

MEETING MINUTES
PORTSMOUTH ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION

Oct. 3, 2008

City Hall Conference Room A

7:30 a.m.

Members Present: Dana Levenson, Chairman; Everett Eaton, Vice-Chairman; Jack Blalock, William Gladhill, Tim Allison, Ken Smith, John P. Bohenko; City Manager
Excused: Dr. Paul Harvey, Lisa DeStefano,

Chairman Levenson opened the meeting at 7:30 a.m.

Recognition of Edward Hayes for EDC Service

Chairman Levenson presented Edward Hayes with a plaque in recognition and appreciation of his EDC service from 2001-2008. Mr. Levenson spoke of Ed's many contributions to the EDC and the community including his work on subcommittees formed to respond to City Council referrals. Likewise, Mr. Bohenko thanked Mr. Hayes and presented him with a book on Portsmouth photos.

Approval of Draft Meeting Minutes of September 5, 2008

Following a motion by Tim Allison and a second by William Gladhill, the draft meeting minutes of September 5, 2008 were unanimously approved as written.

Chamber of Commerce Quarterly Report and Partnership Extension Request

Ms. Carmer reported that the subcommittee charged with evaluating the Chamber of Commerce request to extend the partnership extension met twice in the past month. She distributed copies of the evaluation metrics drafted by the subcommittee for measuring the success of the Chamber Tourism program. She also distributed a summary of the tourism program revenues, payroll and expenses noting that the City's partnership funds constitute about 16% of the total tourism revenues and the JPP grant from the state constitutes 13%. Assistant Mayor Blalock said the subcommittee recommends that the partnership be extended and that the proposed metrics be employed to measure the program success and requests in the future. Chairman Levenson said that the subcommittee also recommends that the metrics become program benchmarks and suggested that going forward, the city's contribution should be tied to a percentage of the revenues raised by the Chamber for the tourism program

In response to a question from Mr. Allison about sufficient funds in the EDC budget to cover the \$40,000 request, Mr. Bohenko said that this year the partnership extension request was submitted late and was not included in the EDC FY 08/09 budget. Because the EDC budget is already committed for this year, it is his recommendation that the funds be a separate allocation outside the FY 08/09 UDAG budget. City Council approval is needed for this to occur. If the EDC recommends approval of the partnership extension, he would bring the recommendation to the City Council on October 20th. In the future he suggests meeting in early January with the Chamber to have subsequent requests incorporated into the UDAG budget.

Regardless of the timing of the request, both Mr. Blalock and Mr. Smith support the partnership extension because the program services were seamless. However, Mr. Smith said he would not support it in the future if the request were late again. Assistant Mayor Blalock said he is supporting the recommendation because of the economic vitality it generates and the indirect benefit it brings to many Portsmouth businesses. Mr. Eaton supports the partnership and feels that the partnership is a good investment. On a motion to recommend extension of the partnership to the City Council at \$40,000 from UDAG funds, the EDC voted unanimously.

Mr. Levenson said the city has made a significant commitment to the Chamber in the partnership and that it is key that the community "be ahead of the curve, not behind it" on tourism. He feels that tourism is an important priority and that it is essential for the Chamber to be truly collaborative and work with all organizations such as

Prescott Park, Pro Portsmouth, Discover Portsmouth etc., which contribute to the tourism success that Ms. Noble reported. Instead of acting on the request at the meeting, he suggested that Ms. Noble and a couple EDC representatives meet to develop deliverables and define metrics that enable the Commission to evaluate the City/Chamber tourism partnership and report back to the EDC. He asked if Assistant Mayor Jack Blalock and City Councilor Ken Smith would be willing to do this since they are most familiar with tourist related business. They agreed and will meet and report back to the EDC at the October 3rd meeting. Mr. Bohenko said that if the EDC acts on the partnership grant renewal on October 3rd, the EDC recommendation could go to the City Council in late October.

Top Employer Discussion with John Land, Representative of Direct Capital

Chairman Levenson informed the Board that due to a last minute cancellation by Direct Capital, this agenda item will be postponed until the December EDC meeting.

EDC Project Updates

Islington Street Action Plan Project Update

Ms. Carmer reported that the traffic study is complete and a memo is being developed by the City's Transportation Engineer regarding preferred street improvement plan concepts.

Blue Ribbon Committee on Housing Update – William Gladhill

The Housing Committee met this week for a review of the Housing Report and Recommendations that will be presented to the City Council in November.

New Business/upcoming events

State Street utility work and Memorial Bridge repair schedule

Public Works Wastewater Engineer Peter Rice updated the EDC on the proposed utility work along State Street. The project area is State St. from Pleasant St. to Prescott Park. This work is part of the EPA-mandated citywide sewer/storm sewer separation project and is funded with state revolving loan funds and 30% grant funds as well as city water fund revenues and general fund dollars.

The design will be complete by June 2009, the project will be bid in the summer of 2009 and construction will occur from summer 2009 to fall 2010. Improvements to the streetscape will be similar to those recently completed on Market Street. They will include brick sidewalks, granite curbs, period lighting, and safer pedestrian crossings. For efficiency purposes, the city endeavors to do as much utility work as possible when working on the sewers to avoid repetitive opening of the road and disrupting businesses.

The project is scheduled to coincide with the repair work on the Memorial Bridge and the Scott Avenue Bridge. The DOT will be re-bidding this project for execution of the project with a full bridge closure versus maintaining one-way traffic. This will realize significant project cost savings. The City will be asking the state to re-open the Route One Bypass exit onto Market St. Ext. during Memorial Bridge repair to ease traffic.

EDC members asked what percent of sewer separation is complete (15%) and approximate date of completion of separation (2016).

Other Business

Mr. Smith asked for an update of the City's small business loan program at the next meeting.

Confirm Next Meeting Date: November 7, 2008/Adjourn

Respectfully submitted,
Nancy Carmer
Economic Development Program Manager