

City of Portsmouth, New Hampshire
Portsmouth Citizen Response Task Force
Remote meeting via Zoom
Meeting Minutes for Wednesday, September 16, 2020, 2:00 P.M.

Call to Order

Co-Chair James Petersen called the meeting to order at 2:00. Nancy Colbert Puff, Deputy City Manager, represented staff and was the moderator. Patience Horton took minutes. This conversation-dense, 16th general Citizen Response Task Force meeting lasted one hour. Votes were taken with a show of hands.

Task Force present:

1. James Petersen, Petersen Engineering, Co-Chair
2. Ann Birner, PharmD (Health Care Professional)
3. Russ Grazier, PMAC (Non-profit)
4. Valerie Rochon, President, Chamber Collaborative of Greater Portsmouth
5. Alan Gold, Economic Development Commission (City)
6. Bianca Monteiro, York Pulmonary Associates (Health Care Professional)
7. Sarah Lachance, Economic Development Commission (City)
8. John Golumb, Poco's Bow Street Cantina (Restaurant)
9. Kathryn Lynch, (Non-profit Health-care Organization)
10. Samantha Finigan, Gus & Ruby Letterpress (Retail Business)

Task Force absent:

11. Karen Conard, City Manager
12. Mark Stebbins, ProCon Construction, Co-Chair
13. Kim McNamara, Health Officer (City)
14. Jim Lee, REMAX Shoreline (Real Estate)
15. Deborah Anthony, Gather Pantry Market (Non-profit)
16. Senator Martha Fuller Clark, NH State Senate District 21
17. Karen Bouffard, The Real Estate Market, Inc. (Real Estate)
18. Marylyn Morin, Pediatric Nurse Practitioner (Health Care Professional)
19. Jeffrey Goss, The Clipper Tavern (Restaurant)
20. Nathan Moss, Citizen-at-large
21. 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. Kristin Shaw, Deputy Health Officer
5. Robert Merner, Police Chief
6. Nancy Carmer, Economic Development Commission Manager
7. Patrick Howe, Deputy Fire Chief
8. Nancy Colbert Puff, Deputy City Manager

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: Valerie Rochon moved to approve the Minutes of September 9, 2020, as written. John Golumb seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

Health Subcommittee Report

CRTF HEALTH SUBCOMMITTEE MEETING NOTES 15SEPTEMBER2020

The City mask ordinance was approved on September 14th. The Task Force was reminded that 2 letters on this topic were previously approved but delayed to await the final vote by the Council. The letter to other municipalities will be individualized depending on the circumstances in that community, as some have acted on masking proposals. The second letter goes to Governor Sununu. The subcommittee's recent suggestions as ratified by the TF (see memo to City Council dated 8/26/20) were not incorporated into the ordinance.

The subcommittee has created a series of Frequently Asked Question (FAQ) documents. "Masks" was created and approved by the CRTF for the City Council's reference but is also available to the public; "Testing" was the first FAQ specifically created and approved for public use; "Ventilation" is in near-final draft form. The Health SC proposed a process that would expedite creation of and updates to these documents in the face of rapidly changing information relevant to the pandemic. Piloting with "Ventilation", a page on the City website would be created for posting each FAQ document. The CRTF would approve an FAQ conceptually and, once written and posted, members would be able to provide feedback. Discussion ensued strongly suggesting that task force members prefer such documents to be provided for review, not just as concepts, prior to approval. The proposed process was subsequently modified as follows: FAQs will be posted on a shared drive visible to voting TF members with a request for commentary within a specified time period, typically 48 hours. The Health SC will then finalize the document and present to the TF at a regularly scheduled meeting for approval before posting for public access on the City website. This approach was supported by general consensus (vote not required).

Requested to add to Ventilation FAQ:

- questions business owners may get from customers regarding their ventilation
- questions business owners should ask landlords about ventilation of their space

The weekly dashboard was shown. Format for the JHU graphics in the center of the page now runs across state by state (NH then ME then MA, left to right) with data for each state vertically beneath the state name. Explanation of “% Positive” was expanded on the dashboard to include World Health Organization recommendation of <5% as a reference point. In NH recently we have rising cases and falling testing (as a reminder, broad testing is favorable). Although below 5%, the fact that percent positivity is on an upward trend is also worrisome. Will continue to follow.

