

## MEETING MINUTES OF THE PORTSMOUTH ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION

March 20, 2026 7:30 AM- 9:00 AM

**Members' Present:** Chair Andrew Ward, Vice Chair Sarah Lachance, Anne Weidman, Tom Watson, Wendy Clement, Bob Marchewka, Phil Cohen, Jason Goodrich, Joshua Cyr, Councilor Blalock, Councilor Flynn, Ben VanCamp, City Manager Karen Conard

**Absent (Excused):** Anna Howard

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

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

*Chair Ward* welcomed *Commissioners Cyr* and *Goodrich* to their first official meeting as fully approved and recorded members of the EDC.

*Chair Ward* entertained a motion to accept the EDC meeting minutes from February 6, 2026. The motion was made by *Commissioner Cyr* and seconded by *Councilor Blalock*. The motion carried.

*Deputy City Manager Webber* presented the latest version of the Resident Access Parking Program pilot (2026). A robust conversation followed the presentation which outlined the potential benefits to residents as well as downtown employees and employers. Commissioners were able to ask questions and provide feedback which were noted for future consideration.

*Councilors Blalock* and *Flynn* provided a brief update on City Council's activity including acceptance of the Public Art Review Committee annual report, an update on the Community Power Coalition ongoing review, Sister City Committee activity vis-à-vis Halifax, NS, Canada and a planned visit by representatives from Santarcangelo, Italy.

Office of Economic Development Update: *S. Clancy*

- 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
- (Potential) New businesses continue to contact the OED regarding leases, locations, and general inquiries

Chamber Collaborative Update – *B. VanCamp*

- The Chamber is updating the official Portsmouth tourism website: (fall 2026)  
[Official Portsmouth, NH Tourism Website! Stay. Shop. Eat.](#)
- Chamber Staff will be attending an Outdoor Adventure trade show in Montreal, ON
- Spring Restaurant Week is scheduled for April 9<sup>th</sup> - April 18th.
- Membership, engagement, and programming are all increasing across the Chamber universe
- The Chamber is engaged in childcare and housing efforts across the region to support employers and employees

[Events Calendar - Chamber Sponsored Programs](#)

*Chair Ward* led the group in a further conversation about 2026 working groups and next steps. *Chair Ward* requested the groups to meet, start reviewing initiatives, and choose a lead prior to the April 3<sup>rd</sup> EDC meeting. Lastly each group is required to report (out) to the full commission.

- 1) The Future of Work – Infrastructure needs, Workforce needs, Smart City, Education (CTE)  
Initial Working Group: *Councilor Blalock, Vice Chair Lachance, Commissioner Cyr, Commissioner Goodrich*
- 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* reminded the working groups to utilize the intake and decision-making framework that was previously created. *Vice-Chair Lachance* requested that this document be distributed to the working groups.

*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

Public Comment:

Resident, *Jim Wilson* shared with the Commission his question for all commissions and departments in Portsmouth: Why is the City of Portsmouth not treating communication as a critical resource (like water and sewer infrastructure)? A robust discussion followed.

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

Meeting adjourned at 8:51am.

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