

**MEETING MINUTES OF THE PORTSMOUTH
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION (EDC)**

February 3, 2023 7:30 AM

Members Present: Philip Cohen; Chair, Alan Gold: Vice Chair, Bob Marchewka, Tom Watson, Andrew Ward, Sarah Lachance, Anne Weidman, Everett Eaton, Jacob Lehoux, Assistant Mayor; JoAnna Kelley; City Councilor; Vince Lombardi, Ben VanCamp

Absent:

City Staff: City Manager; Karen Conard Asst. City Manager for Economic Development; Sean Clancy

Chairman Cohen called the meeting to order at 7:35 AM

Minutes - Approval of draft meeting minutes of January 6, 2023 – Motion made by *Councilor Lombardi* seconded by *Commissioner Watson*. Motion to approve draft minutes passed unanimously.

Annual Elections –

Commissioner Lachance nominated *Chair Cohen* for another term and the motion was seconded by *Assistant Mayor Kelly*. The motion passed unanimously.

Commissioner Watson nominated *Vice Chair Gold* for another term and the motion was seconded by *Assistant Mayor Kelly*. The motion passed unanimously.

Proposal to Support PHA Sherburne School Proposal - The commissioners discussed the proposal and feedback from the recent public meeting held by the City Council. The Commissioners decided to postpone any vote to support or not support the PHA proposal until the Charter/Mission review working group completes its work and the EDC votes on general “charter positions”.

Working Group Updates:

Charter/Mission Review – did not meet

Business Retention and Expansion – did not meet

Data – did not meet

Land Use Liaison – Land Use Committee did not meet

Office of Economic Development Update: (newly created)

The OED has two initiative underway; the first is to purchase customer relationship management software to support connection and communication with our business community and the second; a regional employer outreach program designed at support employers in understanding the best practices around attracting and retaining employees. Both initiatives will be reported on in more detail at the next EDC meeting. The Small Business Administration (Federal) contacted the OED with an inquiry to host an event in Portsmouth on the topic of entrepreneurship and how we as a city can support entrepreneurs. More information will be provided at the next EDC meeting.

City Council Update:

Counselor Lombardi provided a list of germane issues before the City Council including: ongoing outdoor dining deliberations, the market square design study, city staff retention increases, new Pease Development Authority representative (City Manager Karen Conard), Ongoing Community power process, meetings and conversations.

Chamber Update: *Chamber President Van Camp*

- Public Policy Committee is tracking State Legislation for business impact
- Save the date: Chamber 2023 Economic Outlook event is scheduled for February 28th
 - 8:30-9:30am, Portsmouth Public Library
- Chamber is continuing a strategic planning effort (Jan-Jul'23)

Miscellaneous:

Commissioner Lachance made the request to the OED poll surrounding communities (EDOs) about any on-going efforts to convert city/town owned land to housing uses(?)

Small Business Development Center presentation (*Ed Miles*):

What is SBDC hearing from small businesses and other observations –

- Staffing is a challenge
- Workforce housing (related to staffing) is a challenge
- Employee retention is a challenge

Small businesses are moving past survival and into a growth mindset of not phase.

- Many SBDC members report strong balance sheets (opportunity)
- Many members are planning to strategically add staff (opportunity)
- Side hustles are on the rise for many SBDC members
- Commercial lending is available

Everyone wants to be in Portsmouth

There is a trend of healthcare professionals wanting to leave large organizations and start their own practice.

Ed's full comments are available through the EDC meeting recording.

Adjourn

Motion to adjourn made by *Assistant Mayor Kelly*, seconded by *Councilor Lombardi*. Motion passed unanimously.

Next Meeting Schedule for Friday March 3, 2023

Respectfully submitted,

Sean Clancy

Assistant City Manager for Economic Development