

**Economic Development Authority of the City of Portsmouth  
April 15th, 2025  
9:00 AM**

**COMMISSIONERS PRESENT:**

Malcom Mitchell – Chairman  
Neal Barber – Vice Chairman  
Theresa J. Saunders-Smith – Treasurer  
Anthony Brown  
Joe Harmon  
Camille Cherry  
Matthew James

**ALSO PRESENT:**

Brian Donahue – Secretary  
Charles J. Bauman, III – Assistant Secretary  
Kelsey Swieringa – Assistant City Attorney (9:07am)  
Kyera Pope – Finance  
Lakeitha Forest – Finance (9:10am)  
Mark Hugel – Councilman (9:21am)

**ABSENT:**

Jeff Miller – Deputy City Attorney  
Alisa Winston – PRHA  
William Moody – City Council Liaison  
Lavonda Graham-Williams – City Attorney  
Steven Carter – City Manager  
Vernon Tillage – City Council Liaison

**GUESTS:**

Steve Edwards – City Assessor  
Dorothy Morgon – Deputy City Assessor  
Jim Cullen – Mayor’s Military Affairs Committee  
William Dodson, Councilman  
Michelle Wren, Portsmouth Partnership  
Liz Pasqualini, Portsmouth Partnership  
Zeinoun Kawwass, Davis Agency  
Richard Worchol, Davis Agency  
Stephen Myers, SB Ballard

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**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 March 18, 2025, 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 the March 18, 2025, Regular Meeting as presented.

**Roll Call Vote:** Mr. Barber - yes; Mr. Mitchell - yes; Mr. Brown - yes, Ms. Saunders-Smith - yes; Ms. Cherry - yes; Mr. James – yes; Mr. Harmon-yes. Approved 7-0 vote.

### **Financials**

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

### **Old Business**

- **1117-1121 High St.** – Ms. Julie Chop, Real Estate Development Specialist with Economic Development, reported that construction documents for the renovation of 1117 & 1121 High St. have been submitted for City review. Plans include a proposal from Columbia Gas to install a gas line at a cost of \$55,000. The board agreed to move forward with the gas line installation.
- **1028 High St.** – Ms. Julie Chop reported that demolition plans for 1028 High St., 400 Hatton St., 1013-1017 Queen St. have been submitted for City review. Demolition is anticipated to begin shortly after the Wall Street Mural Festival on May 10, 2025.
- **FY26 EDA Budget Presentation** – Mrs. Saunders-Smith presented the EDA's FY2026 Budget proposal. Notable changes include a \$50,000 reduction to the Smart Start Business Acceleration Grant, reallocating those funds to the Real Property Investment Grant. Additionally, \$250,000 was allocated to the planned Small Business Loan Program.

### **New Business**

- **Appointment of EDA Assistant Secretary** - Mr. Charles J. Bauman, III was nominated and unanimously approved as the new EDA Assistant Secretary.

**ACTION:** On a motion by Mr. Barber and seconded by Mr. Brown, the Commissioners approve the appointment of Charles Bauman to the position of Assistant Secretary

**Roll Call Vote:** Mr. Barber - yes; Mr. Mitchell - yes; Mr. Brown - yes, Ms. Saunders-Smith - yes; Ms. Cherry - yes; Mr. James – yes; Mr. Harmon-yes. Approved 7-0 vote.

- **Shop the Block High St. Festival** – Ms. Michelle Wren and Ms. Liz Pasqualini from the Portsmouth Partnership gave a presentation on the upcoming Shop the Block High Street Festival, scheduled for September 2025. The event will expand along High Street, featuring more local businesses, outdoor dining, and a DORA (Designated Outdoor Refreshment Area) permit. They requested \$45,000 from the EDA Board. Board members inquired about success metrics, which included foot traffic, revenue, and

EDA Meeting

April 15, 2025

ferry ridership.

