

**City of Portsmouth, New Hampshire**  
**Portsmouth Citizen Response Task Force**  
**Remote meeting via Zoom**  
**Meeting Minutes for Tuesday, November 18, 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 25<sup>th</sup> 2020 Citizen Response Task Force meeting lasted forty-five minutes. Votes were taken with a show of hands.

Task Force present:

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

Task Force absent:

13. Mark Stebbins, ProCon Construction, Co-Chair
14. Martha Fuller Clark, NH State Senate District 21
15. Valerie Rochon, President, Chamber Collaborative of Greater Portsmouth
16. Karen Bouffard, The Real Estate Market, Inc. (Real Estate)
17. Jeffrey Goss, The Clipper Tavern (Restaurant)
18. Joe Scarlotto (Restaurant)

City Staff present:

1. Stephanie Seacord, Public Information Officer
2. Joe Almeida, Facilities Manager
3. Todd Germain, Fire Chief
4. Mark Newport, Police Chief
5. Patrick Howe, Deputy Fire Chief
6. Kristin Shaw, Deputy Health Officer
7. Peter Rice, DPW Director
8. Nancy Carmer, Economic Development Director

Also present were:

1. Anne Weidman, Alliance of Portsmouth Design Professionals
2. Andrew Bagley, Board member, PopUpNH

## **I. Welcome & Approval of November 10, 2020 Minutes**

- Motion: Jim Lee moved to approve the minutes of November 10, 2020 as written. Sarah Lachance seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

## **II. Recommendation to Council re: CRTF 2.0**

James Petersen's review of "Rough Notes from CRTF Recommendations to City Council for 11/23/20" prompted the following discussion. [James's complete outline is at the end of these Minutes.]

- **On Money**

**Karen Conard:** Any consideration of a Task Force 2.0 to request funds would require a specific breakdown of costs. Costs have to be identified.

- **On Reporting**

**Karen Conard:** The subcommittees should be consistent about sharing their agendas with Stephanie so they become part of the central site for information.

**Stephanie Seacord:** There is a CRTF page that is updated when the Minutes and videos are available. I created a banner on the home page with a link to that page.

- **On Committees**

**Karen Conard:** I think it should be understood by everybody that the Task Force functions best when it breaks into subgroups. The way subcommittees are created and what they tackle should be formalized.

- **On CRTF tenure**

**Alan Gold:** The Task Force should run until it is not needed and the City Council votes to close it.

**Kim McNamara:** We are hopeful about the vaccine, but that is only available for vulnerable populations. It isn't possible to set an end date for the length of the Task Force.

- **On Filling Vacancies**

**Russ Grazier:** The mayor appointed all of us. I don't see any reason to change that process. People apply, and the Mayor approves it. We should encourage individuals to apply.

**Kathy Lynch:** The sooner we can get someone onto the Health Subcommittee to overlap with Ann Birner’s tenure, the easier it will be for us to move forward.

**Ann Weidman:** I’m not officially here, but I am always here. If Rich DiPentima is going to move forward, why doesn’t he just log in so he can come up to speed? There is nothing preventing him for doing that.

**III. The Streets/Fall/Winter Subcommittee** did not meet, reported Karen Conard. They are pending further guidance from the City Council.

**IV. The Bridge Street Lot Subcommittee:** Russ Grazier: Mark Stebbins and Russ Grazier met with a few of the Board members of PopUpNH, which has their books together, and they have worked on getting everything off the lot. They are preparing a detailed financial report to give to the City Council. Their fiscal year ends at the end of March.

The economic impact was meaningful, Russ said. We heard that Evan Mallet, owner of the Black Trumpet, said that if the PopUp had not happened this year, he seriously doubts that his business would exist today.

## **V. Health Subcommittee Report**

### **CRTF HEALTH SUBCOMMITTEE MEETING NOTES**

**November 18, 2020**

**By Ann Birner**

“The weekly dashboard speaks for itself, with graphs showing sharp rises in cases, hospitalizations and positivity. As previously discussed, there are various methods for calculating positivity (percent positive) so that depending on the source, numbers will vary. To best understand positivity, it is important to look at trends over time from the same sources; for example, this week vs last week for NH and Rockingham County at the top, the rolling averages in the center of the page for NH/MA/ME, or the NH graph over time just above the US map in the lower right. Also, in the center page section, the number of cases (per million) are rising in all 3 states. It was noted that all of NH is now showing “substantial community transmission” on the map in the upper right corner and is designated as a state with “uncontrolled spread” by Covid Exit Strategy.

“The situation is worrisome. Pandemic fatigue, desire to celebrate the holidays, and perhaps anticipation of vaccine availability may all contribute to lack of attention to risk reduction behaviors and strategies. City staff has a number of ongoing efforts intended to encourage adherence to these measures, and many news media outlets are discussing this as well.

