

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

March 3, 2023 7:30 AM- 8:30 AM

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

Absent: Philip Cohen; Chair, Andrew Ward, Everett Eaton, Anna Howard

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

Vice Chair Gold called the meeting to order at 7:35 AM

Minutes - Approval of draft meeting minutes of February 3, 2023 – Motion made by *Councilor Lombardi* seconded by *Commissioner Weidman*. Motion to approve draft minutes passed unanimously.

Working Group Updates:

Charter/Mission Review – *Commissioner Watson* advised that the group met; reviewed the current ordinance in consideration of conversations at our strategic retreat and created a draft of new language. The draft will be shared with all EDC members and be added to the April agenda to review as the full EDC.

Business Retention and Expansion – did not meet; committed to meet before April 7th EDC meeting.

Data – did not meet, plans to meet before April 7th EDC meeting.

Land Use Liaison – Land Use Committee did not meet – next meeting scheduled for March 10th.

Office of Economic Development Update:

The office responsibilities have been expanded to include the City's Community Development staff and responsibilities, primarily around overseeing the (Federal) Community Development Block grants used to support low-income residents.

A DPW update was provided regarding utility work planned for Commercial Alley and Market Street which will be disruptive to the business community but will not force any closure of businesses. The EDO is working with DPW to provide information and support to affected business scheduled. The project is scheduled for mid-April through mid-May. The next phase of Islington street works is also scheduled for this spring and will cover the area from Dover Street to Cornwall Street.

Progress continues to be made on the CRM/Database project for the EDO as well as the regional workforce development initiative funded by the NH BEA.

Chamber Update: *Chamber President Van Camp*

- Chamber 2023 Economic Outlook event is (re-) scheduled for March 3rd
 - 8:30-9:30am, Great Bay Community College
- Save the Date – Chamber Sponsored 2023 Tourism Summit, March 27th (morning event)
- Save the Date – Spring Restaurant Week April 20-29th
- Chamber Strategic Planning efforts continue
- Preview of Retail event for next year at this time previewed...this will be an opportunity for the EDC to partner with the Chamber and City directly

City Council Update:

Counselor Lombardi provided a list of germane issues before the City Council including Public Art funding (passed) and an increase elderly and veteran tax credits (passed). The FY24 Budget and CIP review process are in full swing. The City Council voted to join the Community Power Coalition of NH effective in June 2023.

Assistant Mayor Kelley introduced her (City Council) motion to refer the review and recommendation of a long-term outdoor dining Policy/Ordinance to the EDC. The goal is for the EDC to clarify the request and determine the parameters of the review and recommendations requested by City Council.

Many questions and robust conversation ensued. The City, specifically the Planning Department, has three years of experience working through various iterations of an outdoor dining policy which has evolved since the beginning of the pandemic (2020).

The next step is for the EDC to determine whether the EDC as a whole or a smaller working group will take up this task.

There is an opportunity to utilize three years' worth of experience and data to focus in on a clear and effective (ordinance) recommendation. The City Council will ultimately make an ordinance decision. There is further opportunity to monitor this year's outdoor dining policy in action to inform EDC efforts.

Many in attendance expressed a desire to clarify the task in order to deliver a thoughtful and tangible outcome to the City Council.

Commissioner Watson requested a (3 year) summary of outdoor dining policies, actions, and decisions to bring EDC fully up to date prior to beginning this effort.

Adjourn

Motion to adjourn made by *Commissioner Lachance*, seconded by *Assistant Mayor Kelley*.
The motion passed unanimously.

Next Meeting Schedule for Friday April 7, 2023*

*S. Clancy will confirm location

Respectfully submitted,
Sean Clancy
Assistant City Manager for Economic Development