Economic Development Authority of the City of Portsmouth November 19, 2024 9:00 AM

COMMISSIONERS PRESENT: Malcom Mitchell – Chairman

Theresa J. Saunders-Smith – Treasurer

Anthony Brown Matthew James Joe Harmon

ALSO PRESENT: Brian Donahue – Secretary

> Jeff Miller – Deputy City Attorney Steven Carter - City Manager

Vernon Tillage – City Council Liaison

ABSENT:

Neal Barber – Vice Chairman

William Moody - City Council Liaison

Lavonda Graham-Williams – City Attorney Kelsey Swieringa – Assistant City Attorney

Kyera Pope – Finance Alisa Winston – PRHA

Barbara Smith

GUESTS: Steve Edwards – City Assessor

Dorothy Morgan – Deputy City Assessor

Drew Lumpkin – Hampton Roads Executive Round Table

Michelle Wren - Portsmouth Partnership Mark Hugel – City Councilman (9:08am)

Sophia Zheng – Bludot Technologies (10:23am, virtual attendee)

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 October 15, 2024, Regular Meeting were presented and adopted.

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ACTION: On a motion by Mr. Mitchell and seconded by Mr. Brown, the Commissioners approved the minutes from the October 19, 2024, Regular Meeting as presented.

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

Presentation

Mr. Drew Lumpkin, Vice President of External Affairs with the Hampton Roads Executive Round Table
provided a presentation on the findings of the Hampton Roads Outmigration Study. He presented data
on workforce outmigration from Hampton Roads in comparison to other markets in Virginia and
competing states, and the motivating factors behind the relocations.

Old Business

- Bloom Market Update- Mrs. Michelle Wren, Executive Director, of the Portsmouth Partnership
 presented an update on the progress, revenue, and levels of success of the vendors within the Bloom
 Market pop-up retail shop.
- Bains Point 1100 High St. Mr. Donahue reported that the Woda Cooper Companies closed on the
 purchase of 1100 High St. for the Bains Pointe project, a 50-unit affordable apartment community, at
 the end of October. He stated that an official groundbreaking ceremony is tentatively scheduled for
 January 28, 2025.

New Business

- **Business Investment Grant Program Update** Ms. Autumn Bailey, Senior Business Development Specialist, presented an update on the Grant Program.
 - Smart Start Business Development Grant For Round 2, ending October 2024, there were 12 grant applications received with 2 grants approved, for a total of \$4,000.00 approved.
 - o **Smart Start Business Acceleration Grant** For Round 2, there were a total of 3 grant applications received, no applications were approved as of the meeting date.
 - Real Property Investment Grant The RPIG program is currently closed due to funding limitations.
- **Small Business Programming Update -** Ms. Bailey updated the Board on the following future training/event programs:

EDA Business Investment Grant info Session
 Business Plan Preparation
 December 4, 2024
 December 11, 2024

Portsmouth Procurement Contracting Institute
 January 9 - February 27, 2025

• **Bludot Open Rewards Program**- Ms. Bailey, Business Development Specialist and Ms. Sophia Zheng, CEO of Bludot Technologies, presented the Bludot Open Rewards Program which incentivizes citizens to shop locally by offering rewards through a mobile app that can be gained and redeemed at local, participating Portsmouth based businesses.

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ACTION: At 10:56am Ms. Saunders-Smith, seconded by Mr. Brown, move to allocate \$5,000 to the Bludot Rewards Program for a one-year period.

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

Closed Meeting

ACTION: At 10:59a.m. Ms. Saunders-Smith, seconded by Mr. Brown, move 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 strategic acquisitions and the dispositions of 1021-1107 High Street and 1220 High Street; 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 sponsorship requests from FTP and sponsorship of the Annual Business Appreciation Reception.

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

Open Meeting

<u>ACTION:</u> At 12:39pm Mr. Mitchell, 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 - absent; Mr. Mitchell - yes; Mr. Brown - yes, Ms. Saunders-Smith - absent; Mrs. Smith - absent; Mr. James – yes; Mr. Harmon-yes. Approved 4-0 vote.

Items Submitted by Commissioners

- Mr. Harmon inquired about the status of the former John Kool Auto Dealership at 1313 High St., Mr. Donahue reported that the property was sold to a private buyer.
- Mr. Harmon stated that there is an interest from the owners of Chik-fil-A in forming a Midtown Business Association.
- Mr. Mitchell inquired about a demolition date for the Holmes property. Mr. Donahue reported that a demolition plan is being procured.
- Mr. Brown inquired as to whether there is a fund to assist local businesses who have experienced loss due to theft, Mr. Donahue reported that there is no existing EDA fund for that purpose.

Report Backs

- Mr. Donahue introduced the following new Economic Development Department staff members.
 - o Ms. Tanisha Golston, Business Development Specialist
 - o Ms. Faith Griffin, Administrative Coordinator II

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<u>Adjourn</u>

• The meeting adjourned at 12:46pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Brian Donahue, Secretary

Malcom Mitchell, Chair