“Changes are proposed to the Daily Life FAQ as follows:

- Update to the description of contact tracing in 2 places. This was necessitated by the State of NH's change to its contact tracing procedures as announced on November 12th. No longer will every case of COVID-19 be subject to contact tracing; it will be undertaken only in specified populations. The decision has been challenged by the NH Science and Public Health Task Force but stands for now. The FAQ would no longer be accurate without these revisions.
- Added language in italics, describing the rationale for "avoiding the 3 C's" as follows. "The virus spreads person to person on airborne droplets, so gatherings of any kind – where even one or two people might unknowingly be carrying the virus – put everyone in that gathering at higher risk. They then have the potential to spread the virus back to their homes, work, relatives and friends". Concerns regarding holiday travel and a desire to further explain the risks are behind this proposed change."
- Motion: A motion to ratify these changes was made by Russ Grazier seconded by Kathryn Lynch and approved.

"Finally, thanks to Kim McNamara and Bianca Monteiro for representing City Health and the HSC on Friday's 'Chamber Chat'."

*Submitted by Ann Birner*

James Petersen: One of the unfortunate things about membership on the Health Subcommittee is that we don't have the privilege of sharing good news—yet. We look forward to that day.

Karen Conard: During the latest City Council meeting, I made a point to say that the Health Subcommittee in particular has been invaluable as a resource to the very taxed and limited resources of our three-person health department. And that is not to diminish the many-talented Kim McNamara, Kristin Shaw, and Toni McLellan. It just adds to the wealth and depth and breadth.

## **The Final Word**

Kim McNamara: There are no indicators that are good in any realm. No one should expect that we're going to get through Thanksgiving if there is the amount of travel that AAA is saying is still expected. *We are not talking about groups of ten that are being risky. We are talking about groups of two who don't live in the same household that is risky right now.* There are far more infections out there than the numbers capture, because there is always a lag. It takes five days for a test to be resulted and another amount of time for it to be reported. You can expect that there is far more infection out in our community than our residential numbers show, because the State numbers only show Portsmouth residents who are currently infected. The amount of people who come into Portsmouth vary for reasons—to go to school, shop, to eat out, get health care, or to come to work. I am extremely

worried about Thanksgiving to the point where I have a grandson I want to see, and I just am not going to see him for the reasons that we are talking about. You cannot do Thanksgiving dinner safely because you cannot eat with a mask, and you generally don't stay at least six feet away from each other. Particularly with people traveling from areas that have even higher rates than ours, I am very worried.

## **Adjourn**

- Motion: Jim Lee moved to adjourn. Karen Conard seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,  
Patience G. Horton,  
Recording Secretary

Addendum

### **Rough notes from CRTF Recommendations to City Council for 11/23/20 By James Petersen**

#### **Size**

- Skill sets, add health care professional
- Diversity of industry, hospitality, pp who want to be engaged
- People who want a seat at the table
- Look at mission first, then recruit to suit, update Charge
- Rich DiPentima – applied originally, health care professional
- Need sufficient bodies to staff sub-committees
- ID skillsets we need – arts and entertainment, health, hospitality, city event experience, designers Health input essential

#### **New People**

- Allow non-residents
- Limit % of non-residents, key functions not filled by residents filled by non-residents
- How to add members? Rich is great candidate, experience with outbreaks, understands pandemics
- Apply, Mayor appoints, worked well and can work well again, TF encourages pp to apply
- Subcommittee membership only? Timing of approval of appointments.
- Need substitute for Ann, move on Rich, Rich is welcome to join meetings now like Anne Weidman does

#### **Money**

- Rather than receive an amt of money, request money for a specific project from Council (concern with politics, will slow us down, 1.0 approach worked,

don't slow TF down, trust the TF instead for it to work well, Council can intervene, counter argument – CC requested specific breakdown of costs, hard to do, difficult)

- Suggest early winter appropriation, then approve funds as needed/requested

We don't know what we don't know

Include “contingency” amount for unforeseen

**Reg meeting time** – already do this

### **Reporting**

- Include minutes in packets? Makes part of public record
- Email minutes the day they are issued
- YouTube list serve, all info in one place, page kept up to date
- Find best way to raise awareness, let people know,
- Sub com to post agendas

### **Committees**

1. Health Subcommittee is instrumental  
Other professionals helped manage rapid rate of new information  
Committee chooses accurate resources, health dept needs the help right now
  2. Streets
  3. Non-profit performing arts and culture, entertainment  
Medical, arts & entertainment hit very hard  
Vulnerable populations not represented  
Travel, transit  
Micro businesses, the very small businesses
- CRTF – creation of subcommittees an important aspect of effectiveness of CRTF, subcommittee within purview of CRTF

### **Council Membership**

- TF is like a blue-ribbon committee, defined start and end date, not necessary include a Councilor, why is it important to include a Councilor?
- Meetings open to CC, no purpose served, all are welcome to join meetings

### **CRTF tenure**

- Authorizing TF on monthly basis, or short increments in general, will not work
- TF runs until CC votes to close out TF
- Hopeful about vaccine however sufficient production remains unknown

*Submitted by James Petersen*