

MEETING MINUTES OF THE PORTSMOUTH ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION

December 7, 2018

City Hall, Conference Room A

7:30 a.m.

Members Present: Cliff Lazenby, Nancy Pearson, Ron Zolla, Sarah Lachance, Tom Watson, Alan Gold, Katelyn Kwoka, and Dana Levenson (via phone)

Excused: Bob Marchewka, Chairman; Philip Cohen, Vice Chair; and Everett Eaton

City Staff: City Manager John P. Bohenko, Economic Development Program Manager Nancy Carmer

In the absence of Chairman Marchewka, City Councilor Lazenby served as Pro tem Chair and opened the meeting at 7:35 a.m.

Approval of draft meeting minutes of November 9, 2018

Commissioner Watson moved and Commissioner Gold seconded a motion to approve the draft meeting minutes of November 9, 2018. The motion carried unanimously.

Presentations

- Greater Portsmouth Chamber Collaborative semi-annual report on Tourism and Business Development, Valerie Rochon and Katti Mowers distributed copies and presented the report for the period June 1 – November 30, 2018. The report covered the following:
 - Frontier Airlines has started service to Portsmouth from Orlando. They are interested in inbound marketing. This has caused Allegiant to also be interested in marketing the destination.
 - Destination marketing including the Official Map and Harbor Guide to Portsmouth and the Seacoast and the Seacoast brochure that is popular in NH rest stops.
 - Rollout of experiential retail gift box for travel writers including Travel & Leisure Magazine and Forbes
 - Attendance and outcomes of Consumer Travel Shows in NYC, a new AAA Travel Show at Gillette Stadium in Foxborough (in lieu of the declining Boston Travel Show) and the MGM Show in Springfield, MA (in lieu of Connecticut Travel Show) and indirect marketing to Canada through the New England Travel Center and fam tours
 - Public relations consultant press results.
 - Analytics for the GoPortsmouth.com website
 - Visitor Center Survey results
 - Rooms and Meals revenues
 - Lodging Occupancy data (~80% in summer months)
 - Small business and economic development initiatives including the Manufacturing Roundtable, Portsmouth High School Career Technical Pathways Program, Trend Talks, Workforce Attraction/Retention/Housing, Transportation, and Education

Commissioners discussed the practice of targeting press versus Instagram or other social media outlets as well as the benefits (less cost and reaching a different traveler demographic) and drawbacks (poor blog posts) of using social media for destination marketing.

Also discussed was the challenges of the online booking feature of the GoPortsmouth.com created by website consultant Entopia. The firm is currently working on the compatibility issue between local hotels' online booking tool and the Chamber's web tool.

Lastly, Commissioner Watson raised the concept of employer contributions to a fund for development of workforce housing. Under this scenario, employee compensation would take into account the employer's

contributions for an employee housing unit constructed by a contracted developer. Commissioner Zolla thought that it might work for a short term subsidy versus a long-term asset due to costs inherent in housing development.

Project Updates

2019 Meeting Calendar and Action/Advocacy Plan options

EDC meeting calendars for 2019 were distributed as was an analysis of progress to date on the 2018 Action/Advocacy Plan for discussion at the January EDC meeting.

Public Comment - No members of the public were present to comment.

Confirm Next Regular Meeting: January 4, 2019 7:30 a.m.

Depart for Commerce Way Site Visit to 135 Commerce Way

Following meeting adjournment, at 8:20 a.m., members boarded a shuttle to a site tour of 135 Commerce Way in the Portsmouth Business Park.

Respectfully submitted,
Nancy Carmer
Economic Development Program Manager