

**Economic Development Authority of the City of Portsmouth
February 20, 2024
9:00 AM**

COMMISSIONERS PRESENT: Malcom Mitchell – Chairman
Neal J. Barber – Vice Chairman
Theresa J. Saunders-Smith– Treasurer
Anthony Brown
LaToya Boone
Matthew James

ALSO PRESENT: Brian Donahue – Secretary
Jeff Miller - Deputy City Attorney
Kelsey Swieringa – Assistant City Attorney
William Moody – City Council Liaison
Alisa Winston – PRHA

ABSENT: Barbara Smith - Commissioner
Mimi Terry – Interim City Manager
Lavonda Graham-Williams – City Attorney
Vernon Tillage – City Council Liaison
Flora Berisha – Finance
Kyera Pope - Finance

GUESTS: Mark Hugel – City Councilman
Dorothy Morgan – Deputy City Assessor
Julie Chop, Interim Planning Director
Cliff Copley, HR Alliance
Jim Bento, Fairlead Integrated
A'Daye Foster, Harvey Lindsey
Ryan King, Harvey Lindsey

Welcome & Call to Order

- The Chairman called the meeting to order at 9:05 a.m.

Roll Call

- Mr. Donahue called the roll. There was a quorum.

Minutes

- The minutes from the January 16, 2024, Regular Meeting were presented and adopted.

ACTION: On a motion by Mr. Mitchell and seconded by Ms. Saunders-Smith, the Commissioners approved the minutes from the January 16, 2024, Regular Meeting as presented.

Roll Call Vote: Mr. Barber - yes; Mr. Mitchell - yes; Mr. Brown - yes, Ms. Saunders-Smith - yes; Mrs. Smith - absent; Ms. Boone – yes; Mr. James - yes. Approved 6-0 vote.

Financials

- The FY23 Financial Audit was presented for acceptance by the EDA.

ACTION: On a motion by Mr. Barber and seconded by Ms. Saunders-Smith, the Commissioners approved the FY23 Financial Audit as presented by CliftonLarsonAllen LLP.

Roll Call Vote: Mr. Barber - yes; Mr. Mitchell - yes; Mr. Brown - yes, Ms. Saunders-Smith - yes; Mrs. Smith - absent; Ms. Boone – yes; Mr. James - yes. Approved 6-0 vote.

Old Business

- **North Pier – 0 Harbor Center Ct.** – Once owned by the EDA, the pier was sold to Fairlead Integrated with restrictions for the use of the pier. Mr. Jim Bento of Fairlead gave a presentation explaining the importance and need of the facility. Fairlead is requesting (1) a 5-year extension (until 2031) for completing a building on the site and (2) that Fairlead be allowed to use the North Pier for storage of pieces used for aircraft carriers and other naval vessels prior to construction of the building. Fairlead would improve the North Pier on Wavy St. by adding screening and buffering (trees & bushes).
- **1220 High St.**-Mr. Donahue gave an update on the acquisition of 1220 High St. and stated that Stokes Environmental conducted a Phase II- Environmental Site Assessment on the property. Their findings were not substantial. The site assessment did not find contamination consistent with dry cleaning operations but did find petroleum contamination at lower levels. Stokes Environmental stated this should not have any effect on developing the property. The contractual due diligence period expires on March 15th, 2024.
- **Waterfront Redevelopment**-Mr. Donahue gave an update on the redevelopment of the waterfront. AECOM is finalizing the study presented to the EDA Board in January incorporating comments and feedback from the EDA. The goal is to present a final form of study at a future meeting, then move forward for a formal solicitation process.

New Business

- **Portsmouth@Work** - Mrs. Nahla Saleh, Manager of Workforce Development- provided an update relating to Portsmouth@Work’s programs, plans, achievements and goals.

ACTION: On a motion by Mr. Barber and seconded by Ms. Saunders-Smith, the Commissioners approved providing \$500.00 in funding support to the YouthBuild Love Campaign.

Roll Call Vote: Mr. Barber - yes; Mr. Mitchell - yes; Mr. Brown - yes, Ms. Saunders-Smith - yes; Mrs. Smith - absent; Ms. Boone – yes; Mr. James - yes. Approved 6-0 vote.

- **Small Business Development Update** - Ms. Autumn Bailey, Senior Business Development Specialist, provided an overview of the Smart Start Small Business Development Grants, Smart Start Business Acceleration Grants, and the training programs offered by Economic Development to assist small business owners and businesses.
- **Real Property Investment Grants** – Mrs. Aimee Tracy, Business Development Specialist, provided an update of Real Property Investment Grants awarded YTD. She also provided the 2nd round of FY24 Business Development Grant applications.

