

**City of Portsmouth, New Hampshire**  
**Portsmouth Citizen Response Taskforce**  
**Remote meeting via Zoom**  
**Meeting Minutes for Wednesday, July 15, 2020; 2:00 P.M.**

**Call to Order; Determination of Quorum**

Co-Chair James Petersen determined a quorum and called the meeting to order at 2:00. City Manager Karen Conard represented staff and was the moderator. Patience Horton took minutes. Her observations are included in [brackets]. This quick, intensively action-packed, meeting lasted one hour.

**Taskforce present:**

1. Co-chair James Petersen, Principal, Petersen Engineering
2. Russ Grazier, PMAC, Non-profit
3. Valerie Rochon, President, Chamber Collaborative of Greater Portsmouth
4. Ann Birner, Pharmacist, Retired Health Care Professional
5. Dr. Bianca Monteiro, York Pulmonary Associates, Health Care Professional
6. Jeffrey Goss, The Clipper Tavern, Restaurant Owner
7. John Golumb, Poco's Bow Street Cantina, Restaurant Owner
8. Samantha Finigan, Gus & Ruby Letterpress, Retail Business Owner
9. Jim Lee, REMAX Shoreline, Real Estate Business
10. Karen Bouffard, The Real Estate Market, Real Estate Business
11. Marylyn Morin, Pediatric Nurse Practitioner, Health Care Professional
12. Deb Anthony, Gather Pantry Market, Non-profit Director
13. Karen Conard, **City Manager**
14. Health Officer Kim McNamara, **City Health Officer**
15. Alan Gold, **City Economic Development Commissioner**
16. Sarah Lachance, **City Economic Development Commissioner**

**Taskforce absent:**

17. Co-chair Mark Stebbins, Principal, PROCON, Hotel Industry Professional
18. Senator Martha Fuller Clark, NH State Senate District 21 Representative
19. Kathryn Lynch, Non-profit Health-care Organization, Little League Umpire
20. Joe Scarlotto, Restaurant Owner
21. Nathan Moss, Citizen-at-large

**Other City Staff present:**

1. Peter Rice, Director of Public Works
2. Nancy Carmer, Economic Development Manager
3. Stephanie Seacord, Public Information Officer
4. Joe Almeida, Facilities Manager
5. Robert Merner, Police Chief
6. Juliet Walker, Director of Planning

**Also present:**

1. Petra Huda, City Councilor

2. Anne Weidman, JSA Architects
3. Andrew Bagley, Popup Portsmouth Independent Working Group

## **I. Minutes**

- Motion: Jim Lee moved to approve the Minutes of July 9, 2020, as written. Alan Gold seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

## **II. Health Subcommittee—update, mask use**

**Ann Birner:** It appears that infections in New Hampshire and Maine are decreasing. Massachusetts appears to be staying the same. Becoming intimidated and treated aggressively by customers who do not wish to wear masks has been a problem for some businesses downtown.

**Kim McNamara:** It is difficult to get data about how we are affected by the areas in adjacent Maine and Massachusetts. Neither available are details about statistics for Portsmouth, other than numbers of cases and numbers of deaths.

**Valerie Rochon:** We don't have tracking feedback from hotels yet. People largely come here from parts of Massachusetts, Boston particularly, New York, Connecticut, Montreal, Toronto, Vermont, parts of Maine, and throughout New Hampshire—pretty much in that order. The day trippers are three times the number of folks who stay in hotels.

**Bianca Monteiro** (who works at York Hospital): Maine is tracking mostly through Airbnbs and hotels. It would be helpful if we could, too. A Texas family with five Covid cases flew into Boston and drove into York County. In Maine, infected visitors are required to quarantine in their hotels.

**Karen Conard:** Last Monday night (July 13), the City Council passed a mask-mandate resolution unanimously. The resolution requires face coverings be worn at all times when people are unable to socially distance in the city. The Council will be working with City Attorney Sullivan later this week to create a formal ordinance. Potentially, there might be penalties for non-compliance.

## **III. Bridge Lot (Pop-up Portsmouth) Subcommittee—Update**

**Russ Grazier:** Physical work in the Bridge Street lot will hopefully begin on Monday (July 20). The sewer service has been installed at the Bridge Street Lot. Public Works will be working on the water line, fencing, and metal barriers for the space. The site will include Portapotties and generators. Infrastructure costs fall within the City's committed contribution for the safe use of public space. The initial list of retail vendors:

- 1) Calli B
- 2) Rain4Sahara [apparently a non-profit]
- 3) Macro Polo
- 4) Cotillion Bureau
- 5) Country Farm Candles

- 6) Biju's Body and Soul
- 7) Belle Farm Shops
- 8) Priscilla Design
- 9) J&G Jewelry
- 10) Seacoast Scrunchie
- 11) River Run Book Store
- 12) Wandering Sprouts
- 13) We Fill Good [possibly a Kittery store]
- 14) Diversions Puzzles and Games.

