

**MEETING MINUTES OF THE
PORTSMOUTH ECONOMIC
DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION**
March 1, 2024 7:30 AM- 9:00 AM

Members Present: Chair Tom Watson, Vice Chair Sarah Lachance, Bob Marchewka, Andrew Ward, Jacob Lahoux, Jen Scumaci, Anne Weidman, Everett Eaton, Assistant Mayor Joanna Kelley
Absent: Phil Cohen, Anna Howard, Ben VanCamp, City Councilor Vince Lombardi
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 February 2nd meeting with no changes made by *Vice Chair Lachance*, seconded by *Commissioner Marchewka* passed unanimously.

Commissioners received confirmation of the passage of the Outdoor Dining Encumbrance Permit, Sections 6.1701- 6.1707 Chapter 6, LICENSE, Article XVII sections 6.1701- 6.1707. The City Council also approved the (EDC recommended) design standards and the Fee Committee's fee schedule for the current season beginning on May 1st and ending on October 14th, 2024.

Vice Chair Lachance requested that a report of participating restaurants and related fees be provided at the May 3rd EDC meeting.

Presentations by *Senior Assistant Attorney Jane Ferrini*:

- Legislative Subcommittee update – summary of enabling legislation, municipal control, state retirement contribution, education funding, and a multitude of housing bills are being tracked for impact on the City's operation and FY '25 budget process.
- A primer on large private development projects – process review, construction mitigation and management plan development (CMMPs), abutters meetings, construction schedule.
- There are 19 private developments approved and, in some stages, of construction as we enter the City's municipal construction season.

The majority of these projects are mixed use and contain housing units (850 market rate and 19 categorized as affordable housing).

Chamber Update:

- Elected Officials Reception – March 11th 4:30-6:30 pm @ the 110 Grill
- State of the State with Gov. Chris Sununu – March 12th 8:00-9:30 am @ the Atlantic Grill

Business Support (led by *Vice Chair Lachance*) has proposed two issues to address that can potentially deliver tangible results/recommendation by the end of calendar year '24.

1. Understand, assess, curate business resources such as digital resources, partnerships (i.e. SBA, SCORE), a functioning Customer Relationship management system (housed in the office of economic development) and ultimately share this information with our business community.
2. Investigate the City's building inspection process and data to determine if this is a problem for commercial developers. If so, explore ways to streamline/expediate our inspection process while maintaining all code and legal requirements.

Business Resiliency (led by *Commissioner Weidman*) has proposed two issues to address that can potentially deliver tangible results/recommendation by the end of calendar year '24.

1. Explore and identify the current state of the City's electrical grid including connections, challenges, etc. If there is a problem and if it can be addressed by the city; then suggest ways that the EDC can support/propose/advocate for improvements to facilitate commercial development.
2. Investigate micro-transit opportunities and/or options that the City of Portsmouth may consider. This includes researching similarly situated municipalities while considering the ever-evolving needs of our citizens, businesses and visitors.

Assistant Mayor Kelley provided brief updates on the Outdoor Dining Encumbrance Permit ordinance and the creation of the Mayor's Blue-Ribbon Committee on Housing (Sherburne School property), City of Portsmouth Recognitions, Amended the Elderly and Veteran tax credits (increased).

Public Comment: *David Choate* provided additional comments on housing and affordable housing efforts at the state and regional level.

Motion to adjourn made by *Commissioner Marchewka*, seconded by *Commissioner Scumaci*, motion passed (9:00am).

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