

**City of Portsmouth, New Hampshire**  
**Portsmouth Citizen Response Task Force**  
**Remote meeting via Zoom**  
**Meeting Minutes for Wednesday, October 14, 2020, 2:00 P.M.**

**Call to Order**

Co-Chair James Petersen called the meeting to order at 2:00. City Manager Karen Conard represented staff and was the moderator. Patience Horton took minutes. This 20<sup>th</sup> general Citizen Response Task Force meeting lasted 50 minutes. Votes were taken with all in favor saying aye.

Task Force present:

1. Mark Stebbins, ProCon Construction, Co-Chair
2. James Petersen, Petersen Engineering, Co-Chair
3. Alan Gold, Economic Development Commission (City)
4. Karen Conard, City Manager
5. Ann Birner, PharmD (Health Care Professional)
6. Russ Grazier, PMAC (Non-profit)
7. Sarah Lachance, Economic Development Commission
8. John Golumb, Poco's Bow Street Cantina (Restaurant)
9. Kathryn Lynch, (Non-profit Health-care Organization)
10. Jim Lee, REMAX Shoreline (Real Estate)
11. Deborah Anthony, Gather Pantry Market (Non-profit)
12. Senator Martha Fuller Clark, NH State Senate District 21
13. Bianca Monteiro, York Pulmonary Associates (Health Care Professional)

Task Force absent:

14. Kim McNamara, Health Officer (via phone)
15. Valerie Rochon, President, Chamber Collaborative of Greater Portsmouth
16. Karen Bouffard, The Real Estate Market, Inc. (Real Estate)
17. Marylyn Morin, Pediatric Nurse Practitioner (Health Care Professional)
18. Jeffrey Goss, The Clipper Tavern (Restaurant)
19. Joe Scarlotto (Restaurant)

City Staff present:

1. Peter Rice, Director of Public Works
2. Stephanie Seacord, Public Information Officer
3. Joe Almeida, Facilities Manager
4. Todd Germain, Fire Chief
5. Patrick Howe, Deputy Fire Chief
6. Kristin Shaw, Deputy Health Administrator
7. Juliet Walker, City Planner
8. Mark Newport, Police Chief

Also present:

- 1) Petra Huda, City Councilor
- 2) Anne Weidman, Alliance of Portsmouth Design Professionals

- 3) Andrew Bagley, Board member, PopUpNH
- 4) Benjamin Newton

### **Welcome and Approval of Minutes**

- Motion: Jim Lee moved to approve the Minutes of October 7, 2020 as written. Kathy Lynch seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

### **Health Subcommittee Report**

#### **CRTF HEALTH SUBCOMMITTEE (HSC)**

October 14, 2020

By Ann Birner

“The subcommittee’s approved FAQ documents are all posted, with some undergoing revision in the working document format. The HSC is now proposing an FAQ called “Daily Lives”. The aim is to keep the community healthy and open by helping individuals to understand best behaviors and practices for risk reduction during the pandemic. It would, in a way, replace the “activity rating chart” brought to the TF recently. Members at that time expressed concern that the chart was not sufficiently relevant to local activities to justify posting on the city website. Proposed questions to be answered in the “Daily Lives” document were sent to CRTF members yesterday, and concerns or questions were solicited. There were no concerns expressed and there were several comments in favor of developing this document, which the HSC will now undertake to do.

“The Weekly Dashboard has been reformatted to increase the focus on NH, Rockingham County, and Portsmouth. Two new graphs created by Stephanie Seacord show NH and Rockingham County cases over the past 12 weeks on one graph, and NH hospitalizations and Portsmouth cases over the past 12 weeks on another. Case locations are based on residence so, for example, a person who commutes to Portsmouth for work and is COVID positive will not be counted as a Portsmouth case. The JHU data show concerning trends in NH – upward for cases and percent positivity and downward for number of tests. ME is stable, MA shows an increase in cases and positivity. Percent positivity is approaching 2% in NH. There is a note on the state website that UNH negative test data are not yet fully integrated into the report, will follow for integration. HSC members recently learned that while PCR positive cases are automatically reported to the state, point of care tests are called in. It is not clear what impact that may have on data in the dashboard.

