

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

September 11, 2026 7:30 AM- 8:30 AM

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

Absent (Excused): Joshua Cyr

Absent (Not Excused):

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

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

Chair Ward acknowledged the efforts and contributions of *Commissioner Howard* who is leaving the EDC at the end of September. Members thanked Commissioner Howard and wished her well.

Chair Ward entertained a motion to accept the EDC meeting minutes from August 7, 2026. The motion was made by *Commissioner Watson* and seconded by *Commissioner Howard* to accept the minutes. The motion carried unanimously.

Chair Ward outlined three areas of potential EDC focus and potential creation of working groups:

1. Initiate an effort to identify challenges or opportunities that similarly situated municipalities are facing and overcoming to improve their business environment and overall communities (Benchmark Similar Cities / Towns) *
2. Initiate a communications review (citizens – business – city staff – City Council) to determine improvements in the quality and potential quantity of communication **
3. Initiate a study of Cyber Security / Privacy issues to support the business community ***

**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

**Regarding #2, *City Manager Conard* suggested inviting Director of Communications Monte Bohanan to present recent communication initiatives and improvements to level set the EDC's research into this potential initiative.

****Vice Chair Lachance* offered to invite someone from the International Association of Privacy Professionals to a future EDC meeting to provide an orientation for Item #3 education

City Council Update: *Councilor Flynn /Councilor Blalock*

- Announced the Resident Access Parking Pilot work session was scheduled for Sept 14th
- There is a group investigation bringing a ½ Ironman event to the seacoast region
- The Sister City Committee is exploring establishing a special revenue mechanism to allow for hosting Sister City visitors in the future (specifically students from Santarcangelo, Italy)

Office of Economic Development Update: *S. Clancy*

- Congress Street (surface) work begins on Monday 9/14 and is scheduled to be complete by Friday October 30th
- There is an open Art RFP for the Hanover Garage (Percent for Art)
- A new Art exhibit is planned for the Portsmouth room – an opening reception is being planned for Monday September 28th
- The City continues to field inquiries for large events, a global art exhibit, securing a professional men's soccer team, etc.

Chamber Collaborative Update – *B. VanCamp*

- Nearly 300 people attended streetlife! At Water Country
- Preliminary data shows that visitors to Portsmouth are up 4% year-over year through August
- The Chamber's non-profit foundation has secured a \$10K grant from the NH Charitable Foundation to continue the work of Councilor Hopkins in exploring ways to increase the availability of Childcare in Portsmouth (and the region)
- Catapult – the Seacoast's young professionals association celebrated its 20th year anniversary recently
- The Chambers's statewide candidates' forums are currently in the planning stages
- The new GoPortsmouth.com website will launch by the end of September
- Annual Business Awards will be held on Wednesday December 2nd

[Events Calendar - Chamber Sponsored Programs](#)

Public Comment – none

Motion to adjourn by *Commissioner Goodrich* seconded by *Councilor Flynn*. The motion carried.

Meeting adjourned at 8:30am.

Submitted by,
Sean Clancy

Assistant City Manager for Economic & Community Development

**Next Meetings: October 2nd at City Hall, November 6th, at Portsmouth High School (CTE),
December 4th at City Hall**