The subcommittee has discussed a study recently published as an [MMWR report](#). The study has limitations but along with other available evidence, the subcommittee concludes there is ample reason for concern regarding certain activities and gatherings, especially over the next few months as progressively more time will be spent indoors. An example is eating and drinking at restaurants and bars (one limitation of the study is that the researchers did not distinguish between indoor and outdoor dining at restaurants). Multiple risk factors such as being indoors, increasing exhalation associated with raised voices, unmasking, close proximity to others, people from many different communities gathering in one place, etc. all may coincide in these settings. *Submitted by Ann Birner.*

James Petersen: The Ventilation FAQ is new. It contains information on the best way to ventilate. It is a working document. It should get some sort of approval showing that the whole group is headed in the right direction with the FAQ format.

- Motion: Valerie Rochon moved to approve a Ventilation FAQ. Kathryn Lynch seconded.

In discussion, Valerie said it is important to not just have recommendations, but answers. The motion passed unanimously.

- Motion: A Birner moved that the FAQs that have been developed or are in development by the Health Subcommittee would be, once approved conceptually by the Task Force, developed and put on the website. Then everyone would be free to review them and provide feedback, if necessary. Kathryn Lynch seconded. The motion passed unanimously. [It was later withdrawn and replaced with something different.]

John Golumb: I would like to have FAQs verified by the general CRTF before it goes on the website. The group had a lengthy discussion and changed the strategy for approving the CRTF FAQ format.

- Motion: Ann Birner moved that FAQs from the Health Subcommittee will go onto a Google Doc accessible to all voting Task Force members. There will be a 48-hour window for feedback, which should be in the form of comments, rather than

on-line editing or revision. The Health Subcommittee will revise the document following the 48-hour comment period and present it at the next Task Force meeting for approval before making it public.

There was no second. In discussion, Russ Grazier said that it is good policy but does not need a vote. Ann said that was a good point. We started off asking for pre-approval, and that has gone away, she said.

The motion was withdrawn.

Streets/Fall/Winter Subcommittee Report

James Petersen: The chair, Mark Stebbins, is not here. I don't know if there were any approvals of new road closures in the last week.

Valerie Rochon brought the task force up to date about the 33 heaters that the Chamber has now paid for but have not been delivered.

James Petersen: We were recommending that the permits be extended to October 31 for both the Bridge Lot and Streets. The variable is that the State has to extend the liquor license which ends on October 1.

Russ Grazier: We have no idea if the Governor is going to extend the Emergency Order by three weeks past September 30 or not.

Peter Rice: We are gearing to clear up the streets at the end of October. Unless directed otherwise, we move quickly. We are planning to get the roads cleared up then.

Bridge St Lot Subcommittee Report

Russ Grazier: Things are going on as smoothly as they can be expected at the Bridge Street lot. We have gotten some feedback from neighbors who are concerned it will go beyond October 31.

Moving Indoors/Staying Outdoors

James: We have had to rebrand the Streets Committee, the "Winter Survival Committee."

Russ Grazier: This issue might last longer than just this calendar year. I think we are going to incur a significant amount of cost if we decide to repeat the PopUp next year. We would have to deconstruct the five sheds and take them off the lot. They take up 13 parking spaces. I would like to put forward the idea of sealing and maintaining those sheds for the winter, keeping them on the spaces they occupy. If we decide that that's not needed later, they can be removed easily.

Peter Rice: I had the opportunity to speak about this with North Sturtevant, and I explained to him the challenges we feel are relative to maintaining the sheds on that location. We do not recommend pursuing that. We think you are better off finding alternative locations. The sheds are easily disassembled and reassembled. They were intended that way. I don't recommend keeping the sheds on site for this winter. There are policy hurdles that I think would be more challenging than we are trying to do at this time.

Valerie Rochon: There are businesses that want to see Bridge Street Lot coming back to full parking at the end of October.

Nancy Colbert Puff: The Task Force is currently scheduled to serve through the end of this year. I think some of the conversation for existing services and work that go beyond December 31 should be discussed so we know whether our charter needs to be changed and what extensions the charter might need.

James: I think you're right. It is time to think about that.

John Golumb: The outside dining should end October 31 and not go any further. We need to start focusing on inside dining and what we can do to survive with that.

Anne Weidman and Nancy Colbert Puff showed slides illustrating winter goings-on in Chicago and Quebec City.

Adjourn

- Motion: John Golumb moved to adjourn. Alan Gold seconded. The motion passed unanimously. It was 3:00.

Respectfully submitted,
Patience Gifford Horton
CRTF Recorder