

**City of Portsmouth, New Hampshire**  
**Portsmouth Citizen Response Taskforce**  
**Remote meeting via Zoom**  
**Meeting Minutes for Wednesday, August 19, 2020, 2:00 P.M.**

**Call to Order**

Co-Chair James Petersen and called the meeting to order at 2:00. Deputy City Manager Nancy Colbert Puff represented staff and was the moderator. Patience Horton took minutes. This meeting, the 13<sup>th</sup> general Taskforce meeting, lasted one hour.

Taskforce present:

1. Co-chair James Petersen, Principal, Petersen Engineering
2. Co-chair Mark Stebbins, Principal, PROCON, Inc. (Hotel Industry)
3. Senator Martha Fuller Clark, NH State Senate District 21
4. Russ Grazier, PMAC (Non-profit)
5. Ann Birner, PharmD (Health Care Professionals)
6. Kathryn Lynch, (Non-profit Health-care Organization)
7. Karen Bouffard, The Real Estate Market, Inc. (Real Estate)
8. Valerie Rochon, President, Chamber Collaborative of Greater Portsmouth
9. Deborah Anthony, Gather Pantry Market (Non-profit)
10. Alan Gold, Economic Development Commission
11. Dr. Bianca Monteiro, York Pulmonary Associates (Health Care Professional)
12. Sarah Lachance, City Economic Development Commission

Taskforce absent:

13. Marylyn Morin, Pediatric Nurse Practitioner (Health Care Professional)
14. Jim Lee, REMAX Shoreline (Real Estate)
15. Samantha Finigan, Gus & Ruby Letterpress (Retail Business)
16. City Health Officer Kim McNamara
17. Jeffrey Goss, The Clipper Tavern (Restaurants)
18. Joe Scarlotto (Restaurants)
19. Nathan Moss, Citizen-at-large
20. John Golumb, Poco's Bow Street Cantina (Restaurants)
21. Karen Conard, City Manager

City Staff present:

1. Peter Rice, Director of Public Works
2. Todd Germain, Fire Chief
3. Stephanie Seacord, Public Information Officer
4. Joe Almeida, Facilities Manager
5. Kristin Shaw, Deputy Health Officer
6. Juliet Walker, City Planner
7. Nancy Colbert Puff, Deputy City Manager
8. Robert Merner, Police Chief

Also present:

- 1) Petra Huda, City Councilor
- 2) Anne Weidman, Portsmouth Professional Alliance/JSA Architects
- 3) Andrew Bagley, Board member, PopUpNH
- 4) Laura Brown, Board member, PopUpNH

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

- Motion: Kathryn Lynch moved to approve the Minutes of August 12, 2020, with clarifications in the Health Report; a name correction; a job title correction; and James Petersen's description of winter corrected. Ann Birner seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

### **Health Subcommittee Report**

Ann Birner writes: City Council met last night (Wednesday, August 18, 2020) for the second reading of the proposed Mask Ordinance. Ann Birner listened to the reading, public comments, and council deliberation. Numerous amendments were proposed, voted on, and will be incorporated into a revision which will undergo a third reading on August 31<sup>st</sup>. The impression was that the Council favors an approach that is simple to understand and enforce and will focus on education and discretionary enforcement. The Health Subcommittee will review the updated document in detail as soon as it becomes available.

The subcommittee met yesterday. Topics included

- Ventilation – James is educating members on this topic as relevant to moving activities indoors as the weather changes. The subcommittee will gather information including guidance for the pandemic era. Discussions are underway as to how best to use and disseminate as we get further along in this process.
- Public Information – Bianca and Ann presented a discussion on the work of the subcommittee last Friday on the “Chamber Chat” as organized by Valerie Rochon, Chamber President. Two letters discussed at the last CRTF meeting (one to Governor Sununu and one to area towns, on the topic of mask ordinances) remain unsent and in draft form pending decision on Portsmouth's proposed ordinance.
- COVID-19 Testing – the subcommittee has an “FAQ” document in development. It is intended primarily for public information and will be written using lay terminology at an appropriate reading level. Focus will be on kinds of test, where and how to get tested in Portsmouth, and relative accuracy of the various tests. Testing capacity is likely to be in flux so will not be included, but a summary may be presented to this group in the future.
- COVID-19 Dashboard was presented. NH and MA have changed the graphics on their respective websites. MA did not report by county this week so summary data were limited to US/NH/Rockingham County/Portsmouth. Given the limited space

