

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

January 5, 2024 8:00 AM- 9:30 AM

Members Present: Chair Phil Cohen, Vice Chair Tom Watson, Bob Marchewka, Sarah Lachance, Andrew Ward, Jacob Lahoux, Anna Howard, Jen Scumaci, Anne Weidman, Ben VanCamp, City Councilor Vince Lombardi, Assistant Mayor Joanna Kelley

Absent: City Manager Karen Conard, Everett Eaton

City Staff: Assistant City Manager for Economic & Community Development Sean Clancy

Chair Cohen called the meeting to order at 8:05am.

Motion to accept the minutes of the December 1st meeting with no changes made by *Commissioner Watson*, seconded by *Commissioner Lachance*, passed unanimously.

Chair Cohen initiated the annual election process by nominating *Vice Chair Watson* for the chair role in 2024. *Commissioner Weidman* seconded the nomination. A call was made for additional nominations, and none were forthcoming. A vote was taken, and *Vice Chair Watson* was elected to the chair role unanimously.

The gavel was passed to *Chair Watson* who nominated *Commissioner Lachance* for the role of vice chair in 2024. *Commissioner Marchewka* seconded the nomination. A call was made for additional nominations, and none were forthcoming. A vote was taken, and *Commissioner Lachance* was elected to the Vice Chair unanimously.

Senior Assistant City Attorney Ferrini presented the Commission with proposed drafts refined Outdoor Dining Ordinance and Outdoor Dining Design Standards/Best Practices prepared by the Legal Department at the request of the City Council that are based on the EDC's recommendations to the Council in September 2023 and incorporate certain comments and provisions suggested by City Staff. *Attorney Ferrini* stated that the drafts reflect certain compromises and are intended to simplify the process of obtaining an outdoor dining license while reserving to the City the ability to deny or condition a license upon terms necessary to protect the safety of the public and other users of public domain. EDC members thereupon voted to endorse the language of the proposed ordinance as presented by *Attorney Ferrini*. The motion was made by *Commissioner Cohen*, seconded by *Commissioner Weidman* and the motion passed unanimously.

A presentation was made to the EDC by Sustainability Practices Committee (SPC) *Chair Bert Cohen* & *Member Jessica Blasko*. The SPC's goals and initiatives were shared as well as a desire to collaborate/partner with the EDC on sustainability issues and initiatives that require support and understanding by the business community as well as Portsmouth residents. The EDC members found the information presented very informative and expressed an interest in continuing the conversation and exploring more collaborative opportunities.

Econ Dev Office Update:

- AFTA Visit, preferred event; “Arts Means Business”, 1/11/24 8:30 @ Seacoast rep
- Cultural Plan in final stage due to be completed by end of January
- Launch of EDC Document Library (live)

Chamber Update:

- Tourism Summit – 1/23/24 8am-12 noon, Music Hall Loft
- Hate has no place in Portsmouth event – 2/1/24, Noon, Portsmouth Public Library
- Additional Events: [Events Calendar - Chamber Sponsored Programs - The Chamber Collaborative of Greater Portsmouth, NH \(portsmouthchamber.org\)](https://www.portsmouthchamber.org/events-calendar)

City Council update:

- Councilor Lombardi shared updates on BRC on Historical Archives
- Awaiting results of Holiday Parking program (new format this year)
- Bartlett Street Rail bridge replacement via Federal grant

There was no public comment

Next Meeting(s): Annual Retreat January 19th, regular meeting February 2nd.

Motion to adjourn made by *Commissioner Weidman*, seconded by *Councilor Lombardi*, motion passed (9:00am).

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

Submitted by,

Sean Clancy

Assistant City Manager for Economic & Community Development