

**MEETING MINUTES OF THE
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION**

December 4, 2015

Conference Room A City Hall

7:30 a.m.

Members Present: Everett Eaton, Chairman; Bob Marchewka, Vice-Chairman; Dana Levenson, Eric Spear, Philip Cohen, John Bosen, Josh Cyr, Ron Zolla, John Pratt, John Bosen, Stefany Shaheen

Excused: City Manager John P. Bohenko

Unexcused: Jen Zorn

City Staff: Economic Development Program Manager Nancy Carmer

Approval of draft meeting minutes of October 2, 2015

Commissioner Cohen moved, and Commissioner Cyr seconded, a motion to approve the draft meeting minutes of November 6, 2015. The motion carried unanimously.

EDC Focus Areas- Spotlight and discussion on Route 1 and Woodbury Avenue

This agenda item was postponed until a later meeting as the presenter was unable to attend.

UNH Business Retention/Expansion Project - program, expectations and timeframes

André L. Garron, AICP, UNH Cooperative Extension State Economic Development Specialist, reviewed the three steps of the Business Retention Expansion Strategies Program which include research, prioritization and implement phases. He identified the roles of the leadership team and the characteristics of the taskforce partners that are part of the process. He also described the business visitation process and the survey used during the visits. Volunteers are trained by UNH prior to surveying the businesses. Typically, there are two members assigned to each survey visit. One team member surveys the business and the other transcribes the responses and takes general notes on business information, products/services, labor force, and customer profile, business plans for the future, broadband needs and general concerns or challenges facing the business.

After Mr. Garron's presentation, the Commission discussed program start dates (mid-February to mid-March 2016) and potential leadership team and taskforce members. It also discussed media awareness strategies and the need to determine how many, or what business sectors to focus on as only a percentage of the overall business community is surveyed. The EDC also discussed focusing on businesses outside of the downtown. Mr. Garron suggested that the teams definitely survey the City's largest employers. He noted that he is endeavoring to get UNH to provide tablets to assist with the surveys.

Following the presentation and discussion, a subcommittee of EDC members was established to begin the process of developing the program schedule, leadership team and taskforce members. Josh Cyr, Phil Cohen, and Bob Marchewka volunteered to serve on the subcommittee and Commissioner Zolla offered support as needed.

Other Business

2015 EDC Year-end Review

Ms. Carmer distributed a draft of the EDC 2015 Year in Review Report which summarizes EDC activity under the categories of Project Advocacy, Partnerships, and Business Visitations, Development Activity support/participation, EDC Subcommittee work, City Council referrals and City Council Work Session Participation during calendar year 2015. It also lists the presentations provided to the EDC at regular monthly meetings. She asked Commissioners to review the document and provide edits to her.

2016 EDC calendar and initiatives

2016 meeting dates were provided to members via email. 2016 initiatives will include the Business Retention

and Expansion Program, supporting Art-Speak with the American for the Arts Economic Prosperity study, participation in, and review of the City's Master Plan Update, and continuation of analysis of the four EDC Focus Areas-outside of downtown.

Other Business

Chairman Eaton informed the EDC that he has been asked by the Greater Portsmouth Chamber of Commerce to serve on a search committee for a new Chamber President to replace Doug Bates who is retiring at the end of the year.

Public Comment

There were no requests for public comment.

Next Regular Meeting: Friday, January 8, 2016 at 7:30 AM.

Adjourn - The meeting adjourned at 9:00 AM.

Respectfully submitted,

Nancy Carmer
Economic Development Program Manager