

**MEETING MINUTES OF THE PORTSMOUTH
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION**

May 3, 2024 7:30 AM- 9:00 AM

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

Absent: City Manager Karen Conard

City Staff: Assistant City Manager Sean Clancy

Chair Watson called the meeting to order at 7:30 am.

Motion to accept the minutes of the April meeting with no changes made by *Commissioner Weidman*, seconded by *Commissioner Eaton*. Motion passed with one abstention from *Councilor Lombardi*.

Economic Development Office Report:

1. Outdoor Dining update –
 - a. Through 5/3/24: 27 applications, 10 approvals, 1 denial by ordinance;
 - b. The application period is rolling with no end date based on opportunity for new restaurants to apply as they open;
 - c. Staff are working with applicants to assist them in complying with new guidelines.
2. **July 3rd (WEDNESDAY)** a meeting is scheduled to be held in the School Department Board room (2nd floor) at City Hall
3. **December 6th** a meeting is scheduled to be held at Portsmouth High School with the CTE Team/students. Start time: TBA
4. Zoning Changes regarding Electric Vehicle charging station are working their way through the City Council hearing process. The next hearing is scheduled for is City Council meeting on **Monday May 6th**.
5. Offshore Wind efforts in the Gulf of Maine continue to move forward with OSW lease areas going out to auction withing the next month.

Economic Resiliency Working Group presentation- *Commissioner Weidman*

- The ERWG has scheduled a meeting with Jim Jalbert (C&J Bus Lines) to continue research into micro-transit opportunities in Portsmouth.
- The ERWG is also reviewing city wide efforts from the Sustainability Committee, etc.

Business Support Working Group Update – *Commissioner Ward*

- Provided update on Inspections process research and proposed inviting Director of Inspections department to a future EDC meeting.
- Provided update on meetings including a demonstration of Customer Relationship Management database tool with vendor. Reminder: the objective is to better activate this tool and associated processes in support of increasing the quality of two-way communication with our business community.

Chamber Update - *Ben VanCamp*

- Newest Collaboration is to promote, market, and support Art ‘Round Town including a new website, literature and maps.
- Starting to plan Vintage Christmas 2024 with partners.
- Expecting Restaurant Week data/ results withing the next 10 days
- New collaboration effort (marketing/branding) with the maritime related non-profits (education, history, etc.) more to come.
- Working on a new (Fall launch) local gift card program - researching best product/software platform.
- Thursday unofficial kick-off Summer “Hit the Decks.”
- Chamber’s Market Square kiosk opens May 15th.
- StreetLife 2024 will be held at the Pease Tradeport – more to be revealed next week.

Market Square Master Plan Update - *Commissioner Eaton (EDC Rep.)*
Commissioner Weidman (Citizen Rep.)

- The first “working group” meeting was held on April 11th and then a public input session was held on April 24th.
- This is the beginning of a wide public input process which will run for several months as the consultant work to deliver a plan to the City Planning and Sustainability department.
- The word being used for the effort is “refresh” or “refinement” as a way to let people know what the City’s thought process is.
- Public input is intentionally playing a large role in this planning effort.

City Council Update – *Assistant Mayor Kelley*

- South Meeting House: The city is starting a request for proposals to identify options for next use etc.
- Blue Ribbon Housing Committee – start the land lease and disposition process for the Sherburne Property (RFQ - request for qualifications). The City Council is targeting permanent below market rate housing, including the ability to include community space.
- City Council passed a zoning change to increase Gateway1 locations which will open options for additional housing.
- A City Council work session is being planned regarding the proposed Police Community facility.
- Private workforce/below-market-rate housing is being proposed for Lafayette Road on land owned by Service Credit Union. This conversation is in preliminary stages.
- The Blue Ribbon Committee on Housing is meeting twice per month to increase the momentum of addressing this critical need.

Public Comment:

Steve Dunfey is a local writer working on an article for InDepth NH.org regarding the work of the Economic Development Commission. Steve wanted to let the EDC know about his efforts

Motion to adjourn made by *Commissioner Cohen*, seconded by *Commissioner Marchewka* motion passed unanimously.

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

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