

**MEETING MINUTES  
PORTSMOUTH ECONOMIC  
DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION**

**June 6, 2025      7:30 AM- 9:00 AM**

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

**Absent:** Anna Howard

**City Staff:** Assistant City Manager Sean Clancy

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

Motion to accept the minutes of the April meeting made by *Assistant Mayor Kelley*, seconded by *Commissioner Scumaci*. Motion passed unanimously.

*Chair Watson* introduced a City Council parking proposal to convert the existing (25) 15-minute parking spaces within the downtown district to 30-minute parking spaces, free of charge, to Portsmouth residents only. He advised that the proposal was presented to the Council at its May 19<sup>th</sup> meeting at which the Council voted to schedule it for “first reading” on June 9<sup>th</sup> and requested that the EDC as well as the Parking and Traffic Safety Commission provide feedback on this proposal on or before that date.

Chair Watson advised the Commission that he had appointed a working group, consisting of Commissioners Howard, Weidman, and VanCamp to review the proposal from the perspective of the downtown business community and develop a response for consideration by the EDC. A summary report prepared by the Working Group was circulated to the EDC prior to the meeting.

Mr. VanCamp then addressed the Commission on behalf of the Working Group. He explained the polling of downtown businesses undertaken by the Group that identified a segment of the business community, consisting of businesses that rely on quick-service customer interactions requiring proximate short term parking, who believed that the proposal would be somewhat or very harmful to their operations.

The Director of Public Works, Peter Rice, and Operations Manager of Park Portsmouth, Michael Casad, also addressed the Commission regarding the systemic nature of and strategic thinking underlying Portsmouth’s current parking plan. They also raised possible revenue impacts and technological obstacles inherent in the parking proposal. A substantial period of questions and answers followed.

The Commission was also advised that a second parking proposal is informally circulating that gives 15-minute free parking in any downtown parking space for Portsmouth residents using the ParkMobile application.

Thereafter, an extended discussion ensued regarding the proposals.

Following the discussion, Weidman made a motion, to wit:

That the EDC report to the City Council that it believes the proposed ordinance amendment before the City Council is premature, that the concept of limited low or no-cost resident parking in the central

business district as an incentive for residents to visit downtown more often is worthy of further study, specifically using the consultant from the recent parking utilization study, with the anticipation that a report with recommendations will be forthcoming in 3-4 months.

If the City Council decides to move forward with the current proposal to convert the 15-minute parking spaces downtown to 30-minute, resident-only free parking, the EDC opposes that proposal as it will likely adversely impact a subset of downtown businesses.

The motion was seconded by *Vice Chair Lachance*, and the motion carried unanimously.

Office of Economic Development Update – *S. Clancy*

We have launched a new City resource for new (brick & mortar) businesses -

[How to Start a Business in Portsmouth, NH | City of Portsmouth](#)

*Chair Watson* provided an update on the Master Plan process (citizen advisory group formed), EDC representation (Marchewka, Watson), and timeline (December 2026).

Due to the Independence Day holiday, the next EDC Meeting will be held on July 11<sup>th</sup> at Pease. (exact location to be confirmed)

City Council Update – *Councilor Lombardi*

Chamber Update: *B. VanCamp*

- Portsmouth High School held a CTE signing day for graduates moving directly into careers.
- Local Love scheduled for June 19th.

Public Comment: N/A

Motion to adjourn by *Commissioner Weidman*, seconded by *Commissioner Lahoux*. Motion passed.

Meeting adjourned at 9:00 am.

A full recording of this meeting is available on the City's EDC webpage.

Submitted by,

*Sean Clancy*

Assistant City Manager for Economic & Community Development