“Stephanie Seacord replied in detail to the HSC’s earlier request for information on how often COVID-19 information is accessed on the city website. Overall, the information appears to be readily accessible to website’s target audience.

“Several Portsmouth restaurant closures have been publicized over the past few days. City Health reviewed for the HSC reporting procedures and clarified the roles of Portsmouth’s

Health Department and the state's Department of Health and Human Services. The state bears responsibility for contact tracing, including cases at restaurants; the city Health Department is not routinely notified. James noted that these closures were voluntary, and Ann commended the restaurateurs for their openness and concern for public safety.

“Questions:

1. When is ‘active’ case designated as ‘inactive’? [Ans.] Per Bianca, a negative test would be required. It is possible that some positive individuals, particularly those who are asymptomatic, will not undergo retesting.
2. Does the city Health Department have a role in reopening a restaurant once closed due to COVID-19 case(s)? [Ans.] No.”

*Report submitted by Ann Birner*

### **Streets/Fall/Winter Subcommittee Report**

Mark Stebbins: There are warm winter days in winter when people come out in droves from their houses, UNH, etc. Those are periods of a couple of days or a week or so when every day is going to mean something. How do we get people back on the street without keeping the Jersey barriers out there? We've got to come up with some kind of temporary barrier that the restaurants can put up from (for example) 11:00 A.M.-on and take down at night so they can take advantage of those days. Could the barriers be orange cones—something like that? There should be something they can have available and put in the street for days over 40 or 45 degrees. I think Peter Rice and the staff should be talking about that.

James Petersen: Among other attractive winter days that brings people out is when the sun is out, it is not windy, and though it might be only twenty-five degrees, people are still coming out and about.

Karen Conard: We have assisted about 20 out of the 40 restaurants we permitted with extensions to November 1. Valerie Rochon sent out an email on October 9 to all the restaurants to determine if they wish to stay open past November 1, and if so, what would they be thinking about in terms of accommodations and how they plan for folks to dine outside.

Ann Weidman: We need a solid rationale for City Council to approve outdoor dining in the public domain during winter. Would it be better if some sort little idea book was put together to show what outdoor service could look like? We might think of a central City-sanctioned outdoor gathering-place that is unaffiliated with the restaurants where people could bring their own takeout.

Deputy Fire Chief Patrick Howe: Firepits are more decorative than heat-producing. If the purpose is just to gather a crowd, then the firepits may be appropriate for that purpose. However, they can't be left unattended. On city property, a city staff member would have to be there the entire time. Portable radiant gas-powered heaters are what are designed to heat.

We are approving them. You can be farther away and still be comfortable. Still, it is an open flame and takes constant attendance.

### **Bridge St. Lot Subcommittee Report**

Russ Grazier: This is the final weekend of the PopUp. The conversation at the committee level has turned toward quantifying and being able to describe the impact of the PopUp over the summer. We are working on gathering detailed information that can be shared with the city and the community on the impact the activity. We want to have a very clear idea about what happened this summer so we know what went well and what needs to be improved.

### **Other Business**

Karen Conard: The upcoming November 9 work session is dedicated to the CRTF, its origin, evolution, and future. The work session will be a give-and-take interaction between staff and the Councilors. It is deliberative and is intended to generate conversation. Public comment will be available. As many members of the Task Force should participate as possible.

Mark Stebbins: We need to tell the City Council that we can't let this go. Under Alan Gold's leadership, we have to start planning this winter for next spring and start thinking about how we can become more effective and make Portsmouth more of a star community than it became this summer.

Russ Grazier: We are foolish if we're not prepared.

### **Adjourn**

- Motion: Mark Stebbins moved to adjourn. Alan Gold seconded, and the group agreed unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,  
Patience Gifford Horton  
Recorder