

**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)

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



**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**

**ACTION:** 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.
  - Ms. Tanisha Golston, Business Development Specialist
  - Ms. Faith Griffin, Administrative Coordinator II

EDA Meeting  
November 19, 2024

**Adjourn**

- The meeting adjourned at 12:46pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Brian Donahue, Secretary

Malcom Mitchell, Chair