

MEETING MINUTES OF THE PORTSMOUTH ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION

April 3, 2026 7:30 AM- 9:00 AM

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

Guest: Zoe Mueller – Utile (planning Consultant)

Absent (Excused): Jason Goodrich, Phil Cohen

City Staff:, Assistant City Manager Sean Clancy

Chair Ward brought the meeting to order at 7:35 am.

Chair Ward entertained a motion to accept the EDC meeting minutes from March 6, 2026. The motion was made by *Commissioner Cyr* and seconded by *Councilor Blaylock*. The motion carried with one identified spelling correction.

Zoe Mueller from Utile presented most recent Master Plan analysis based on nearly a year of input and stakeholder conversations. The high-level presentation will be the basis for the public meeting planned for April 22nd. This meeting has been heavily promoted and will be the public's next opportunity to review Utile' work to date and provide additional input to the Master Planning process. A robust conversation followed this presentation, and additional notes were taken by the consultant for future analysis.



2026-04-03

Portsmouth Master |

Chair Ward requested updates from the working groups who all reported meeting and choosing a lead(er).

- 1) The Future of Work – Infrastructure needs, Workforce needs, Smart City, Education (CTE)orking Group: *Councilor Blalock, Vice Chair Lachance, Commissioner Cyr, Commissioner Goodrich*. *Commissioner Cyr* provided an update on a meeting which started to outline large categories of topics to be better defined and addressed. He also stated that this group would be a landing spot for hyper topical issues that the City Council might refer to the EDC in this realm. Also, more work needs to be done researching studies or previous efforts regarding “infrastructure” be it technology or workforce (human infrastructure) related.
- 2) Parking & Transportation
Working Group: *Commissioner Weidman, Commissioner Clement, S. Clancy, Commissioner Weidman* explained that there are key groups within the City addressing parking and in the future a task force will be formed to address public transportation. The group met and will continue to monitor efforts around **Parking and Transportation** for opportunities to monitor or join in with what is underway where the EDC wants to be more involved. Further, the group's conversation about parking efforts underway through PTS, including the 3rd garage forecast as well as now the RAPP pilot. In terms of transportation there is a plan to put a public transportation taskforce together to work with COAST and others around what possible improvements could be.
- 3) Arts, Culture, and Enrichment Working Group: *Councilor Flynn, Commissioner Howard Commissioner Howard* explained that there are other groups (PARC, Arts & Cultural Commission) within the City addressing these issues. The group met and will continue to monitor efforts around **Arts, Culture, and Enrichment** for opportunities to monitor or join what is underway where the EDC wants to be more involved. Anna mentions that the conversation has started and that more review is planned through PARC and ACC and connection with Councilor Cook who supports both Arts groups.

City Council Update – *Councilors Flynn and Blalock*

- *Councilor Blalock* provided as preview of the City Council meeting scheduled for April 6th.
- *Councilor Blalock* also provided an update from the Sister Cities Committee regarding a visit and gift of art from our Friendship City, Santarcangelo, Italy

Office of Economic Development Update: *S. Clancy*

- The Outdoor Dining application process is underway. We have 10 applications as of April 3rd and staff will begin reviewing them during the week of April 6th.
- COAST (public bus transit) is hosting a capital campaign on April 16th to close the funding gap on a new bus facility in Dover to serve the Seacoast
- Two email campaigns were launched (from CRM) in March: one to promote COAST to employers and one to invite the business community to participate in the Master Plan process live and/or via online survey

Chamber Collaborative Update – *B. VanCamp*

- The Chamber hosted a Housing (panel) event on March 31st.
- Spring Restaurant Week is scheduled for April 9th - April 18th.
- The Chamber is revamping its Tourism website www.goportsmouth.com
- It will include a new calendar tool incorporating some AI capabilities which the community has been requesting
- It “may” include a trip-builder planning tool in concert with the State of NH
- The Chamber is looking at re-purposing the Chamber Foundation effort to support workforce development and attraction. It will be complimented by software that will provide visitor data (more to come)

[Events Calendar - Chamber Sponsored Programs](#)

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