

**MINUTES OF THE PORTSMOUTH
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION**

September 4, 2015

City Hall Conference Room A

7:30 a.m.

Members Present: Everett Eaton, Chairman; Bob Marchewka, Vice-Chairman; Philip Cohen, John Bosen, Jen Zorn, Josh Cyr, Ron Zolla, John Pratt; Eric Spear

Excused: Dana Levenson, John Bosen, Stepfany Shaheen

City Staff: City Manager John P. Bohenko, Economic Development Program Manager Nancy Carner

Approval of draft meeting minutes of June 5, 2015

Commissioner Pratt moved, and Commissioner Cohen seconded, a motion to approve the draft meeting minutes of June 5, 2015. The motion carried unanimously.

Update on Development Projects and North End Character Zoning

Principal City Planner Nick Cracknell gave a presentation on development projects in the City and the recently approved character zoning amendments for the City's North End. Mr. Cracknell informed the Board to develop design guidelines for the projects in the North End, the HDC has approved \$50,000 to for the City's character-based zoning consultant to develop the guidelines. A draft will be available for public comment in October.

During discussion, Councilor Spear commented on the failure of the existing zoning requirement for first floor commercial use for properties on Hanover Street where some hospitality uses have located their exercise rooms or pools. Mr. Cracknell noted that the new zoning should remedy this condition by a requirement to have a door that is open to the public every 50 linear feet. The EDC also discussed other positive attributes of the North End character-based zoning such as design based on neighborhood context of building height and scale as well as the incentive of density bonuses based on the developer's creation of civic space.

Schedule for EDC participation in the Business Expansion Retention Program with UNH

The program application has been accepted and the City will enter into an agreement with UNH Extension for program participation. Pre-program planning will occur in this fall for a kick-off in early 2016.

Discussion and input on EDC initiatives

Chairman Eaton began the discussion by stating that for the past several years, the EDC has focused its work on the downtown and in particular on parking. Now that the City is moving ahead with the Deer Street garage and the North End Zoning is complete, he is looking for EDC input on new initiatives. The Commission discussed work that can be done to use tools such as tax increment financing to promote business and improve infrastructure in areas outside of the downtown. Members agreed that it would be useful to review a map of the areas of the city in conjunction with the allowed land uses. They also discussed the UNH Business Retention and Expansion Program as a means to get feedback from the business community and to review the comments from the upcoming Master Plan events and recent Portsmouth Listens sessions on economic development. The following areas of interest will be mapped for discussion at the next EDC meeting:

1. Islington Street West End
2. Route 1 Bypass corridor
3. Woodbury Avenue
4. Pease Tradeport/Port of NH

Other Business

Portsmouth participation in NH Manufacturing Week (Oct 6-9)

The Economic Development Program Manager is working with the Portsmouth High School Technical Center to arrange onsite visits to local manufacturing companies as part of NH Manufacturing Week.

Google “Let’s Put Our City on the Map” Program

In conjunction with the “Let’s Put Our City on the Map” program, the City will be establishing a workshops for small businesses that need free assistance establishing a web presence.

Public Comment

David Choate from Collier International raised the issue of the policy on Monday morning trash pickup downtown. He feels that the current situation creates an unpleasant environment with trash bags lining the sidewalk during the busy summer tourist season. The City Manager responded that the City is in the process of doing a stakeholder survey of businesses and residents in order to create a better refuse plan for solid waste disposal.

The next topic raised by Mr. Choate was the issue of frivolous appeals of development projects. He asked if there is any recourse for the City as this practice wastes staff time, significantly lengthens the land use permit process and costs developers additional resources. He said that the practice is putting a “chilling effect” on the willingness of developers to invest in the city.

Lastly, He stated his support for a rezoning of the parcel on Route One Bypass where Sports Medicine offices are located from the current Single Residence B zone to the new Gateway Zone.

Confirm Next Regular Meeting: Friday, October 2, 2015, 7:30 AM.

Respectfully submitted,

Nancy Carmer
Economic Development Program Manager