

**MEETING MINUTES OF THE PORTSMOUTH
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION
January 10, 2020**

Members Present: Bob Marchewka, Chairman; Philip Cohen, Vice Chairman; Sarah Lachance, Tom Watson, Alan Gold, Ron Zolla, and Dana Levenson, City Councilor Cliff Lazenby; Katelyn Kwoka; Everett Eaton

Excused: Assistant Mayor Splaine

City Staff: City Manager Karen Conard, Economic Development Program Manager Nancy Carmer

Approval of draft meeting minutes of December 6, 2019

Commissioner Gold moved and Commissioner Watson seconded a motion to approve the draft meeting minutes of December 6, 2019. The motion carried unanimously.

Introduction and welcome to City Manager Karen Conard

Chairman Marchewka welcomed New City Manager Karen Sawyer Conard to the City and to the EDC. Ms. Conard thanked the Chair and provided a summary of her professional background. EDC members followed by introducing themselves including their service on the Commission.

Welcome 2020 EDC City Council Representatives Assistant Mayor Splaine and Councilor Lazenby

Chairman Marchewka welcomed City Council representative Lazenby back to the EDC and stated that Assistant Mayor Splaine is the other City Council representative to the EDC. Due to a prior conflict he was unable to attend the meeting.

Election of Commission Officers for 2020

On a motion by Commissioner Kwoka, seconded by Commissioner Watson, Chairman Marchewka was elected to continue to serve as Chairman for 2020 by unanimous vote.

On a motion by Chairman Marchewka, seconded by City Counselor Lazenby, Vice-Chairman Cohen was elected to continue to serve as Vice-chairman for 2020 by unanimous vote.

Old Business

Discussion on Committee Framework, Updates and meetings

The Commission re-iterated the desire raised at the last EDC meeting to work with the new City Council on economic development and to determine the best way to be a resource for both the Council and the residents.

The Commission discussed the following EDC subcommittees and related work that emerged at the October 2019 retreat for the Commission's focus on in 2020. A hybrid approach to subcommittee research was suggested that might include input/presentations from experts on the topics studied. Collaboration with the UNH survey center and other departments was deemed an important resource for the EDC subcommittee work. An example of how the survey center could potentially assist is to look into where the local workforce lives and spends their money as it relates to workforce housing opportunities.

- 1) Education and Research Subcommittee (EDC members: Cohen, Watson, Levenson, and Lachance)
Discussion centered around strategic opportunities to conduct research on the economic impacts on local development projects/proposals and initiatives. Commissioners discussed potentially doing research on the tax impact/value of local development over a set period of time. Specific focus would be on the direct and indirect economic impact of development projects including tax revenue, jobs, etc.

The desire for more active EDC input on the economic impact of the McIntyre redevelopment as proposed or as modified was discussed. Another potential research topic deliberated relates to hospitality development

in the city. It was suggested that the EDC could conduct a supply and demand analysis of the local conference center market to better understand the ability of the existing and proposed conference facilities to meet demand as well where gaps exist.

- 2) Transportation Subcommittee (EDC members: Watson, Gold, Zolla and Lazenby)
The EDC members of this subcommittee are prepared to work on the Joint Subcommittee on Microtransit initiative when members of the Parking Traffic and Safety Committee members are identified. Another potential project for the transportation subcommittee is to follow the regional Joint Land use Study underway relative to the transportation impacts of the Portsmouth Naval Shipyard.
- 3) Legislative Action/Advocacy Subcommittee (EDC members: Kwoka, Lazenby)
If desired, this committee could assist the City's Legislative Subcommittee on bills related to economic development such as the local hotel fee option, workforce housing, and workforce development. City Manager Conard said that Staff Attorney Ferrini is working with the City's Legislative Subcommittee on the current slate of bills and Ms. Conard suggested that the EDC invite her to the Feb 7th EDC meeting for a conversation about legislative advocacy.

General EDC Advocacy Discussion

Commissioners discussed the benefit of a more active EDC advocacy role as it relates to local development proposals and potential economic impacts. Historically, the Commission has not weighed in on specific development proposals other than to make a general statement of the economic impacts of specific development such as how more workforce housing equates to easier talent attraction for local employers. In general, Commissioners support the opportunity to create a dialogue between the Commission and the City Council on economic development matters through reports by the City Council representatives at regular City Council meetings.

City Council Representative Report Out

This portion of the agenda is an opportunity for the City Council representatives to the EDC to report on upcoming business that warrants EDC attention or action as well as an opportunity for the EDC to raise issues that could be brought before the City Council, including progress on the EDC subcommittees.

Councilor Lazenby reported on the status of the McIntyre redevelopment project and the legal consequences and costs if the City elects to terminate the current development agreement with the Redgate/Kane team. The fiscal impact of a lawsuit could be in the millions of dollars depending on lost profits and other factors. He said no decision has been made and there will be a future meeting to discuss the application to the National Park Service application for the Historic Monument Surplus Program and lease agreement terms. Ms. Conard said that it is worth noting a willingness by the Council to re-explore the development agreement versus terminating it.

The EDC discussed the importance of Redgate/Kane plan to lease the McIntyre Building to Hub Spot in order to retain the company and related jobs in the City and how the EDC might support this effort.

Commissioner Watson noted the importance of a downtown presence of the Post Office and suggested that the EDC might assist in facilitating a conversation with the agency.

New/Other Business

Staff is working on submitting the Central Business District economic revitalization zone to the state Department of Business and Economic Affairs.

Public Comment

No member of the public wished to provide public comment.

Confirm Next Regular Meeting: February 7, 2020 7:30 AM

Respectfully submitted,
Nancy Carmer
Economic Development Program Manager