

**DRAFT
MEETING MINUTES
PORTSMOUTH ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION**

February 7, 2003

Conference Room A

7:30 a.m.

Members Present: Mark Simpson, Chairman, John Hynes, Cliff Taylor, Dana Levenson, Tom Ferrini, Edward Hayes, Everett Eaton, Steve Alie, Scott Pafford, Paul Harvey Sr., John Bohenko, City Manager

Minutes of December 6, 2002

Commissioner Cliff Taylor moved and Commissioner Hayes seconded the motion to approve the December 6, 2002 meeting minutes as written. The motion passed unanimously.

McIntyre Building Transfer-Area Redevelopment

Since the beginning of the year, the city has been in discussions with the U.S. General Services Administration (GSA) regarding the disposition of the federal building in downtown Portsmouth. Originally, the building was slated for an \$11 million renovation project and the GSA had begun the process of applying for permits for the work. The Mayor and the City Manager expressed concern to the GSA about new security measures to be included in the renovation and the effect of these measures on the downtown. These concerns lead to a discussion of relocation of the federal building offices Pease Tradeport.

The City Manager told the EDC that, at a press conference held the day before, Senator Gregg announced plans to submit a bill to approve the relocation of the federal offices to the Tradeport with the exception of the Post Office. The plan calls for the McIntyre Building to be transferred to the City, potential demolition of the 65,000 square foot structure, removal of asbestos and mixed-use redevelopment of the 2.2-acre site. Some preliminary ideas for redevelopment include construction of an underground parking facility with an open space area above for public performances and for public sculpture.

Mr. Bohenko anticipates the redevelopment process will be an open and public process. It will be guided by a consultant similar to the process followed for the Northern Tier Feasibility Study. He anticipates the EDC playing a lead role in developing concepts and making recommendations to the City Council. The time line for the project is three to four years.

Chamber of Commerce Quarterly Report on Tourism and e-Coast- Marge Hubbard, Jennifer Quinlan

Ms. Hubbard and Ms. Quinlan distributed summary reports and made brief presentations on the Chamber's tourism and e-coast activities for the quarter ending December 31, 2002. Ms. Hubbard reported on a variety of tourism promotion activities including a successful ad campaign for the *Guide to the Seacoast*, receipt of a state grant for promotional literature and a positive outlook for the 2003 travel season.

Ms. Quinlan reported on e-Coast activities including the Tech Connect seminar in November and a successful MIT forum in December. The forum provides an opportunity for tech-based businesses to learn from peer companies in an open and instructive environment. There was a brief discussion of recent press reports on the relocation of Bow Street Software to Tewksbury, Massachusetts from Portsmouth. The company has been downsizing from 255 to 55 employees over the past two years. New executive management personnel live in Massachusetts, as do 50%

of the current employees. Many of the workers laid off have begun start-up companies here in Portsmouth.

Master Plan Process – Cindy Hayden, Community Development Director and David Holden, Planning Director

The City is undertaking an ambitious Master Planning project as mandated by state statute. The last City Master Plan was completed in the early 1990's. Co-managing the project are Cindy Hayden, Community Development Director and David Holden, Planning Director. Planning consultants Taintor and Associates have been hired to assist the city in this planning effort.

Ms. Hayden and Mr. Holden described the required elements of a Master Plan and the process for its development. This comprehensive planning effort will take two years to complete and will include extensive public input. The Study Circle approach will be employed to create public dialogue and input into the plan. Ultimately, the plan will lay out goals and objectives including changes to the city's zoning ordinance. These strategies are then adopted by the Planning Board and accepted by the City Council for future implementation. Ms. Carmer has already met with the consultants to provide information on the City's economic development efforts and goals.

Commissioner Ferrini asked how the EDC could assist in the process. It was decided that it would be desirable to have a roundtable discussion with the EDC and the consultant.

2003 EDC Planning

2003 EDC Action Plan – Ms. Carmer distributed copies of the draft 2003 EDC Action Plan which incorporates the changes discussed at the last EDC meeting as well new activities such as the redevelopment of the federal building area and participation in the city's master planning process. The Commission reviewed the draft plan and made minor modifications. Commissioner Taylor moved, and Commissioner Ferrini seconded a motion to adopt the plan as modified. The EDC voted unanimously to adopt the 2003 Action Plan as modified.

EDC Rules and Procedures

The EDC briefly discussed the Rules and Procedures that were presented at the last meeting. They were drafted to bring the Commission in step with other municipal boards and to establish a process for electing a chair and vice-chair. Commissioner Pafford made a motion and Commissioner Ferrini seconded the motion to adopt the Rules and Procedures. The motion passed 10-0.

EDC Election of Officers- The EDC has not held nominations for officers in five years. At the last meeting, the EDC discussed establishing the procedure of electing a chair and vice-chair on an annual basis in keeping with the newly- adopted EDC Rules and Procedures and with the practice of most City Boards and Commissions.

Accordingly, Commissioner Eaton nominated Commissioner Ferrini as Chair of the EDC. Commissioner Taylor seconded the nomination that passed by unanimous vote. Mr. Pafford nominated Commissioner Ferrini as Chair of the EDC. Commissioner Levenson seconded the nomination that also passed by unanimous vote.

Members expressed appreciation to Chairman Simpson for his leadership of the EDC during the past five years.

Other Business/Updates

Sheraton Owner – re: Northern Tier – The memorandum outlining the proposal to expand conference space and rooms on the Deer Street parking parcel owned by the Sheraton Hotel and Conference Center is not yet complete. The general manager of the hotel has had discussions with owners of adjacent properties and will soon be meeting with them to explore all feasible options for the expansion efforts. Mr. Griswold aims to submit a proposal memorandum to the EDC by its April meeting.

FY 2003/04 UDAG Budget

It is time to develop an UDAG budget for the upcoming fiscal year. The budget will reflect the activities in the newly adopted 2003 Action Plan and will be reviewed at the next meeting. Updates of current-year UDAG revenues and expenditure will be sent to the Commission for future budget discussion preparation.

Public Comment Session

No members of the public present wished to comment.

Adjourn Meeting

The next meeting will be March 7, 2003. With no other business, the meeting was adjourned at 9:00 AM.

Respectfully submitted,
Nancy M. Carmer
Community Development Program Manager