

**Economic Development Authority of the City of Portsmouth
August 18, 2025
9:00 AM**

COMMISSIONERS PRESENT: Malcom Mitchell – Chairman
Neal Barber – Vice Chairman
Theresa J. Saunders-Smith – Treasurer (9:04am)
Anthony Brown
Joe Harmon

ALSO PRESENT: Brian Donahue – Secretary
Charles Bauman III – Assistant Secretary
Jeff Miller – Deputy City Attorney
Vernon Tillage – City Council Liaison
Kyera Pope – Finance
Lakeitha Forest – Finance

ABSENT: Camille Cherry – Commissioner
Kelsey Swieringa – Assistant City Attorney
Alisa Winston-PRHA
William Moody – City Council Liaison
Lavonda Graham-Williams – City Attorney
Steven Carter – City Manager

GUESTS: Steve Edwards – City Assessor
Mark Hugel – City Councilman (9:09am)
Tripp Muldrow – Arnett Muldrow Associates
Peter Glagola – Director of Marketing & Communications
Jim Cullen – Mayor’s Military Affairs Committee (9:09am)

Welcome & Call to Order

- The Chairman called the meeting to order at 9:03 a.m.

Roll Call

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

Minutes

- The minutes from the July 21, 2025, Regular Meeting were presented and adopted.

ACTION: On a motion by Mrs. Saunders-Smith and seconded by Mr. Harmon, the Commissioners approved the minutes from the July 21, 2025, Regular Meeting as presented.

Roll Call Vote: Mr. Barber - yes; Mr. Mitchell - yes; Mr. Brown - yes, Ms. Saunders-Smith - yes; Ms. Cherry - absent; Mr. Harmon-yes. Approved 5-0 vote.

Presentation

- Tripp Muldrow of Arnett, Muldrow & Associates presented a retail market snapshot of Olde Towne Portsmouth, with a custom trade area including Portsmouth, Suffolk and portions of Chesapeake. Commissioners emphasized focus on locally owned, boutique, and experiential retail. Staff noted a full inventory of vacant spaces in Olde Towne has been completed, and outreach to property owners is underway.

Financials

- Kyera Pope, Controller with the City of Portsmouth Finance Department presented the EDA's Quarterly Financial Report through June 2025.

Old Business

- **1028 High St** – Julie Chop, Real Estate Development Specialist, reported that the bid package for the demolition of 1028 High Street is in procurement for issuance of an Invitation for Bids and that sewer and water lines will be capped to expedite demolition.
- **1117-1121 High St.** – The big package for the renovation of 1117-1121 High Street is with procurement for issuance of an Invitation for Bids, and asbestos abatement specifications have been updated to reflect renovation plans.
- **1220 High St.** – The EDA previously approved \$33,485 for construction documents for building renovations; however, an additional \$4,619 is required for a pre-bid cost estimate, and an asbestos survey costing \$1,100 will be executed.
- **934 High St.**– The EDA's acquisition of property at 934 High Street closed on August 14, 2024 at a purchase price of \$400,000.
- **Small Business Loan Program** – Three proposals were received and reviewed for administration of the Small Business Loan Program by an EDA and city evaluation panel. Bridging Virginia was selected as the vendor, with an annual administrative fee of \$100,000 which is within the EDA's FY26 \$125,000 budget.

ACTION: At 9:56am Mr. Brown, seconded by Mrs. Saunders-Smith, moved to approve Bridging Virginia as the administrator of the Small Business Loan Program.

Roll Call Vote: Mr. Barber - yes; Mr. Mitchell - yes; Mr. Brown - yes, Ms. Saunders-Smith - yes; Ms. Cherry - absent; Mr. Harmon-yes. Approved 5-0 vote.

- **Waterfront Development Real Estate Consulting Services** – An RFP for Waterfront Development Real Estate Consulting Services was issued on February 24, 2025 and received six responses. After review by a city evaluation panel and interviews of the highest ranking consultants, AECOM was selected as the most qualified proposer. The contract value is \$169,610 for a two-phased scope of work.

ACTION: At 10:00am Mr. Barber, seconded by Mr. Brown, moved to approve the contract with AECOM for the Waterfront Development Real Estate Consultant Services.

