

**MINUTES OF THE PORTSMOUTH
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION**

October 2, 2015

City Hall Conference Room A

7:30 a.m.

Members Present: Everett Eaton, Chairman; Bob Marchewka, Vice-Chairman; Stefany Shaheen, Dana Levenson, John Bosen, Jen Zorn, Josh Cyr, Ron Zolla, John Pratt; John Bosen, Stefany Shaheen

Excused: Eric Spear, Philip Cohen

City Staff: City Manager John P. Bohenko, Economic Development Program Manager Nancy Carmer

Approval of draft meeting minutes of September 4, 2015

Commissioner Zolla moved, and Commissioner Pratt seconded, a motion to approve the draft meeting minutes of September 4, 2015. The motion carried unanimously.

Miscellaneous /Other Business

Update on status of 165 Deer St. Parking Garage

City Manager Bohenko provided the following activity summary of the 165 Deer Street Municipal Garage Project: In July through September, the City/DSA undertook respective due diligence for geotechnical, environmental, property transfers, and the creation of a parking garage disposition plan. In August, the Planning Board approved applications for property subdivision and consolidation required for project. The Board also recommended that the City transfer and acquire parcels needed for project implementation. At the Sept. 21, 2015 City Council meeting, the Council approved land transfers recommended by Planning Board for proposed municipal parking structure at 165 Deer Street.

Next steps in project implementation include completion of geotechnical and environmental analyses and the finalization and City Council approval of purchase and sale agreement for land from Deer St. Associates and the Gray Revocable Trusts. The City has interviewed parking garage consultants and will soon begin the relocation of the old brick box sewer, construction of the proposed Deer Street Extension, project design/permitting and construction.

Review of maps of potential EDC initiative areas

As a follow up to the discussion on areas of interest for EDC initiatives at the September EDC meeting, maps of the identified general business areas were distributed for review including Islington Street West End, Route 1 Bypass corridor, Woodbury Avenue, and Pease Tradeport/Port of NH. Future EDC meetings will include a brief presentation and discussion on allowed land uses (zoning regulations) and potential economic initiatives in the respective areas.

ECoast revitalized - The Chamber of Commerce has formed a partnership with the NH High Tech Council to re-boot the eCoast. There will be a tech tour of four technology companies at Pease on October 15th including visits to Newmarket International, Pixel Media, C3 and NeoScope. Tickets are \$10 for interested participants.

Business NH Magazine – 2014 Top Companies to Work For

Ms. Carmer informed the Commission that, of the eighteen companies ranked as Best Companies to Work For by *Business NH Magazine*, five are located in Portsmouth and include Newmarket International, Medtronics, Adaptive Communications, American Health Centers, Loftware and International Association of Privacy Professionals.

Public Comment

There were no requests for public comment.

Confirm Next Regular Meeting: Friday, November 6, 2015, 7:30 AM

Economic and Activity Update and Tour of Marine Terminal

Port Director Geno Marconi provided an overview of the NH Marine Terminal. The 12-acre, state-owned, facility is used for several different marine-related activities. One area is being used for pre-cast concrete fabrication of the bridge towers and related components for the Sarah Mildred Long Bridge (SML) replacement project. Another area is used for road salt delivery, storage and distribution, and a third area is leased for dockage to local tour boats and fishing charter expeditions. The terminal will undergo improvements as mitigation for the impacts on the port facility stemming from bridge construction including lengthening of the largest receiving pier by 120' and the construction of a new boat launch. Positive shipping outcomes of the new SML Bridge include reducing the shipping turning angle in the river from 32 degrees to 13 degrees and widening the bridge opening to 118 feet making it easier and safer for large vessels.

The state is currently working on securing a cargo user post-bridge construction. As part of this effort, Mr. Marconi is working with students at UNH on a marketing plan for the port. Sixteen companies currently depend on the Piscataqua River and the Port for commerce. In 2012, this economic impact amounted to \$92M in direct wages to 1,500 employees. This region's key shipping products are home heating and diesel fuel. New markets that support these existing companies as well as unrelated markets are being explored for future terminal use.

The US Army Corps of Engineers is responsible for maintaining the navigation channel in the Piscataqua River. It currently has five projects proposed for the river including the removal of ledge (which consists mostly of compacted sand), creation of a 1,000 turning basin, and expansion of a second upstream turning basin. Many US eastern seaboard ports are currently focusing on readiness for larger ships post-Panama Canal upgrade ("post-Panamax") when it can handle boats triple the size it can now accommodate. Portsmouth's Piscataqua River navigation channel cannot currently handle the new larger cargo ships being employed by freight firms for which the Canal is being improved as they are hampered by bridge heights and channel depths. Nonetheless, the local market for smaller vessels will be explored.

Following the presentation, the EDC inquired about the viability of initiatives such as transporting propane from Sea3 by river versus overland by rail, as well as the feasibility of the proposed passenger ferry between Portsmouth and Provincetown, MA. Mr. Marconi does not see the feasibility of either at the Port as the ferry is probably not economically feasible and there is no room for a propane storage dome at the marine terminal. Following the discussion, Mr. Marconi provided a walking tour of the terminal for interested members.

The meeting adjourned at 9:30 AM.

Respectfully submitted,

Nancy Carmer
Economic Development Program Manager