ACTION: On a motion by Mr. Brown and seconded by Mr. Barber, the Commissioners approved the Real Property Investment Grants for 215 High Street and 2330 Portsmouth Blvd.

Roll Call Vote: Mr. Barber - yes; Mr. Mitchell - yes; Mr. Brown - yes, Ms. Saunders-Smith - yes; Mrs. Smith - absent; Ms. Boone – yes; Mr. James - yes. Approved 6-0 vote.

Closed Meeting

ACTION: At 10:28 a.m. Mr. Barber, seconded by Mrs. Saunders-Smith, moved to go into a closed meeting: (a) pursuant to Virginia Code Subsection 2.2-3711 A.3 for the purpose of discussing the acquisition of real property where discussion in an open meeting would adversely affect the bargaining position or negotiating strategy of the public body, specifically regarding 1028 High Street, 1013-15 Queen Street, and 400 Hatton Street; and (b) pursuant to Virginia Code Subsection 2.2-3711 A.8 for the purpose of consultation with legal counsel employed or retained by a public body regarding specific legal matters requiring the provision of legal advice by such counsel, specifically regarding O Harbor Center Court.

Roll Call Vote: Mr. Barber - yes; Mr. Mitchell - yes; Mr. Brown – yes; Ms. Saunders-Smith – yes; Mrs. Smith – absent; Ms. Boone – yes; Mr. James-yes. Approved 6-0 vote.

Open Meeting

ACTION: At 10:45 a.m., Mr. Barber, seconded by Ms. Saunders-Smith, moved that each Commissioner certify that, to the best of his or her knowledge: (i) only public business matters lawfully exempted from open meeting requirements under the Virginia Freedom of Information Act, and (ii) only such public business matters as were identified in the motion by which the closed meeting was convened were heard, discussed or considered in the closed meeting just concluded.

Roll Call Vote: Mr. Barber - yes; Mr. Mitchell - yes; Mr. Brown - yes, Ms. Saunders-Smith yes; Mrs. Smith - absent; Ms. Boone – yes; Mr. James-yes. Approved 6-0 vote.

Items Submitted by Commissioners

- Mr. Mitchell asked if there is a way to incentivize shopping centers to beautify their sites. Mr. Donahue mentioned that there are funds available in the Business Development category of

EDA Meeting
February 20, 2024

- the budget.
- Mr. Barber stated he was impressed by the achievements of Portsmouth@Work and the small business efforts made by staff, and he would like to see a way to show the return on investment.
- Ms. Saunders-Smith would like to see a report on all the good things that the Portsmouth Economic Development office is doing. Mr. Donahue mentioned the office will be issuing a quarterly newsletter beginning in April.

Report Backs

- Mr. Donahue stated the EDA budget committee met on February 12th to kick off the planning of the FY25 operating budget. The committee is planning to have a draft of the budget for consideration by the March 19th meeting.
- Mr. Donahue mentioned Portsmouth Public Schools Starbase Victory STEM AWARDS GALA– “Reach for the Stars” sponsorship opportunity.

ACTION: On a motion by Ms. Saunders-Smith and seconded by Mr. Barber, the Commissioners approved the sponsorship of \$1,000.00 in support of Portsmouth Public Schools Starbase Victory STEM AWARDS GALA– “Reach for the Stars”

Roll Call Vote: Mr. Barber - yes; Mr. Mitchell - yes; Mr. Brown - yes, Ms. Saunders-Smith - yes; Mrs. Smith - absent; Ms. Boone – yes; Mr. James - yes. Approved 6-0 vote.

ACTION: On a motion by Mr. Brown and seconded by Ms. Saunders-Smith, the Commissioners approved to increase the EDA sponsorship to \$2,500.00 in support of Portsmouth Public Schools Starbase Victory STEM AWARDS GALA– “Reach for the Stars”

Roll Call Vote: Mr. Barber - yes; Mr. Mitchell - yes; Mr. Brown - yes, Ms. Saunders-Smith - yes; Mrs. Smith - absent; Ms. Boone – yes; Mr. James - yes. Approved 6-0 vote.

- Mr. Donahue mentioned a meeting with Rich Meredith of Meredith Construction Company. The Meredith Company is working on the railyard redevelopment in Norfolk over by Hampton Blvd. Mr. Meredith has offered to host staff and the EDA Board on a tour of the project. This would be a good comparison with the innovation district. Mr. Donahue will coordinate a tour.

Adjourn

- The meeting adjourned at 11:04 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Brian Donahue, Secretary

Malcom Mitchell, Chair