

## MEETING MINUTES OF THE PORTSMOUTH ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION

January 4, 2019

City Hall, Conference Room A

7:30 a.m.

**Members Present:** Bob Marchewka, Chairman; Cliff Lazenby, Everett Eaton, Nancy Pearson, Katelyn Kwoka, Sarah Lachance, Tom Watson, Alan Gold, Ron Zolla (via phone), and Dana Levenson (via phone)

**Excused:** Philip Cohen, Vice Chair

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

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Chairman Marchewka opened the meeting at 7:35 a.m.

### **Approval of draft meeting minutes of December 7, 2018**

Commissioner Watson moved and Commissioner Gold seconded a motion to approve the draft meeting minutes of December 7, 2018. The motion carried unanimously.

### **Presentation/Discussion: Parking as an Economic Development Tool**

Public Works Director Peter Rice and Parking Director Ben Fletcher made a presentation on the City's Parking Division services and the current inventory and use of public parking as it relates to parking as an economic development tool. Mr. Fletcher noted the Division's \$1.13M budget is generated from public parking revenues and provides services for residents, local business and visitors. Parking revenues directly support the City's general fund, parking operations, downtown trash removal, school and senior transit, downtown trolley, local Coast Bus services and downtown police and fire services.

Mr. Fletcher reviewed new technology used in the City including smart meters and data-driven parking management for on-street inventory and in public garages. He also cited, *ParkMobile*, the new parking app that allows residents to access \$0.50 per hour discounted parking rates on-street and in surface lots. A graphic map was distributed to illustrate the City's inventory and annual occupancy rates in the downtown. The graphic included free municipal surface lots and the various parking zones. He noted that the new high occupancy parking rate will go into effect on February 15, 2019 as incentive to create turnover in the City's busiest areas.

A discussion ensued that included, parking diversity rates, the plan to accommodate demand during renovation of the High Hanover Parking Garage, transit options such as demand activated transportation, trolleys, traffic modeling for the growing West End, and a suggestion for marketing the resident rates implemented as a way to encourage city dwellers to visit and support downtown.

Relative to parking as a tool for business retention/attraction, a handout was distributed illustrating new downtown development projects in the land use permit pipeline as of October 2018. It was noted that the increase in parking inventory created by the new Foundry Place Garage and public and private surface lots combined with has resulted in new office users seeking space downtown combined with the economic rebound from the recent recession has generated inquiries about employee parking passes in the City's garages and other facilities. City Manager Bohenko said that the City is currently contemplating a potential employer subsidized parking program and he would like the EDC to revisit the outdated corporate discount parking policy created in 2009 for the High Hanover Garage.

### **Other Business/Project Updates**

- *2019 EDC Officer Elections*

City Manager asked for EDC officer nominations. Mr. Gold moved the nomination of Mr. Marchewka as EDC Chair for 2019. Motion seconded by Mr. Watson. The vote passed unanimously. Ms. Lachance moved the nomination of Mr. Cohen as EDC Vice-Chair for 2019. Motion seconded by Mr. Eaton. The vote passed unanimously.

- *2019 Action/Advocacy Plan options*

Members reviewed and commented on a progress summary of the 2018 EDC Action/Advocacy plan and on suggestions for the 2019 Plan. The consensus was to see the 2018 actions underway through to completion and then look to 2019 for the following:

1. EDC advocacy and monitoring of the McIntyre Redevelopment Historic Monument Program application and City land use process.
2. Monitoring legislation related to Workforce Housing in the state legislature (Commissioner Kwoka).
3. EDC presence at and monitoring of an upcoming comprehensive community parking discussion proposed by Councilor Dwyer (Councilor Lazenby).
4. Exploration of an effort to market the City for corporate events at new hospitality properties (Councilor Pearson).
5. Rollout of a series of resource sessions on topics of interest expressed in the 2017 Business Retention and Expansion survey (Commissioner Lachance and Nancy Carner).
6. Develop policies for requests by downtown office tenants for parking in public facilities.
7. Revisit the 2009 corporate policy for discounted downtown parking.

Ms. Carner will prepare a draft of the items discussed for 2019 to be separated into EDC action initiatives and monitoring initiatives.

- *McIntyre Building Redevelopment Project*

A public hearing on the draft application will be held during the January 7, 2019 City Council meeting.

### **Public Comment**

Mary Lou McElwain of 259 South Street voiced a concern about new development and the potential of larger tenants to supplant small, locally-owned businesses that characterizes downtown. She would like to see discussion on this topic in the future. Chairman Marchewka noted that one thing the City has in its favor regarding this concern is that the size of the typical downtown retail properties does not easily fit the model for national franchises.

David Choate of Colliers International noted that much of the proposed downtown development does not include office users. This is partially due to timing. It is difficult for developers to get signed commitments from such tenants before the permitting is complete. Regarding the McIntyre tenants, he said that, despite their desire to remain downtown, many of the current McIntyre tenants have signed leases outside the downtown because existing downtown inventory could not meet their relocation requirements. Finally, he asked for assistance from the EDC in his capacity serving on the CIBOR Public Policy Committee in identifying any new legislative bills in the state that would impact economic development.

**Confirm Next Regular Meeting:** February 1, 2019 7:30 AM

**Adjourn:** Following a motion by Ms. Kwoka, seconded by Mr. Watson, the EDC unanimously voted to adjourn.

Respectfully submitted,

Nancy Carmer  
Economic Development Program Manager