

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

June 7, 2024 7:30 AM- 9:00 AM

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

Chair Watson called the meeting to order at 7:30 am.

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

Economic Development Office Report:

1. Outdoor Dining update –
 - a. **Thirty-one** establishments approved and operating.
 - b. This is a reduction from **thirty-six** last year due to ordinance restrictions and changes in the restaurant landscape.
2. The EDC meets next on **Wednesday July 3rd** . This meeting will be held in the School Department Board room (2nd floor) at City Hall
3. The Market Square Master Plan process continues to move forward with a focus on seeking public input
4. The Parking Utilization Study Group’s process is moving forward with a report of future needs due this fall. This report will be presented to City Council and then shared with the public for input, feedback, etc.
5. The State of the City summary shared with Commission. Quality of place was defined and reviewed as a strength of Portsmouth which needs to be protected, enhanced, and shared with the business community.
6. The Public Art Review Committee is moving forward with interviews associated with an RFP process to commission public art to be located on Peirce Island. More to come.

Economic Resiliency Working Group presentation- *Commissioner Weidman*

- The ERWG provided a summary of meetings held with Jim Jalbert (C&J Bus Lines) as well as Steve Pesci and Beverly Cray with Wildcat Transit. Efforts continue to research the transportation landscape to determine if there are opportunities to increase economic resiliency.

Business Support Working Group Update – *S. Clancy*

- Reminded Commissioners that Shanti Wolph, Director of Inspections department will attend the July 3rd EDC meeting.
- Customer Relationship Management database implementation process continues to move forward with vendor.

Chamber Update - *Ben VanCamp*

- Newest Collaboration is to promote, market, and support Art ‘Round Town including a new website, literature and maps.
- New collaboration effort (marketing/branding) with the maritime related non-profits (education, history, etc.) more to come.
- Working on a new (Fall launch) local gift card program - researching best product/software platform.
- StreetLife 2024 will be hosted by Port City Air at the Pease Tradeport on Thursday September 5th
- Chamber membership is up year-over-year approximately 6% though organic growth
- The Chamber is hearing about some concerns with hotel occupancy and retail sales this spring. Early indications are lower than expected and warrant monitoring.
- Service Credit Union is hosting a property walk-about & meeting (June 20th) and day long workforce housing charrette (June 21st). Both events will be held at their headquarters building on Lafayette Road. Contact Ben for more information.

City Council Update – *Councilor Lombardi*

- The City Council passed the FY ‘25 City budget at the June 3rd meeting
- The City Council continues to review and address the need for a new Community Police facility. The City Hall campus is the favored location currently.
- The City Council is in conversation with the Community Power Coalition about offering participation to the City of Portsmouth (municipality)

Public Comment:

Steve Dunfey is a local writer working on an article for InDepth NH.org regarding the work of the Economic Development Commission. Steve wanted to let the EDC know about his efforts

Motion to adjourn made by *Commissioner Weidman*, seconded by *Commissioner Scumaci*. 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