

FINAL
MEETING MINUTES OF THE
PORTSMOUTH ECONOMIC
DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION
August 7, 2026 7:30 AM- 9:00 AM

Members Present: Chair Andrew Ward, Vice Chair Sarah Lachance, Anne Weidman, Tom Watson, Anna Howard, Bob Marchewka, Joshua Cyr, Jason Goodrich, Phil Cohen, Ben VanCamp, Councilor Flynn

Absent (Excused): Wendy Clement; Councilor Blalock

Absent (Not Excused):

City Staff: City Manager Karen Conard, Assistant City Manager Sean Clancy

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

Chair Ward entertained a motion to accept the EDC meeting minutes from July 10, 2026. The motion was made by *Commissioner Watson* and seconded by *Commissioner Howard* to accept the minutes with a corrected date edit. The motion carried unanimously.

Vice Chair Ward summarized his conversation with the working group leads:

- The Parking and Transportation WG as well as the Arts, Culture, and Enrichment WG have confirmed that they have no new initiatives as the critical issues in their formation are covered by existing Commissions and/or City staff.
- The Future of Work WG will take the opportunity to take a mid-year reset to determine a priority initiative (or initiatives) to present to the full EDC.

Ben VanCamp

- Offered for consideration that the EDC may want to connect with other EDC's (or similar commissions) and seek an exchange of ideas up to and including reciprocal visits to share tactics or strategies which they have employed to improve the economic development or business environment of their municipality.

A robust conversation ensued. *Chair Ward* closed the conversation with a commitment that he and *Vice-Chair Lachance* would distill the discussion down to a path forward for the group.

City Council Update: *Councilor Flynn*

- Announced the Resident Access Parking Pilot work session scheduled for August 17 at 6:00pm
- Advised that the Vaughn Mall Redesign plan has been approved
- Shared her enthusiasm for the City Project Dashboard on the City website
- Advised that the Housing Action Plan was accepted and moves to the Planning Board for review
- Complimented the work of Councilor Hopkins on the Childcare issue
 - *Ben V.* advised that the next phase of work will continue

Office of Economic Development Update: *S. Clancy*

- Hotels and retailers are busier than this time last year
- More artists are planning to come to Portsmouth to “busk” on our sidewalks

- In 2025, for the third year in a row New Hampshire was voted the 2nd best state in the country to live in by U.S. News and World Report

Chamber Collaborative Update – *B. VanCamp*

- Preliminary data shows that visitors to Portsmouth are up 5% year-over year for July
- Also, visitor length of stay has decreased by 1.5% year over year for July
- Streetlife! is scheduled for Wednesday September 9th hosted by Water Country
- Annual Business Awards will be held on Wednesday December 2nd

[Events Calendar - Chamber Sponsored Programs](#)

Public Comment – none

Motion to adjourn by *Commissioner Howard* seconded by *Councilor Cohen*. The motion carried.

Meeting adjourned at 8:55am.

Submitted by,
Sean Clancy

Assistant City Manager for Economic & Community Development

**Next Meetings: September 11th at City Hall, October 2nd at City Hall,
November 6th, December 4th**