

City of Portsmouth, New Hampshire
Portsmouth Citizen Response Taskforce
Remote meeting via Zoom
Meeting Minutes for Wednesday, August 5, 2020; 2:00 P.M.

Call to Order; Determination of Quorum

Co-Chair James Petersen determined a quorum and called the meeting to order at 2:05. City Manager Karen Conard represented staff and was the moderator. Patience Horton took minutes. The meeting lasted one hour.

Taskforce present:

1. Co-chair James Petersen, Principal, Petersen Engineering
2. Co-chair Mark Stebbins, Principal, PROCON, Hotel Industry Professional
3. Ann Birner, PharmD, Health Care Professional
4. Russ Grazier, PMAC, Non-profit
5. Valerie Rochon, President, Chamber Collaborative of Greater Portsmouth
6. Dr. Bianca Monteiro, York Pulmonary Associates, Health Care Professional
7. Karen Bouffard, The Real Estate Market, Real Estate Business
8. Katie Lynch, Non-profit Health-care Organization
9. Deb Anthony, Gather Pantry Market, Non-profit Director
10. Mary Morin, Pediatric Nurse Practitioner, Health Care Professional
11. Samantha Finigan, Gus & Ruby Letterpress, Retail Business Owner
12. Karen Conard, City Manager
13. Health Officer Kim McNamara, City Health Officer
14. Alan Gold, City Economic Development Commissioner
15. Sarah Lachance, City Economic Development Commissioner

Taskforce absent:

16. Jeffrey Goss, The Clipper Tavern, Restaurant Owner
17. Senator Martha Fuller Clark, NH State Senate District 21 Representative
18. Jim Lee, REMAX Shoreline, Real Estate Business
19. John Golumb, Poco's Bow Street Cantina, Restaurant Owner
20. Nathan Moss, Citizen-at-large
21. Joe Scarlotto, Restaurant Owner

City Staff present:

1. Stephanie Seacord, Public Information Officer
2. Brian Goetz, Department of Public Works
3. Robert Merner, Police Chief
4. Todd Germain, Fire Chief
5. Joe Almeida, Facilities Manager

Also present:

1. Petra Huda, City Councilor
2. Anne Weidman, Portsmouth Professional Alliance/JSA Architects

3. North Sturtevant, JSA architect, Board Member, PopUpNH
4. Andrew Bagley, PopUpNH

I. Welcome & Approval of Minutes

- Motion: Alan Gold moved to approve the minutes of July 22, 2020, as written. Katie Lynch seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

II. Health Subcommittee

- a) **Weekly COVID data report**
- b) **Sub-committee—Update**
- c) **Letter to Governor & other outreach**

Ann Birner: Two weeks ago, Portsmouth City Council unanimously passed a resolution of recommended safety steps, including the mandatory use of masks. They wrote a letter to Governor Sununu recommending this rule for the entire State of New Hampshire.

The Taskforce Health Subcommittee followed up with a letter to the Governor with the same message.

A letter has been drafted by the Health Subcommittee that will be signed by City Manager Karen Conard. It will go to the City and Town Managers in the greater-Portsmouth region. It has the same message. That letter is on the verge of completion.

There are four letters, all supporting mask mandates, local and Statewide:

- 1) To Governor Sununu from the City Council
- 2) To Governor Sununu from the Taskforce Health Subcommittee
- 3) To surrounding City/Town Managers from Karen Conard written by the Health Subcommittee
- 4) To Governor Sununu from the Taskforce following up the Health Committee's earlier letter—not yet written

Taskforce Co-chair James Petersen suggested that all letters written by the Taskforce should be agreed upon and ratified. The letters should carry the individual names of the Health Subcommittee and the Taskforce. The signature block should also have a simple sentence describing the origin of the Taskforce and its mission.

Taskforce Co-chair Mark Stebbins recommended a vote to ratify the letter from the Health Subcommittee to Governor Sununu, already sent.

- Motion: Ann Birner moved that this group vote to voice their support for the letter that was sent to the Governor. Kathryn Lynch seconded. There was no discussion. The motion passed unanimously.

A motion was then made to ratify the letter from Karen Conard to the City and Town Managers in the greater-Portsmouth region.

- Motion: Mark Stebbins moved to approve the Health Subcommittee's letter to the City and Town Managers, signed by City Manager Karen Conard, in the format that James suggested. Bianca Monteiro seconded.

In discussion, Ann Birner said the distribution list for the letter had not been supplied. The Taskforce should be provided with the distribution list from the City Manager's office as a condition of approval.

The motion passed unanimously.

Mark Stebbins had met with Governor Sununu the previous day. The Governor said he could not justify a State-wide mandate. There are counties in the far reaches near the Canadian border that haven't had one COVID case. "I am not going to make them wear masks," Governor Sununu told Mark. "If your community wants to do it, I will support you 100%."

III. Bridge Street Lot Subcommittee—Update

Russ Grazier: A soft opening with food service for the Bridge Street lot is planned for day-after-tomorrow, Friday. The first performance, a fashion show, will take place Saturday evening. It is sold out. The tables are 15-feet apart. Countless individuals and organizations have worked hard to make this happen.

Kim McNamara: We, including the Fire Chief, feel better now that the tables are 15-feet apart. A method of ordering online from the tables has been established. Having people go to their seats and order from their seats is putting a lot of people at ease.

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IV. Streets Subcommittee Report

Karen Conard: There are no new applications or approvals.

Mark Stebbins: We've started talking about how we are going forward into the winter months. We're looking at what people in other communities are doing.

V. Weekly Health Subcommittee Report

Ann Birner on the COVID data: NH and ME are doing reasonably well. Numbers change frequently. The amount of testing is going down in NH. We know that asymptomatic transmission tells us it is essential to test broadly, not just the patients that are showing symptoms. To get a good picture of what's going on in the community requires more robust testing. OUR NUMBERS MIGHT BE LOOKING GOOD, BUT WE STILL NEED TO MAINTAIN OUR VIGILANCE.

VI. Fall & Winter—Indoor/Outdoor Safety

James suggested that next week, the Health Subcommittee and the Street Subcommittee should report indoor and outdoor safety in the upcoming colder months.

Adjourn

- Motion: Bianca Monteiro moved to adjourn. Ann Birner seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,
Patience G. Horton, Recorder.