

MEETING MINUTES OF THE PORTSMOUTH ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION

February 5, 2021

Members Present: Bob Marchewka, Chairman; Philip Cohen, Vice Chairman; Sarah Lachance, Tom Watson, Dana Levenson, Alan Gold, City Councilor Cliff Lazenby; Ron Zolla, Everett Eaton; Assistant Mayor Jim Splaine, Katelyn Kwoka

City Staff: City Manager Karen Conard, Economic Development Program Manager Nancy Carmer

Zoom meeting statement

Chairman Marchewka began the meeting by reading the following statement:

Per NH RSA 91-A:2, III (b) the Chair has declared the COVID-19 outbreak an emergency and has waived the requirement that a quorum be physically present at the meeting pursuant to the Governor's Executive Order 2020-04, Section 8, as extended by Executive Order 2021-01, and Emergency Order #12, Section 3. Members will be participating remotely and will identify their location and any person present with them at that location. All votes will be by roll call.

All members present identified themselves, their location and persons present with them.

Minutes- Approval of draft meeting minutes of January 8, 2021

Commissioner Gold moved, and Commissioner Watson seconded a motion to approve the draft meeting minutes of January 8, 2021. Via roll call vote, the motion carried unanimously.

Retreat Discussion

Though a facilitated discussion, EDC members conferred on actionable items on the topics of COVID 19 business recovery and the impact of development on municipal taxes, revenues and services. The questions addressed for input were as follows:

1. COVID 19 Business Recovery

- What have we learned from the impacts and response to COVID-19 and how can we help Portsmouth businesses recover?
- What recovery initiatives might the EDC develop or do in collaboration with economic development partners?
- Is there support for an EDC business visitation/outreach program?

2. Impacts of development projects on municipal tax/revenue

- How to help residents understand the municipal tax/revenue impacts of development? Should the Urban 3 method be employed here?
- How can the EDC assist the Assessor in optimizing them as a public education tool?
- What role should the EDC play in the McIntyre redevelopment post-Portsmouth Listens

Based on the discussion, Commissioners suggested action items including:

COVID Business Impacts:

- Undertake outreach and polls of businesses and the Mayor's Blue Ribbon Committees to learn more about COVID impacts, current needs and what measures have rendered success. Explore how this outreach can become an ongoing EDC effort post pandemic.
- Collect metrics on the local gig workforce and its influence on the local economy.
- Learn how the public assistance service agencies were impacted as a result of pandemic-related requests and advocate for legislation to create a better safety net for employees of businesses impacted by disasters.
- Assess what the "new business normal" may look like post pandemic and what role the City can play in modifying its practices/regulations to foster positive outcomes going forward.
- Assist state and local economic development partners with business resiliency planning assistance particularly for the arts and culture and the hospitality sectors.

Impacts of Development on municipal tax/revenue:

- Gain a better understanding from the City Assessor on the trends in development generated tax revenues and how they have offset expenses and tax rates over the past 15-20 years.
- Work with the assessing office to create a public education effort for residents and elected officials on how development and the state's downshifting of costs to localities has impacted the tax rate.

The actions will be compiled and reviewed with the goal of prioritization and development of an implementation plan.

Public Comment – No public comment was taken at this retreat meeting.

Confirm Next Regular Meeting: Retreat on March 5, 2021 7:30 AM-9:00 AM

Adjourn

The retreat adjourned at 9:40 AM

Respectfully submitted,
Nancy Carmer
Economic Development Program Manager