

**DRAFT**  
**MEETING MINUTES OF THE PORTSMOUTH**  
**ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION**  
November 3, 2023 7:30 AM- 9:00 AM

**Members Present:** Chair Phil Cohen, Vice Chair Tom Watson, Bob Marchewka, Sarah Lachance, Anna Howard, Andrew Ward, Jacob Lahoux, Jen Scumaci, Ben VanCamp, Everett Eaton, City Councilor Vince Lombardi, Assistant Mayor Joanna Kelley  
**Absent:** Anne Weidman, City Manager Karen Conard  
**City Staff:** Assistant City Manager for Economic & Community Development Sean Clancy

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*Chair Cohen* called the meeting to order at 7:31 Am.

Motion to accept the minutes of the October 6th meeting with no changes made by *Commissioner Lachance*, seconded by *Commissioner Watson*, passed unanimously.

Chamber Collaborative Updates:

- The Chamber continues to provide a full slate of events most recently their annual awards: [High Honors: Businesses recognized for their outstanding work in 2023 by Chamber Collaborative - News - The Chamber Collaborative of Greater Portsmouth, NH \(portsmouthchamber.org\)](#)
- Restaurant Week is in full swing: [Fall Restaurant Week 2023 - Go Portsmouth NH](#)
- See Chamber website for more information - [portsmouthchamber.org](#)

Office of Economic Development Updates:

- The Americans For The Arts (AFTA) Survey results are in and the Portsmouth economic impact has increased since the last survey in 2016. Understanding that the previous results were pre-pandemic; this is a testament to the strength and oversized impact of the Arts and Culture segment of our economy. There will be a formal presentation of the results in early January.
- The Cultural Plan creation process is on track to deliver a plan to City Council in late December.
- As previously mentioned, the City Council voted to create a standing Arts and Culture Commission which will operate in a similar manner to the EDC. This will ensure that the anticipated Cultural Plan and latest AFTA survey results are used to move our Art and Culture segment forward.
- TWO save the dates:
  - Wednesday Nov. 15<sup>th</sup>, 6:30-8:30pm City Council Chambers: Parking Utilization Advisory Committee Public Meeting
  - Tuesday December 5<sup>th</sup>, 8:00-10:00am, Seacoast Rep: Workforce Attraction, Retention, and Development presentation and employer panel discussion

*Councilor Lombardi* provided forward looking update for next year on the horizon are the City Master Plan (2025-2035), the Capital Improvement Plan, and the Budget. He referenced a Financial Presentation made by City staff as helpful to understanding finances.  
Informational Link: [Meeting Presentations | City of Portsmouth](#)

*Assistant Mayor Kelley* – Governance Committee is working hard on many issues i.e., the ethics ordinance, election disclosure, and committee work moving from blue ribbon the standing committees. Also, there is an on-going process to determine a site for a new police station including upgrading the current site (as an option).

*Geno Marconi* – *Director of Ports and Harbors* for the state of NH provided a comprehensive update on port infrastructure improvements and capabilities. The State of NH has been increasing the size of the port facility as well as insuring that it can meet the changing needs of cargo shippers, neighbors such as the Portsmouth Navy Shipyard, and local safety agencies such as the Portsmouth Fire Department.

*Director Marconi* further outlined that in addition to running a profitable operation which receives zero funding from the State of NH, the Pease Development Authority (Division of Ports and Harbors) is committed to working with the City of Portsmouth to support our community goals around economic development, safety, and tourism. Commissioners asked *Director Marconi* some questions about his presentation as well as the potential to host cruise ships at the state terminal. *Director Marconi* shared some history of cruise line activity and inquiries that he has received over the last 20 years. Lastly, he explained that he has a financial responsibility to entertain all terminal opportunities both cargo and passenger. *(meeting recording available for more details)*.

There was no Public Comment

***Reminder from Chair Cohen*** - *Vice Chair Watson* proposed that the EDC meet in January to review priorities and goals from CY '23 and develop or in some cases refine priorities and goals for CY '24. *Commissioner Lachance* proposed that EDC members review the retreat documents from CY '23 and plan to decide which priorities and goals carry-over to CY '24, which priorities and goals are removed either due to completion or obsolescence and determine any priorities and goals to add based on the new EDC charter that was approved earlier this year.

Next Meeting December 1<sup>st</sup> at Portsmouth High School from **8am – 9:30am**.

Motion to adjourn made by Assistant Mayor Kelley, seconded by *Commissioner Eaton*, motion passed.

Submitted by,  
*Sean Clancy*  
Assistant City Manager for Economic & Community Development