

MEETING MINUTES
PORTSMOUTH ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION
(Joint Meeting with Planning Board)

February 19, 2004

City Council Chambers

6:30 p.m.

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

Members Absent: Mark Simpson, (excused), Cliff Taylor

This EDC meeting was scheduled as a joint work session with the Planning Board. The purpose of the session was to discuss a report on the web-based survey conducted as part of the public input component of the City's Master Plan. Community Development Program Manager David Moore explained the methodology and presented data from the 412 responses received from the on-line survey. One thousand survey notices were mailed to the community and the on-line survey was available to residents and Portsmouth workers for a two-week period. Residents without a computer were able to use two computers at the public library to respond.

The 25-question survey focused on demographics, land use, economic development and transportation. There was very good distribution across the various age groups as well as for residency tenure and neighborhood distribution of respondents. Only 5% of respondents were non-residents. The split for owners/renters responding was 80/20.

Following Mr. Moore's presentation, the Chairman of the Planning Board opened the meeting up for discussion/questions on the survey outcome. Following a brief discussion on the validity of the survey given the number of respondents, the board discussed the data. The following themes emerged from the survey:

- People are strongly in favor of increasing waterfront access and acquiring land for open space preservation.
- There is support for mixed use (commercial office, retail, residential)/redevelopment downtown
- Residents tend to go downtown most in the summer.
- Residents tend to go downtown for cultural and leisure activities (dining, library use, entertainment) much more than for retail patronage.
- People are split on promotion of economic versus residential development (this question spawned extensive discussion on the *definition* of economic development and *type* of residential development)
- People feel that improving pedestrian safety and reducing traffic congestion are transportation priorities.
- Responses were split evenly on the option to raise car registration fees (as allowed by the legislature) to increase mass transportation.
- People would like to see increased intermodal transportation services for youth, for travel to Manchester airport and for service to the Dover/Exeter train stations.
- Responses were split evenly on the option to raise parking fees to increase public transportation.
- People prefer not to have wider sidewalks on Market St. at the expense of parking.
- People favored the pilot project of temporarily closing Market St. for a pedestrian mall in summer.

Following the survey discussion, Planning Board Chairman Smith thanked the Commission for their participation and announced that the next step in the Master Plan process is a Planning Board work session on the draft Master Plan and, following that, the study circles' review of the document. This concluded the work session.

The next meeting of the EDC will be March 5, 2004 at 7:30 am in Conference Room A.

Respectfully submitted,
 Nancy M. Carmer, Community Development Program Manager