

**Economic Development Authority of the City of Portsmouth
April 21, 2026
9:00 AM**

- COMMISSIONERS PRESENT:** Malcom Mitchell – Chairman
Neal Barber – Vice Chairman
Theresa Saunders-Smith – Treasurer
Heather Harkleroad
Joe Harmon
Ross Morgan
- ALSO PRESENT:** Brian Donahue – Secretary
Jeff Miller – Deputy City Attorney
Kelsey Swieringa – Assistant City Attorney
Steven Carter – City Manager
Stephanie Council – Finance
Lakeitha Forest – Finance
Steve Edwards – City Assessor
Vernon Tillage – City Council Liaison
Mark Hugel – City Council Liaison
- ABSENT:** Camille Cherry – Commissioner
Charles Bauman – Assistant Secretary
Derek Challenger – Interim City Attorney
Alisa Winston – PRHA
William Moody – City Council Liaison
- GUESTS:** Stephen Meyers – Syncon, LLC
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Welcome & Call to Order

- The Chairman called the meeting to order at 9:01 a.m.

Roll Call

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

Minutes

- The minutes from the March 17, 2026, Regular Meeting were presented and adopted.

ACTION: On a motion by Mr. Mitchell and seconded by Mrs. Saunders-Smith, the Commissioners approved the minutes from March 17, 2026, Regular Meeting as presented.

Roll Call Vote: Mr. Mitchell- yes; Mr. Barber - yes; Mrs. Saunders-Smith - yes;

EDA Meeting
April 21, 2026

Mrs. Cherry - absent; Ms. Harkleroad - yes; Mr. Harmon - yes; Mr. Morgan - yes.
Approved 6-0 vote.

Financials

- **Quarterly Financial Report** – Ms. Council, Interim Director of Finance, presented the Quarterly Financial Report for March 2026. The report noted \$5.7 million in cash and a net position of \$20 million, a slight decrease from the previous year.
- **FY27 Proposed Budget** – Mrs. Saunders-Smith presented the EDA's proposed FY26 Operating Budget for the Commissioners consideration. The EDA is scheduled to adopt a finalized budget at its May 19, 2026 meeting.

Old Business

- **Waterfront Development** – Mr. Donahue provided an update on the Crawford Bay Waterfront Development Project. A Request for Qualifications (RFQ) for interested development partners was issued on March 4, 2026. A pre-proposal conference was held on March 16 which attracted over 61 participants. The deadline for RFQ submissions is May 7, 2026. Interest from the regional development community, as well as statewide and throughout the Mid-Atlantic area has been expressed. Shortlisting of RFQ submissions is scheduled to occur by May 29, 2026. Following shortlisting, the EDA will issue a Request for Proposals (RFP) to the developers in June 2026.
- **LINC District**
 - **Property Updates** – Ms. Chop, Real Estate Development Specialist, provided an update on EDA activities in the LINC District.
 - **1028 High St., 1013 Queen St., & 1015 Queen Street** – Demolition activities have begun and construction fencing has been placed around the perimeter of the property. The contractor is expected to complete demolition work before the upcoming Wall Street Mural Festival on May 8-9.
 - **1117-1121 High St.** – GC Commercial was selected as the contractor for building renovations at 1117-1121 High St., The contractor is currently finalizing building permits with an expected 90-day completion timeline once a Notice to Proceed is issued.
 - **1220 High St.** – A bid package for exterior renovations and roof replacement at 1220 High St. was issued March 12, 2026. A non-mandatory pre-bid conference was held on March 19. Bids were read publicly on April 15, with Bofam Contractors Group identified as the lowest, most responsive bidder, with a bid of \$268,000.

ACTION: At 9:31 a.m. Mr. Barber, seconded by Ms. Harkleroad, moved that the Commissioners authorize the acceptance of the lowest, most responsive bidder provided they provide adequate certifications necessary to complete the project.

Roll Call Vote: Mr. Mitchell- yes; Mr. Barber - yes; Mrs. Saunders-Smith - yes; Mrs. Cherry - absent; Ms. Harkleroad - yes; Mr. Harmon - yes; Mr. Morgan - yes. Approved 6-0 vote.

