

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

February 6, 2026 7:30 AM- 9:00 AM

Members' Present: Chair Andrew Ward, Vice Chair Sarah Lachance, Anne Weidman, Anna Howard, Tom Watson, Wendy Clement, Councilor Blalock, Councilor Flynn, Ben VanCamp
Absent (Excused): Bob Marchewka, Phil Cohen, City Manager Karen Conard
City Staff:, Assistant City Manager Sean Clancy

Chair Ward brought the meeting to order at 7:30 am.

Chair Ward entertained a motion to accept the EDC meeting minutes from January 9, 2026. The motion was made by *Commissioner Watson* and seconded by *Commissioner Weidman*. The motion carried.

- *Chair Ward* welcomed *Councilor Blalock* and *Councilor Flynn* to their first EDC meeting.

Chair Ward explained that the EDC requests City Council updates which are relevant to the work of the EDC at each meeting.

Councilors Blalock and *Flynn* provided a brief update on City Council's discussion of childcare, the resident parking proposal, new construction within the Historic District, and the adoption City Council goals for this council session.

Chair Ward and *Vice Chair Lachance* led a far-ranging discussion based on the EDC's annual retreat conclusions and previous input from all commissioners with the goal of identifying new initiatives and subsequent working groups within the EDC.

Chair Ward outlined initial topics which evolved through deep discussion of critical economic development needs vis-à-vis the goals of the City Council.

The areas and related working groups that surfaced and will require greater consideration were:

- 1) The Future of Work – Infrastructure needs, Workforce needs, Smart City, Education (CTE)
Initial Working Group: *Councilor Blalock, Vice Chair Lachance, Commissioner Cyr*
- 2) Parking & Transportation
Initial Working Group: *Commissioner Weidman, Commissioner Clement, S. Clancy*
- 3) Arts, Culture, and Enrichment
Initial Working Group: *Councilor Flynn, Commissioner Howard*

Vice Chair Lachance introduced an outline of a decision-making process for review and further refinement once working groups or the EDC, as a whole, develops initiatives or is presented with an initiative from City Council.

Office of Economic Development Update: *S. Clancy*

- The Customer Relationship Management tool (CRM) is fully functioning and being utilized to engage the business community in the Master Plan process.
- There is a lot of activity with the Public Art Review Committee as well as the Arts and Cultural Commission which may serve to support the Arts, Culture, and Enrichment working group

Chamber Collaborative Update – *B. VanCamp*

- 2026 Tourism Summit scheduled for February 11th from 8am-noon
- 2026 Economic Outlook scheduled for February 17th from 8am- 10am at the Atlantic Gril
- New Event: Hear & There, a weekend of music around the Seacoast is being heavily promoted by the Chamber
- The Chamber Public Policy committee is monitoring some problematic bills in Concord. One eliminates the Housing Champion program and associated funding (Portsmouth was a “housing champion” in the past). There is an open invitation to any EDC member who would like to be more involved with the Chamber’s Public Policy efforts.

[Events Calendar - Chamber Sponsored Programs](#)

Commissioner Weidman provided a brief Master Plan update:

- A *NEW* survey is available for input on the draft vision and goals that Utile has outlined

[Master Plan | City of Portsmouth](#)

- A community meeting is scheduled for Wednesday April 22nd from 6pm-8pm at Community Campus
- The consultant plans to organize focus groups such as retail, hospitality, etc.
 - Exact timing is still being determined

Public Comment:

Joshua Cyr attended this meeting and provided comments when invited by *Chair Ward*

Motion to adjourn by *Councilor Blalock*, seconded by *Commissioner Watson*, and the motion passed.

Meeting adjourned at 8:49 am.

A full recording of this meeting can be found on the city website.

[Economic Development Commission | City of Portsmouth](#)

Submitted by,

Sean Clancy

Assistant City Manager for Economic & Community Development