on this document and the Subcommittee's perception of threat from the South being greater than threat from the North, ME data were not shown in the upper section. NH/ME/MA data from Johns Hopkins (center of page) are shown as before, with generally favorable data this week. US "hot spots" and NH positivity data at bottom have not changed dramatically. *This section was written by Ann Birner specifically for the August 19, 2020, CRTF Minutes.*

### **Bridge St Lot Subcommittee Discussion**

Russ Grazier. The PopUpNH had a good second weekend. There was a concert on Saturday. The social distancing is remarkable. Everything is so spread out that it looks nearly empty. ADA access has been added. The Wilder, Dos Amigos, and Vida Cantina were the featured restaurants this weekend. Feedback from the neighborhood has been positive. Parking in the Foundry Garage for PopUp events has been successful. The retail end of things has not been added, but that is being worked on. Putting popups for retailers on Bridge St, which is totally closed, is being investigated during today's 4:00 subcommittee meeting.

Andrew Bagley: There are 10 tables that can sit up to six people, and two tables that can sit two people each. From time to time, people have had to wait to get it. The performers are very pleased to have a safe space to perform in again. We've been on the front page of the Herald several times.

Laura Brown: The tables are always full. As soon as a table opens up, we have people to sit down. Most of the performances have been sold out. We have just the right amount of promotion. For publicity, we use a weekly email, our own Facebook page, and both the official and unofficial City of Portsmouth pages.

### **Streets Subcommittee Update**

Juliet Walker: At the Staley, café tables on the sidewalk and parking spaces for pedestrian access have been accepted by the Streets Subcommittee. Once the construction on the Maplewood/Deer St corner is no longer encumbering sidewalk passage, there will be pedestrian access all the way to Maplewood. At Barrio in the 3S Artspace on Raynes Ave, there is sidewalk dining and three parking spaces, as well.

- Motion: Martha Fuller Clark move to ratify the sidewalk and parking space configurations for the Staley and Barrio. Alan Gold seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

Nancy Colbert Puff: The City Manager has implemented six 30-minute parking spaces in the Worth lot since parking in the Bridge Street lot is out of commission.

## **Old Business—Fall/Winter, Moving Indoors**

Mark Stebbins: We are looking for the magic bullet that is going to get us through the middle of winter.

Russ Grazier: What can we do to support indoor performance space for the community? The Music Hall, 3S Artspace, and Seacoast Rep hope to create the safest possible space for indoor performance this winter. The City should be able to support them in realistic ways.

Stephanie Seacord: The Health Subcommittee is working with James Petersen on the whole ventilation question, getting our hands around the filter, ionization, the UV light—all those different things that are floating in the air, pun intended.

James Petersen: The Health Department has a difficult job helping navigate what is safe and what is not when people assemble indoors. The pandemic poses uncharted territory for determining indoor safety for the entire HVAC industry. Health experts and building professionals can help assess risk of indoor assembly. What is difficult is in finding balance between risk to health and the need to support businesses that rely on indoor assembly. Deciding on the right balance may be outside of the purview of the Health Department as it includes an economic component.

Anne Weidman: The potential for use of the Bridge Street lot for Winter Carnival is the subject of the 3:00 Streets Subcommittee meeting. Stephanie Seacord: Strawberry Banke and the rink are part of that conversation.

Stephanie Seacord: There are signs around town saying that wearing a mask is some kind of draconian, authoritarian effort. She expects that the City of Portsmouth and other Facebook groups will address and stop it.

Peter Rice: The foundry use is up 56%, and the Hanover use is up 60-70% since last weekend. There is adequate capacity at both garages, but they are not at the peak summer rates we would like to see.

Adjourn

- Motion: Valerie Rochon moved to adjourn. Martha Fuller Clark seconded. The motion passed unanimously. It was 3:00.

Respectfully submitted,  
Patience Horton  
Recorder