Roll Call Vote: Mr. Barber - yes; Mr. Mitchell - yes; Mr. Brown - yes, Ms. Saunders-Smith - yes; Ms. Cherry - absent; Mr. Harmon-yes. Approved 5-0 vote.

- **EDA Retreat Action Items**

- **Waterfront Development** – Brian Donahue, Director of Economic Development, provided a recap of the status of action items for the Crawford Bay Waterfront Development project.
 - **LINC District** – Peter Glagola, Director of Marketing and Communications for the City of Portsmouth, presented two draft logos and branding materials for the LINC District. Discussion focused on design preferences, color usage, potential community involvement, and paying homage to Lincolnville’s history. No final decision was made, and further review will take place.
 - **Entertainment District** – Mr. Donahue reported that the Landing Hotel project near Rivers Casino have received permits and is scheduled for groundbreaking. Coordination with Rush Street Gaming regarding compatible land uses adjacent to the casino for EDA owned land is underway, and a market analysis is being considered.
- **Portsmouth Business Emergency Preparedness Seminar** – Charles Bauman III, Assistant Director of Economic Development, and Tanisha Golston, Business Development Specialist, provided an overview of the Business Emergency Preparedness Seminar that was held on August 15, 2025 with approximately fifteen attendees and featured presenters from the City’s Emergency Management office, the National Weather Service, and NASA. These seminars will continue on a quarterly basis.
 - **Retail Industry Roundtable** – The Retail Industry Roundtable is scheduled for August 18 , 2025 at 12:00pm and has 26 registrants.
 - **EDA/City Council Joint Meeting** – The joint meeting with City Council is scheduled for August 25, 2025 at 5:30pm in the City Council Conference Room. Topics will include small business programs, working capital loan program, Bloom Market Pop-Up, Crawford Bay waterfront development, LINC District, Entertainment District, and downtown housing initiatives.

New Business

- **FY24 and FY25 Business Investment Grant Recipient Report** – Autumn Bailey, Senior Business Development Specialist, provided updates on FY24 Business Investment Grant recipients. Data for FY25 is not yet available. For FY24, Real Property Investment Grant recipients have a 52% active license status, Business Development Grants recipients have 44% active licenses, and Business Acceleration Grants have 88% active licenses. Outreach is underway to address non-renewals and businesses that may have moved location.
- **Business Investment Grant Update** – Ms. Bailey provided updates on the EDA’s FY26 Business Investment Grant Program for the 1st Round of funding to include the following:
 - **Smart Start Business Development Grant** – In FY26 YTD, there have been 9 applications received which are in the approval process.
 - **Smart Start Business Acceleration Grant** – In FY26 there have been 2 applications received that which

are in the approval process.

- **Real Property Investment Grant** – In FY26 YTD there have been 17 applications received and 12 grants awarded, for a total of \$251,217 awarded, leaving the fund balance at \$98,783.
- **Real Property Investment Grant Program** – Christopher Tillet, Manager of Business Development, presented two new Real Property Investment Grant applications for approval.
 - **5911 Portsmouth Blvd.** – Elam Organization has applied for \$25,000 for expansion of salon suites.
 - **3328 Victory Blvd.** – Styles & Cuts School of Barbering and Cosmetology has applied for \$25,000 for building renovations.

ACTION: At 10:43am Mr. Brown, seconded by Mr. Barber, moved to approve the Real Property Investment Grant applications for 5911 Portsmouth Blvd. and 3328 Victory Blvd. as presented.

Roll Call Vote: Mr. Barber - yes; Mr. Mitchell - yes; Mr. Brown - yes, Ms. Saunders-Smith - yes; Ms. Cherry - absent; Mr. Harmon-yes. Approved 5-0 vote.

Closed Meeting – There was no need for a closed meeting.

Items Submitted by Commissioners

- Chairman Mitchell suggested inviting an AI/technology expert to brief the EDA on resulting workforce and economic impacts.
- Commissioner Harmon inquired about the status of the KFC location on London Blvd.
- Chairman Mitchell advised that Commissioner Matthew James has resigned from the EDA.

Report Backs

- Mr. Donahue advised that Christopher Tillett has resigned from his role as Manager of Business Development to relocate to Florida, and the board expressed appreciation for his service.

Adjourn

- The meeting adjourned at 10:54am.

Respectfully submitted,

Brian Donahue, Secretary

Malcom Mitchell, Chair