

DRAFT
MEETING MINUTES OF THE PORTSMOUTH
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION

February 2, 2024 7:30 AM- 9:00 AM

Members Present: Chair Tom Watson, Vice Chair Sarah Lachance, Bob Marchewka, Andrew Ward, Jacob Lahoux, Anna Howard, Anne Weidman, Ben VanCamp, City Councilor Vince Lombardi, Assistant Mayor Joanna Kelley

Absent: Everett Eaton, Phil Cohen, Jen Scumaci

City Staff: City Manager Karen Conard, Assistant City Manager Sean Clancy

Chair Watson called the meeting to order at 7:31 am.

Motion to accept the minutes of the January 5th meeting with no changes made by *Assistant Mayor Kelley*, seconded by *Councilor Lombardi*, passed unanimously.

An update request was made for the approved Fleet Street construction project. *City Manager Conard* committed to providing an update at the March 1st EDC meeting.

Econ Dev Office Update:

- State a& Regional economic forecasts are being provided in multiple municipalities. The NH economy remains strong and growing. There is continued pressure on employers to find and hire employees of all experience, skill, and talent levels.
- A new EDO/Chamber event calendar communication process is in place
- The Arts and Culture segment of our economy continues to strengthen.
- We are preparing for construction season and working with DPW on communication plan to businesses
- Outdoor Dining ordinance (2nd reading) on February 5th City Council agenda.

Chamber Update:

- Tourism Summit – Successful and enlightening
- Say No to Hate – important dialogue bringing business community into this important issue
- The Chamber is researching local loyalty card alternative as a means to keep local \$\$ - local
- Additional Events: [Events Calendar - Chamber Sponsored Programs - The Chamber Collaborative of Greater Portsmouth, NH \(portsmouthchamber.org\)](https://portsmouthchamber.org)

City Council update:

- Shout-out to Portsmouth H.S. football team, Debate team, Future Business leaders.
- Update on Police Department plans for a new Police facility on the City Hall campus.
- City Council Retreat – Reviewed the previous two years and goals were refined down to five with priority: Housing, Sustainability, Engaging more voices especially previously “unreached”, Economic /Business Support, Transportation (explore more options).

Chair Watson engaged the members with a request for feedback on the priorities and the process used to identify priorities at the EDC annual retreat. There was general agreement that the process worked well, and the outcome was the creation of two working groups to compete a deeper dive into two key areas that align with the newly adopted City Council goals.

The EDC agreed to establish the following working groups: Business Support (to be led by *Vice Chair Lachance*) and Sustainability (to be led by *Commissioner Weidman*). The groups will schedule a meeting prior to the March EDC meeting. The WGs will endeavor to identify priorities based on the annual retreat conversation and share chosen initiatives at the March EDC meeting. (see recording for more detailed dialogue)

BS WG: Sarah, Anna, Andy, Bob, Sean.

SUS WG: Anne, Karen, Jacob, other TBD

Chair Watson announced liaison role to the Chamber Collaborative of Greater Portsmouth will be filled by *Assistant City Manager Clancy*.

There was no public comment.

Motion to adjourn made by *Assistant Mayor Kelley*, seconded by *Councilor Lombardi*, motion passed (8:33am).

As always, recording of entire meeting is available for review on our City Website.

Submitted by,

Sean Clancy

Assistant City Manager for Economic & Community Development