

**MEETING MINUTES OF THE PORTSMOUTH  
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION**

July 3, 2024 7:30 AM- 9:00 AM

**Members Present:** Chair Tom Watson, Vice Chair Sarah Lachance, Bob Marchewka, Anne Weidman, City Councilor Vince Lombardi, Assistant Mayor Joanna Kelley, Andrew Ward  
**Absent:** Jacob Lahoux, Everett Eaton, Phil Cohen, Jen Scumaci, Anna Howard, Ben VanCamp  
**City Staff:** Assistant City Manager Sean Clancy, City Manager Karen Conard

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*Chair Watson* called the meeting to order at 7:35 am.

Motion to accept the minutes of the May meeting with no changes made by *Commissioner Weidman*, seconded by *Vice Chair Lachance*. Motion passed unanimously.

*Shanti Wolph – Chief Building Inspector:*

*C.I Wolph* presented an overview of the Inspections department including the expanded team, the core functions, daily (public) office hours, and the mentality of working to keep developers, contractors, and residents informed and educated code issues and changes. He provided a snapshot of personnel and activity from FY '22, FY '23 and FY '24.

*C.I Wolph* joined the City of Portsmouth in this role in early 2022. He provided a brief overview of the OpenGov software which is used to track permitting activity and provide two-way communication between applicants/contractors and city staff. Lastly *C.I Wolph* provided a summary of what has changed in the department since he joined and successfully cleared a long-standing backlog of requests and additional planned changes to internal processes to increase visibility and the efficiency of the inspections department processes.

A robust question and answer session followed.

Economic Development Office Report:

- The Market Square Master Plan process continues to move forward with a focus on seeking public input. The Planning and Sustainability department has requested a report from the Market Square Day public input session. This report will be posted to the project web page once received.
- The American Cruise Line inaugural visit is scheduled for Monday July 8th
- The City Hazard Mitigation Plan will be circulated to the EDC for feedback as required by the State of New Hampshire
- The Novocure headquarters tour will be scheduled for the first week of August (exact date & time TBD)

Economic Resiliency Working Group presentation- *Commissioner Weidman*

- The ERWG advised that the transportation research and notes have been shared with Holly Parker who is the transportation consultant working with the City's Parking Utilization Study Group. The PUSG's findings and recommendations are scheduled to be shared with the City Council and the public this fall.

Business Support Working Group Update – *Commissioner Ward*

- Summarized the Inspections Department data and presentation based on the initial effort to determine if the department was inhibiting development in Portsmouth.
- Advised that the refined purpose of working with the CRM vendor is to focus on specific two-way communication and engagement with the business community vs. implementing a full-blown Customer Relationship Management database.
- Proposed that the BSWG re-convene to wrap up the Inspections department review and choose other areas to focus on to “better” support the business community.
- *Vice Chair Lachance* requested that the BSWG identify actions needed or areas of study to improve the Inspections process or if no further actions are required that they recommend a communication approach to share learning

Chamber Update – *Sean Clancy on behalf of Ben VanCamp*

- Key events in July:
  - Seacoast Chamber Alliance annual event (6 Regional Chambers) @ Pease Golf Course July 16<sup>th</sup>, 5pm-7pm
- Tickets are on sale for street.life! 2024 @ Port City (Pease) September 5, 2024.

City Council Update – *Councilor Lombardi/Assistant Mayor Kelley*

- The City Council passed Home Occupancy I and II ordinances
- The Housing Committee will re-review city owned properties for additional housing development opportunities
- RFQ for the Sherburne School property resulted in eight proposals which are under review by city staff

Public Comment:

*David Choate* provided feedback on the Inspections Department presentation as well as Sherburn School property request for qualifications process.

Motion to adjourn made by *Councilor Lombardi*, seconded by *Commissioner Weidman*. Motion passed unanimously.

As always, recording of the entire meeting is available for review on our City Website.

Submitted by,  
*Sean Clancy*  
Assistant City Manager for Economic & Community Development