- **934 High St.** – Moseley Architects has completed a Structural Assessment Report for the building at 934 High St. The assessment identified significant structural issues requiring repairs, though the building remains sound and secure for future repurposing. The building's facade is viable for preservation, potentially qualifying for historic tax credits. The EDA directed staff to obtain professional cost estimates for the necessary structural repairs to better understand the scope of work. Staff stated that string lighting has been installed in the adjacent Wall Street alleyway in preparation for the upcoming Mural Festival events.
- **817-833 High Street** – A Phase 2 Environmental Site Assessment was performed on these properties to evaluate if Recognized Environmental Conditions (RECs) previously identified in a Phase 1 report had resulted in any impacts to the soil and groundwater. Contractors collected soil and groundwater samples from locations considered most likely to be affected by the property's history. The report recommended that these findings be sent to the Virginia Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) which indicated that no evidence of petroleum was found above reporting limits. No request for additional petroleum investigations is recommended unless future use of the property is residential. Staff will consult with the Environmental Consultant to determine best course of action.
- **Cradock Property Update** – Ms. Chop provided an update on 53, 60 Afton Parkway and 73 Farragut Street. Demolition plans have been submitted to the city for review. Approval is anticipated within the next two months. The primary use for both this site and the adjacent city-owned property is infill residential development. It was noted that the nearby fire station may be relocated, meaning that the existing fire station building may eventually become available for potential future use, though no determination has been made yet on whether to renovate or demolish it. There were suggestions to consider potential uses such as a recreation center, community center, or green space to enhance the area's value and align with the nearby library.
- **EDA/City Council Joint Meeting - May 11, 2026, 5:30pm** – Mr. Donahue reminded the Commissioners of the upcoming EDA/City Council Joint Meeting on May 11, 2026. The Commissioners engaged in conversations about topics of discussion for the meeting, including topics to highlight, such as the Crawford Bay Waterfront development, the LINC District initiatives, and strategies for vacant properties.

New Business

- **Sail Virginia 2026 Portsmouth** – Peter Glagola, Director of Marketing and Communications, provided information on Sail Virginia 2026 Portsmouth, a significant community event scheduled for June 19–22, 2026, which serves as Portsmouth's contribution to the nation's 250th anniversary. The festival will feature four tall sailing ships moored at High Street Landing, including the French Navy vessel L'Intrepid, the Lady Maryland, the Eliza (from Galveston, Texas), and the Gazella.

EDA Meeting
April 21, 2026

On June 19th, the event will host a Juneteenth celebration in partnership with the Urban League, featuring music on the main stage and historical reenactments on the Green Street stage.

Additional attractions include a dual Ferris wheel on Water Street, a carousel, STEM activities featuring drones and RCs, and a "Build a Boat" competition with races in North Landing. A chalk mural competition will take place on Washington Street, and approximately 100 vendors will set up between the 400 and 700 blocks of High Street.

High Street will be closed to traffic from Water Street to Effingham Street, starting Thursday night at midnight until Monday night.

The city is conducting a "60-day project" to pressure wash, landscape, and enhance the aesthetic of High Street in preparation for the event, followed by a city-wide "ROC the Block" cleanup on May 13.

Updates, vendor lists, and entertainment schedules will be available on the event website at sailvirginia2026portsmouth.com

- **Announcements and Ribbon Cuttings** – Mr. Donahue shared the following ribbon cutting event information.
 - Styles & Kutz School of Barbering, 3328 Victory Blvd. – April 29, 11:00am
 - Radian Forge, 176 Wavy Street – April 30, 10:00am
 - Bains Pointe, 1100 High Street – May 5, 11:00am

Closed Meeting

ACTION: At 10:12 a.m. Mr. Barber, seconded by Mrs. Saunders-Smith moved to go into a closed meeting 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 and negotiating strategy of the public body specifically regarding strategic acquisitions.

Roll Call Vote: Mr. Mitchell- yes; Mr. Barber - yes; Mrs. Saunders-Smith - yes; Mrs. Cherry - absent; Ms. Harkleroad - yes; Mr. Harmon - yes; Mr. Morgan - yes. Approved 6-0 vote.

Open Meeting

ACTION: At 10:34 a.m. Mr. Barber, seconded by Mrs. 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. Mitchell- yes; Mr. Barber - yes; Mrs. Saunders-Smith - yes; Mrs. Cherry - absent; Ms. Harkleroad - yes; Mr. Harmon - yes; Mr. Morgan - yes. Approved 6-0 vote.

Items Submitted by Commissioners

- None

Report Backs

- Mr. Donahue advised that the Hampton Roads Chamber - Portsmouth State of the City Event will be held at Rivers Casino, May 8, 2026, 12:00-2:00pm. A table has been secured for the EDA Commissioners to attend.
- Mr. Donahue shared that the outdoor string lighting project at 934 High St. and Wall St. has been completed before the upcoming Mural festival. The EDA was recognized for its financial support for the project and Ms. Chop was thanked for her efforts to complete the project.

Adjourn

- The meeting adjourned at 10:45 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Brian Donahue, Secretary

Malcom Mitchell, Chair