- **EDA Retreat Review-** Mr. Mitchell shared that the EDA's April 11, 2025 retreat was successful. Further discussion on next steps will occur at the EDA's May meeting following a full review.
- **Innovation District Presentation** – Mrs. Saunders-Smith presented conceptual ideas for the Innovation District, including:
  - A Dining Hall to support aspiring restaurateurs.
  - A Maker's Market to showcase local artisans.
  - A curated Consignment Marketplace to promote sustainability and local commerce.
- **Innovation District Branding-** Ms. Zeinoun Kawwass and Mr. Richard Worchol from the Davis Agency presented the branding concept for the Innovation District. The selected name The LINC stands for Launch, Innovate, Network, Create. "LINC" also honors Lincolnsville, Portsmouth's historic African American community.
- **State of the City – May 2, 2025-** Mr. Brian Donahue invited the board members to the State of the City event scheduled for May 2, 2025, at Rivers Casino.

#### **Closed Meeting**

**ACTION:** At 10:29a.m. Mr. Barber, seconded by Mr. Brown 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 and disposition of real property where discussion in an open meeting would adversely affect the bargaining position or negotiating strategy of the public body, specifically regarding strategic acquisition and disposition within the Innovation District, and the dispositions of 219 Pavilion, 8 Crawford Parkway, 2 Crawford Parkway, 2 Harbor Court, and 3 Harbor Court; and (B) pursuant to Virginia Code Subsection 2.2-3711 A.6 for the purpose of discussing the investment of public funds where competition or bargaining is involved, where, if made public initially, the financial interest of the governmental unit would be adversely affected, specifically regarding the Small Business Finance RFP and Shop the Block.

**Roll Call Vote:** Mr. Barber - yes; Mr. Mitchell - yes; Mr. Brown - yes, Ms. Saunders-Smith - yes; Ms. Cherry - yes; Mr. James – yes; Mr. Harmon-yes. Approved 7-0 vote.

#### **Open Meeting**

**ACTION:** At 11:43 am Mr. Barber, seconded by Mr. Brown, 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; Ms. Cherry - yes; Mr. James – yes; Mr. Harmon-yes. Approved 7-0 vote.

**ACTION:** At 11:45am Mr. Barber, seconded by Ms. Saunders-Smith, moved to amend the agenda for inclusion of the acquisition of 934 High Street, extension of feasibility period for 219 Pavilion Drive and allocation of funds to the Shop the Block High Street Festival.

EDA Meeting  
April 15, 2025

**Roll Call Vote:** Mr. Barber - yes; Mr. Mitchell - yes; Mr. Brown - yes, Ms. Saunders-Smith - yes; Ms. Cherry - yes; Mr. James – yes; Mr. Harmon-yes. Approved 7-0 vote.

**ACTION:** At 11:46 Mr. Barber, seconded by Ms. Saunders-Smith moved to approve the purchase of 934 High Street for \$400,000.

**Roll Call Vote:** Mr. Barber - yes; Mr. Mitchell - yes; Mr. Brown - yes, Ms. Saunders-Smith - yes; Ms. Cherry - yes; Mr. James – yes; Mr. Harmon-yes. Approved 7-0 vote.

**Action:** At 11:48am Ms. Saunders-Smith, seconded by Mr. Barber moved to approve extension of the feasibility period through May 15, 2025.

**Roll Call Vote:** Mr. Barber - yes; Mr. Mitchell - yes; Mr. Brown - yes, Ms. Saunders-Smith - yes; Ms. Cherry - yes; Mr. James – yes; Mr. Harmon-yes. Approved 7-0 vote.

**Action:** At 11:48am Mr. Barber, seconded by Mr. Brown moved to allocate \$35,000 to the Shop the Block Festival.

**Roll Call Vote:** Mr. Barber - yes; Mr. Mitchell - yes; Mr. Brown - yes, Ms. Saunders-Smith - yes; Ms. Cherry - yes; Mr. James – yes; Mr. Harmon-yes. Approved 7-0 vote.

#### **Items Submitted by Commissioners**

- Mr. Mitchell requested regular updates on any issues or delays related to the Crawford Bay Development project.

#### **Report Backs**

- Mr. Donahue reminded commissioners that the Portsmouth Invitational Tournament is scheduled for April 16-19, 2025 and there are two sets of tickets available for each board member.

#### **Adjourn**

- The meeting adjourned at 11:50am.

Respectfully submitted,

Brian Donahue, Secretary

Malcom Mitchell, Chair