More will be added, said **Russ Grazier**. Popup Portsmouth is legally separated from the Citizen Response Task Force, the Street Subcommittee, and from the City. It is an independent fiscal entity that accepts donations and provides fiduciary oversight. It has created a revised budget, which includes acquiring the insurance and providing bare-bones staffing. Popup Portsmouth, a/k/a the Bridge Street project, has the executive leadership and generous volunteerism of Josh Denton, Andrew Bagley, Jo Kelly, along with architect North Sturtevant.

**Peter Rice:** The sewer service covers the wash sinks [gray water] in the sheds of the restaurants. Separate portapotties are the bathrooms for patrons to utilize.

**Karen Conard:** There is a problem with the emphasis of the term "beer garden." It is an ancillary use. She asked for the use of the term "beer garden" to be played down.

**Co-Chair James Petersen** asked for clearer, illustrative reports to the City Council. For transparency to everyone, he asked for Minutes of all the various subcommittee meetings.

#### **IV. Public Realm (Streets) Subcommittee**

**Anne Weidman:** Manchester is looking to Portsmouth as the right way to open up a city; they will most likely imitate our decisions. She showed slides of open-up Baltimore, Burlington, Andover (MA), Manhattan, Brooklyn, and Queens. The images are being sent to everyone on the Task Force. **Stephanie Seacord** is adding them to the website.

The slideshow, **Anne Weidman continued**, shows many ways to create space with homemade barriers instead of Jersey barriers. There are all kinds of creative approaches. Some cities have rules and regs about dimensions. Some restaurant barriers seem to pop together like Legos. Some restaurants have rainproof popups. Some people have made barriers using tree boughs. Some people have built barriers out of cinder blocks. Companies that usually design professional displays for trade shows are now making street dividers for street-side restaurants to buy.

**Peter Rice:** The traffic signal at the corner of Congress and Middle/Maplewood has been adjusted to eliminate the left-turn lane. Flat Bread, the Goat, and Jumpin' Jay's are ready to go.

**City Planner Juliet Walker** presented screen shots of Penhallow Street where Moxy is. It shows the loading zone problem was solved. Initially a business owner had not wanted his loading dock changed. Things got a little steamy, but a compromise was reached.

The new configuration had been approved by the Street Committee in their meeting, and at this point in this meeting, the Citizen Response Task Force, as parent organization, ratified it.

- Motion: Jim Lee moved to ratify the loading zone use for Moxy. Alan Gold seconded the motion. There was no discussion. The motion passed unanimously.

#### V. Additional Citizen Response Task Force scope—cont. from last week

- **Co-Chair James Petersen** asked **Anne Weidman** to produce more examples of what’s going on in other cities. She offered to take photos of what’s happening in downtown Portsmouth, too.
- Handicap accessibility to outdoor spaces is being studied by **Anne Weidman and Todd Hanson**. Anne Weidman is being very generous with her time.
- **Bianca Monteiro** said we should think about how we are going to continue to keep businesses alive and running when it starts to get cold outside in the fall. At that time, we might not still have 100% capacity. What happens in November? What happens in December?
- **Valerie Rochon**: Portsmouth should be known as a friendly community that supports the CDC guidelines. There will be initiative funding specifically earmarked for educating the public about handwashing and mask-wearing. A State-sponsored mask-mobile will go around to different locations—perhaps the opening popup event.
- **James Petersen** asked everyone to brainstorm means of public relations support.
- **Police Chief Robert Merner** said that police officers do not have to wear masks all the time. They wear them when they cannot socially distance or when they “go into houses.”

#### VI. Other

Next Regular Meetings (Zoom)

All Mondays and Wednesdays @ 3:00 p.m.	Street Use Subcommittee
All Fridays @ 9:00 a.m.	Street Use Subcommittee
All Wednesdays through 8/5/20 @ 2:00 p.m.	Weekly Taskforce
By the End of the Year	Task Force Dismantled

#### VII. Adjourn

- Motion: Jim Lee moved to adjourn. Valerie Rochon seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,  
PG Horton