Constitution Avenue may be disposed of and he will keep the ED advised of its ultimate disposition.

Confirm Next Meeting: The next meeting will be Friday, March 15, 2013.

Site Tour of Service Credit Union

Michael Bergeron, Vice President of Logistics for Service Credit Union gave an overview of the Service Credit Union Corporation followed by a tour of the facility. The international company serves both military personnel as well as civilian member company and has 20 offices in NH, one in Falmouth, MA and 16 overseas offices. The new building is the first structure to be built under the City's new Gateway District land use regulations and it is a LEED certified structure. There are currently 140 workers in the new building and 650 employees worldwide with total assets of \$2.2 billion. When the expansion is complete, it will include two buildings and employ 450-500 workers. In addition to personal banking the firm started doing residential mortgages lending in 1992. He said the company has no problem attracting workforce due in part to the wonderful new office space. Following the tour Chairman Eaton thanked Mr. Bergeron and adjourned the meeting at 9:10 AM.

Respectfully submitted,
Nancy Carmer
Economic Development Program Manager