

Approved
November 7, 2003

MEETING MINUTES
PORTSMOUTH ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION

October 3, 2003

Conference Room A

7:30 a.m.

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

Minutes of September 5, 2003

Commissioner Taylor moved and Commissioner Pafford seconded the motion to approve the June 6, 2003 meeting minutes as written. The motion passed unanimously.

Chamber of Commerce Quarterly Report on Tourism and e-Coast

Tourism Manager Hubbard reported on a variety of tourism promotional activities. She said that although tourism has been down compared to the same time last year, there have been some positive events in the past quarter. Over 27,000 copies of the seacoast "lure" advertisement piece were during the quarter. She said that although there were less cruise ship visits this season, the ships that did come to Portsmouth were highly successful and wish to continue stopping here in the future. Ms. Hubbard distributed copies of travel writers' articles on the Portsmouth area and a summary of Chamber tourism activities for the quarter.

Ms. Quinlan reported on e-Coast activities including the installation of the free WiFi (i.e. wireless fidelity) spots in town sponsored by BayRing Communications, Port City Web and Buzz on a Budget. She also reported on the annual e-Cruise held on the Isles of Shoals Steamship Company's Thomas Leighton. This cruise attracted the largest attendance ever and signifies an upturn in the technology sector locally.

Ms. Quinlan also described the Chamber's work with Calypso Communications to interview 25 community and business leaders to create a media kit on Portsmouth for distribution during the upcoming presidential campaign period. A copy of the draft package will be available at the next EDC meeting. Finally, the eCoast Roundtable partnered with the New Hampshire High Technology Council to organize a Seacoast MIT Enterprise Forum in the past quarter. The forum highlighted on Portsmouth-based firm Bid2Win to receive expert advice about attracting outside capital.

In closing, Ms. Quinlan indicated that she is leaving her position at the Chamber to work for Chinburg Builders as their Business Development Manager. She thanked the EDC for their support of the Chamber activities and said she will miss working with them.

Master Plan Update

Community Development Director Cindy Hayden provided an update on the Master Plan process. She noted that Phase I Study Circles are complete, as are the Existing Conditions Report and the Phase II Study Circle reports. The consultants are now facilitating meetings between the Planning Board and individual boards such as the Conservation Commission, Pease Development Authority, School Board, Library Trustees, Cultural Commission, and the Historic District Commission. The Economic Development Commission is scheduled to meet with the Planning Board and representatives of the Chamber of Commerce and the Downtown Business Association on October 16, 2003.

Following these meetings there will be in-house meetings with the consultant to discuss the findings of the meetings with individual boards. The next step in the process is to prepare the draft master plan. This is scheduled for in-house review with the Planning Board in late January and February of 2004. Then it will go to public review with a final plan anticipated in late 2004.

Ms. Hayden noted that the Existing Conditions Report is available online for those wishing to review the entire document.

Other Business

Perambulation Study

City Manager Bohenko stated the perambulation study is underway. The study is essentially an inventory of the city boundaries with abutting communities and is comprised of two components, the landside perambulation and the marine-side. The last time a full perambulation study was completed was 1929.

Community Development Intern David Moore provided a summary of what has been accomplished on the project to date. Four of the boundary markers with Greenland and Rye have been located and the bounds with New Castle and Greenland are being researched as well. The City has hired a surveyor to establish the boundaries at Pease because the original boundary markers were destroyed when the air base was developed. A consultant that specializes in community boundary research has been retained to determine the boundary between Kittery and Portsmouth. Mr. Moore told the Commission that the inland portion of the study should be complete by January 2004.

Worth Lot Parking Garage Feasibility Study

City Manager Bohenko informed the EDC that the City Council has changed the date of the joint meeting of the EDC and City Council to discuss the final report completed by HTA Consulting Engineers. In that the newly elected City Council will be responsible for decisions on the next phase of the project, it was decided to delay the meeting until after the upcoming City Council elections. The new work session date is January 12, 2004 from 6:30-8:30 PM in Conference Room A.

A brief discussion ensued regarding the garage with Commissioner Hynes stating that the important issues for the next phase are the financial feasibility, the architectural concept and traffic flow into and out of the facility. Commissioner Simpson agreed that funding is one of the major issues of public concern and to gain public support for it, the facility must be self-supporting.

Commissioner Taylor expressed concern that, in his opinion, past press reports on the garage intimated that there were secret meetings on the garage topic, which he noted, is completely false. Commissioner Alie and City Manger Bohenko feel it is important that the public is concerned and discussing future parking needs of the city. Commissioner Harvey feels that the appearance of the garage and the associated streetscape is a very important element in the viability of the structure.

It was decided that the staff would meet with the EDC subcommittee on this topic prior to the upcoming work session in January.

Adjourn Meeting

Next Meeting – The next scheduled meeting is November 7th.

With no other business, the meeting was adjourned at 8:45 AM.

Respectfully submitted,
Nancy M. Carmer
Community Development Program Manager