

MEETING MINUTES
PORTSMOUTH ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION

May 7, 2010

City Hall Conference Room A

7:30 a.m.

Members Present: Dana Levenson, Chairman; Everett Eaton, Vice-Chairman; Nancy Novelline Clayburgh, Josh Cyr, Susanne Delaney; Dr. Paul Harvey, Lisa DeStefano, Tim Allison, Ron Zolla, Robert Marchewka, John Bohenko
Excused: Christine Dwyer

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

Approval of Draft Meeting Minutes of April 9, 2010

Following a motion by Commissioner DeStefano and a second by Commissioner Eaton, the draft meeting minutes of April 9, 2010 were unanimously approved as written.

Presentation by Dr. Jonathan Pennock, Director of the University of New Hampshire Marine Program and Jackson Estuarine Laboratory –

Dr. Pennock is director of the University of New Hampshire (UNH) Marine Program and Jackson Estuarine Laboratory and an associate professor of natural resources. He discussed the UNH Marine Program, related research and the economic impact the UNH Marine Science programs have on the regional economy.

The NH Sea Grant College Program provides support, leadership and expertise for university-based marine research, extension and education. It's one of 30 Sea Grant programs throughout the nation promoting the understanding, wise use and stewardship of coastal resources. NH Sea Grant is based at UNH, but serves the entire state. The UNH Marine Program is an interdisciplinary program that encompasses 65 faculty from 10 colleges within the university. Faculty and students work in partnership with the town of Durham, the region and the state. The Jackson Estuarine Lab employs eight faculty and with student participation conducts research on Great Bay. The lab receives \$125-\$135 million in research funds which in turn is spent in the community in the form of salaries and supplies. Similar economic impacts emanate from the Isles of Shoals Cornell University Lab which is also a partnership with UNH. The UNH facility at New Castle is the home pier for research vessels that include significant budgets. The program has recently received a \$14 million grant from NOAA.

The work from these programs has impacts locally and nationally. This includes research on open ocean aquaculture and on coastal response to oil spills. Locally, the UNH programs impact local restaurants through raising awareness of the NH Fresh and Local Fish Cooperative which in turn provides a much needed market for local fisherman. Finally, the university is working with seacoast communities on the Sustainable Communities Program aimed at applying the research to seacoast cities and towns relative to healthy fisheries, sea level rise, mussel aquaculture and capturing renewable energy the in the tides.

A brief discussion ensued on ways that the city and the university can further collaborate and it was agreed that there are untapped opportunities for both organizations to interface on business and economic issues. Chairman Levenson thanked Dr. Pennock for the presentation.

Update on Downtown Capital Projects

City Public Works Director Steve Parkinson distributed a map showing the location of nineteen city capital projects that are in progress or proposed for construction in the coming months. He explained the schedule for the projects as well as the sources of funds for each project including general fund monies, grants, loans and cost-sharing. Several of the projects are in the Islington Street corridor and the Market St. Gateway areas as well as other areas important to the city's economic vitality and quality of life.

Old Business

Maine - NH Bridge Connections Study Update - Ms. Carmer reported on the testimony she gave at the Senate Transportation Committee the previous day. The testimony was in support of an amendment to Senate Bill #2010 (the Ten Year Transportation Plan) and involved a request to use \$45 million in Garvey Bonds to leverage the state's TIGER II application for federal grant money to replace the Memorial Bridge. The State DOT has determined that the deteriorated condition of the Memorial Bridge precludes it from merely being rehabilitated. The testimony was specific to the economic impact of closing the bridge and keeping only a four lane version of the Sarah Long Bridge open.

Update on the Downtown Parking Focus Group – Commissioner Eaton reported that the draft parking focus report is still in progress. He will report back on the draft report at the June 4th EDC meeting.

New /Other Business

Downtown Retail Initiative for Extended Hours – Ms. Carmer reported that a subgroup of Chamber of Commerce retailers have spearheaded an effort to have downtown stores remain open until 8 PM on Friday evenings from May 7 - October 8.

Business Retention Information – City Manager Bohenko informed the Commission that Prime Buchholz will not be relocating to Liberty Lane in Hampton, NH, but will instead relocate to Pease Tradeport at the former offices of Aprisma. The retention of this company keeps the firm and its significant wealth management jobs in Portsmouth as well as the property tax.

Public Comment Period -No members of the public were present to speak.

Confirm Next Meeting Date: June 4, 2010

With no further business the meeting adjourned at 9 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Nancy M. Carmer
Economic Development Program Manager