

FINAL
MEETING MINUTES OF THE PORTSMOUTH
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION (EDC)
September 9, 2022 7:30 AM

Members Present: Philip Cohen; Chair, Alan Gold; Vice Chair, Bob Marchewka, Tom Watson, Andrew Ward, Jacob Lehoux, Sarah Lachance, , Anne Weidman, Everett Eaton, City Councilor; Vince Lombardi, Ben VanCamp

Absent: Assistant Mayor; JoAnna Kelley; Katelyn Kwoka

City Staff: City Manager; Karen Conard, Asst. City Manager for Economic Development; Sean Clancy

Chairman Cohen called the meeting to order at 7:35 AM

Minutes - Approval of draft meeting minutes of July 29, 2022 – Motion made by *Councilor Lombardi* seconded by *Commissioner Watson*. Motion to approve amended minutes passed unanimously.

Working Group Updates:

Business Retention and Expansion Survey – *Sean Clancy* advised that the BR&E Survey team has been working with the UNH Survey Center and that a second draft has been reviewed and a final draft is in process. The Survey is scheduled for completion by mid-September with a launch date scheduled for October 3, 2022. The final list of emails (received from NH SOS in April) stands at 2420 entries.

Land Use Committee (LUC) Liaison – *Commissioner Lachance* advised that the LUC is focused on simplifying Accessory Dwelling Unit permitting process and that the process is moving forward. In response to a question; City Manager Conard advised the group that the City Planning department has applied for a grant from the state sponsored InvestNH program which was established to support an increase in affordable housing throughout NH municipalities

New/Other Business:

- Chamber President *Ben Van Camp* provided a mid-year report of activities, results, and planned initiatives for the remainder of FY '23
 - Portsmouth has experienced a strong Summer tourism season across all sectors including retail
 - The Chamber marketing initiative “GoPortsmouth” delivered improved website visits and website visit times. Results will be provided to the Arts and Non-Profit committee for final review (then shared with the EDC at a future date).
 - *Commissioner Lachance* requested that the Outdoor Dining Report (from the City Planning Department) be presented to the EDC at a future meeting.
 - *Commissioner Lachance* requested that a Parking Utilization report fro the summer tourist season be presented to the EDC at a future meeting.

City Council Update:

- *Counselor Lombardi* advised that an ARPA work session is scheduled for Monday September 12th.
- *Counselor Lombardi* outlined the challenge of on-going “public Forum” conversations within City government.

Commercial Real Estate Presentation (Update) was delivered by Colliers International at the request of the EDC.

- Current trends were discussed and it was agreed that vacancy rates for all segments in CRE are low (as they historically have been) in Portsmouth.
- Industrial space continues to be at a premium and the market has seen industrial space rates increase by over 30% in the last year.
- The uncertainty in the business sector as well as with the overall local and national economic warrant continuous monitoring.

Next Meeting Schedule for October 7, 2022

Tentative Location: Portsmouth High School – CTE Center

Adjourn

Motion to adjourn made by Commissioner Marchewka, seconded by Commissioner Lachance
Motion passed unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,
Sean Clancy
Assistant City Manager for Economic Development