

DRAFT
MEETING MINUTES OF THE PORTSMOUTH
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION (EDC)
April 14, 2023 7:30 AM- 9:00 AM

Members Present: Chair Phil Cohen, Vice Chair Alan Gold, Bob Marchewka, Tom Watson, Sarah Lachance, Anne Weidman, Andrew Ward, Everett Eaton, Anna Howard, Assistant Mayor JoAnna Kelley, City Councilor Vince Lombardi, Ben VanCamp,

Absent: Jacob Lehoux

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

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

Minutes - Approval of draft meeting minutes of March 3, 2023 – Motion made by *Commissioner Watson*, seconded by *Councilor Lombardi*. Motion to approve draft minutes passed unanimously.

City Council Outdoor Dining referral to EDC: *Assistant Mayor Kelley* clarified that the EDC has been asked to review and make a recommendation (to City Council) to propose an ordinance which would make Outdoor Dining permanent.

Working Group Updates:

Charter/Mission Review – The (draft) proposed ordinance language changes were circulated prior to the meeting. There were no comments or questions for *Commissioner Watson* or the group.

Commissioner Watson summarized the changes as expanding our primary purpose to support business and industry and to adding language allowing the EDC to proactively address issues and recommend action(s) to the City Council vs. (historically) waiting for guidance. A motion was made to recommend changes to the City Council to adopt as an ordinance subject to Legal Department and Governance Committee review. (*Motion - Commissioner Watson, Seconded by Councilor Lombardi*), motion passed unanimously.

Data Group – Chair Cohen advised that the small group of two (Jacob L.) spoke a couple of time to discuss identifying what data is available for the EDC to review and what data the EDC would like to post or make available on the Economic Development web pages. (i.e., Housing data, Outdoor Dining data, Assessment data)

Land Use Liaison – The Land Use Committee is focused on finding ways to increase housing stock, preferably affordable housing. There is an ongoing review of city owned property which may be able to be developed – still in progress. There is also a review of density bonuses for developers underway through the Planning Department and Land Use Committee in terms of seeking ways to incentivize adding affordable housing vs. green space (public).

Office of Economic Development Update:

Progress continues to be made on the CRM/Database project for the EDO as well as the regional workforce development initiative funded by the NH BEA. Arts and Culture Committees are ramping up: (New) Public Art Review Committee, AFTA study wraps in June, Cultural Plan RFP on the wire until May 5th.

Chamber Update: *Chamber President Van Camp*

- Save the Date – Spring Restaurant Week April 20-29th.
- Save the Dates: Hit the Decks (5/11), SBA Entrepreneurship Event (6/6), Street Life (8/15)
- Larger Conferences (100-300 attendees) are returning to Portsmouth.
- January & February hotel occupancy and retail sales are strong due, in part, to milder winter weather.

City Council Update:

Councilor Lombardi shared a summary of City Council efforts including reviewing the CIP for opportunities to better align budget priorities, ADU guidelines, and continue support for the Skateboard Park.

Housing Unit Development Analysis and Forecast:

Principal Planner, Nick Cracknell and Housing Navigator, Howard Snyder provided the EDC with 8 years' worth of analysis outlining development efforts to increase housing inventory in the City of Portsmouth. This was the same presentation that was made to the Land Use Committee. Robust conversation ensued regarding how the EDC can better understand this development activity and the associated forecast in order to advocate for increasing housing inventory in support of continued economic expansion and growth.

Adjourn

Motion to adjourn made by *Commissioner Lachance*, seconded by *Assistant Mayor Kelley*.

The motion passed unanimously.

Next Meeting Scheduled for Friday May 5th, 2023

Respectfully submitted,

Sean Clancy

Assistant City Manager for Economic Development