

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

February 1, 2019

City Hall, Conference Room A

7:30 a.m.

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

Excused:

City Staff: City Manager John P. Bohenko, Economic Development Program Manager Nancy Carmer, Planning Director Juliet Walker

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

Approval of draft meeting minutes of January 4, 2019

Commissioner Eaton moved and Commissioner Watson seconded a motion to approve the draft meeting minutes of January 4, 2019. The motion carried unanimously on a roll call vote.

Presentation/Discussion: Snapshot of Development projects outside the Downtown

Chairman Marchewka prefaced the presentation by Planning Director Juliet Walker noting that as a follow-up to last month's snapshot and discussion of development projects downtown, Ms. Walker is providing an overview of projects outside the downtown area.

Ms. Walker summarized current commercial development projects outside of the downtown that have been permitted or are permitted and under construction. She stated that aside from the projects she included in her overview, there are not that many projects currently pending approval. She added that some of the projects in the land use permitting pipeline as well as many of the remaining vacant parcels of land have challenges such as existing easements on the property, wetlands or other environmental constraints.

Areas seeing the most development and redevelopment include Pease (Lonza and Wentworth Douglass Hospital), Commerce Way (rezoning proposal underway from waterfront industrial to Office Research on Portsmouth Blvd.) and the Borthwick Forest commercial project. She said the Planning Department is seeing more development/redevelopment projects along the Lafayette Rd. corridor. There is a new connector road next to Service Credit Union site that connects to Lang Rd. Lens Doctor is also expanding at 605 Lafayette Rd. under the newer Gateway Zoning provisions that encourage parking in the rear rather than in front of the business. When asked about sidewalks along this corridor, Ms. Walker stated that this road is a state road but the City is working cooperatively with the state DOT to construct multi-use pedestrian paths through right of way agreements or easements.

She also mentioned that the City recently approved its first residential project in the Lafayette Corridor that includes long-term housing affordability covenants at 3510 Lafayette Rd. The project sets up extended workforce housing opportunity and a relationship with Portsmouth Housing Authority to manage the 24 affordable units which is located at the former Tortilla Flats site. Another area where workforce units are being considered is the CC Church on Market Street Extension.

Other residential projects include the Cate St. and 288 Peverly Hill townhouse projects, 90 units at 145 Brewery Lane and the former St. James Church site (these are all market rate). The multi-family project at 105 Bartlett St. has not yet been submitted for land use approval permits. In response to a question about what is driving the residential projects she noted that primarily they are market driven and perhaps reflect a rebound from the 2008 recession.

Discussion ensued on the pending North End development slated for a large conference center/parking/hotel project across the street from the Sheraton Harborside (project has all required permits), and the status of accessory dwelling units in the City (there has been a steady stream of permit applications and there is a pending zoning

amendment for units on non-conforming lots). In response to a question regarding the status of 278 State St. (former site of State St. Saloon), Ms. Walker responded that is currently before the Historic District Commission. Before closing, Ms. Walker stated that with the new growth that the City is experiencing the Planning Department is endeavoring to improve the connectivity between areas and where possible add more parks and open space.

Other Business/Project Updates

- *Revised 2019 Action/Advocacy Plan Adoption and assignments*
After reviewing the edited Action/Advocacy Plan goals, objections and action items as well as the Commissioner(s) assigned to facilitating each goal, Commissioner Kwoka moved and Commissioner Cohen seconded the motion to approve the Plan. The motion carried unanimously on a roll call vote. The Plan will be provided to the Planning Board and to the City Council under Assistant Mayor Lazenby and Councilor Pearson's name at a future City Council meeting.
- *Subcommittee updates*
The Subcommittee studying ways to streamline the Land Use Permit Process is completing interviews and plans to meet with the Planning Board Chair and Planning Director before reporting back to City Council in late March.
The Alternate Revenue Subcommittee will meet later this month to plan actions to reach out to other communities. City staff will be testifying in the next week on HB 641, a bill to enable municipalities to adopt a local hotel occupancy fee up to \$2 per night.
- *Other business*
Commissioner Gold asked if there is value in an off-site EDC retreat to discuss how the Commission aligns itself with the City Council and other needs of the City in order to be an effective advisory board. Consensus was that there is value to the retreat idea. City Manager Bohenko said the retreat is possible but the location must be accessible to the public. Staff will explore dates and locations and report back.

Commissioner Eaton asked about the usage of the public parking garages now that Foundry Place Garage is open. Ms. Carmer distributed a summary of the usage and closures at High Hanover Parking Garage (HHPG) for 2018 by quarter and for the Foundry Place Garage since opening. The HHPG experienced a low of 30 closure instances in Q1 2018 to a high of 60 in Q3. Average closure times were steady at about 1.5 hours. Since the opening of Foundry Place Garage in October 2018 there have been 19 closures at HHPG. Foundry Place has a total of 206 monthly pass holders to date and collections have risen 105% between November and December 2018. Commissioner Eaton also asked about a pedestrian crosswalk at the corner Deer St. and of Maplewood Ave. coming from the Foundry Garage. City Manager Bohenko said these crosswalks are being reviewed under the new development projects by Deer St Associates, but he will look into it.

Councilor Pearson asked if there was a plan to market the flex space at the garage and City manager Bohenko said he would speak to staff about that suggestion.

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

Confirm Next Regular Meeting: March 1, 2019 7:30 AM

Adjourn: Following a motion by Assistant Mayor Lazenby, seconded by Commissioner Kwoka, the EDC unanimously voted to adjourn.

Respectfully submitted,
Nancy Carmer
Economic Development Program Manager