

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

COMMISSIONERS PRESENT: Malcom Mitchell – Chairman
Neal Barber – Vice Chairman
Anthony Brown
Joe Harmon
Camille Cherry
Matthew James

ALSO PRESENT: Brian Donahue – Secretary
Jeff Miller – Deputy City Attorney
Vernon Tillage – City Council Liaison

ABSENT: Theresa J. Saunders-Smith – Treasurer
Kelsey Swieringa – Assistant City Attorney
Alisa Winston – PRHA
Kyera Pope – Finance
William Moody – City Council Liaison
Steven Carter – City Manager

GUESTS: Dorothy Morgon – Deputy City Assessor
Mark Hugel – City Councilman
Jim Cullen – Mayor’s Military Affairs Committee- Chair
John Joyce – Support Portsmouth Public Art
Matt Diggs – Support Portsmouth Public Art

Welcome & Call to Order

- The Chairman called the meeting to order at 9:06 a.m.

Roll Call

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

Minutes

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

ACTION: On a motion by Mr. Mitchell and seconded by Mr. Brown, the Commissioners approved the minutes from the January 21, 2025, Regular Meeting as presented.

Roll Call Vote: Mr. Barber - yes; Mr. Mitchell - yes; Mr. Brown - yes, Ms. Saunders-Smith - absent; Ms. Cherry - yes; Mr. James – yes; Mr. Harmon-yes. Approved 6-0 vote.

Old Business

- **1117-1121 High St** – Ms. Chop, Real Estate Specialist, reported that preliminary construction documents for the roof replacement of 1117 and 1121 High Street and the interior renovations of 1117 High Street have been received. Ms. Chop stated that once Columbia Gas provides an estimate to run a gas line to 1117 High Street, the documents should be completed and will be ready to advertise for bid.
- **1028 High St.** – Ms. Chop reported that Kimley Horn is currently in the process of drafting demolition plans for 1028 High Street. The plans are projected to be completed in 30 to 60 days.
- **FY26 EDA Budget Committee** – Mr. Donahue reported that the FY26 EDA Budget Committee has been established by the Chairman to include Mrs. Saunders-Smith and Mrs. Cherry. The first meeting will be held Thursday, February 20th, 2025. The intent is to present a draft budget to the Committee at the March 17th meeting.
- **EDA Annual Retreat** – Mr. Mitchell deferred discussion of the EDA Annual Retreat to the Closed Meeting portion.
- **STARBASE Victory Gala – March 13, 2025** – Mr. Donahue provided a reminder of the STARBASE Victory Gala event that will be held at Rivers Casino on March 13th, 2025. The EDA is sponsoring the event and has a table for Commissioners who would like to attend.

New Business

- **SPPA Wall Street Mural Festival** – Mr. John Joyce and Mr. Matt Diggs of Support Portsmouth Public Art (SPPA), gave a presentation detailing the success of the 2024 Wall Street Mural Festival and the proposed expansions and benefits of the planned 2025 Festival. SPPA requested financial assistance from the EDA for the 2025 Festival.
- **Business Investment Grant Update** – Ms. Autumn Bailey, Senior Business Development Specialist and Mr. Chris Tillet, Manager of Business Development, provided updates on the EDA's FY25 Business Investment Grant Program to include the following:
 - **Smart Start Business Development Grant** – In FY25 YTD, there were 23 applications received with 20 grants approved, for a total of \$40,000 approved and awarded.
 - **Smart Start Business Acceleration Grant** – In FY25 there were 10 applications received with 1 grant approved, for a total of \$5,000 approved.
 - **Real Property Investment Grant** – In FY25 there were 26 applications received and 22 approved for a total of \$351,000 approved and awarded. With the re-allocation of \$50,000 to this grant, 4 additional applications have been received and are being reviewed.

Closed Meeting

ACTION: At 9:58a.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 general acquisition and the disposition strategies within the Innovation District, strategic acquisitions, and the dispositions of 1220 High Street, 1021-1107 High Street, 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, a request for assistance from Support Portsmouth Public Art for the Wall Street Mural Festival, and the Quarterly Community Grant.

Roll Call Vote: Mr. Barber - yes; Mr. Mitchell - yes; Mr. Brown - yes, Ms. Saunders-Smith - absent; Ms. Cherry - yes; Mr. James – yes; Mr. Harmon-yes. Approved 6-0 vote.

Open Meeting

ACTION: At 11:47 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 - absent; Ms. Cherry - yes; Mr. James – yes; Mr. Harmon-yes. Approved 6-0 vote.

ACTION: At 11:48am Mr. Barber, seconded by Mr. Harmon, moved to amend the agenda for inclusion of the allocation of funding for the Quarterly Community Grant.

Roll Call Vote: Mr. Barber - yes; Mr. Mitchell - yes; Mr. Brown - yes, Ms. Saunders-Smith - absent; Ms. Cherry - yes; Mr. James – yes; Mr. Harmon-yes. Approved 6-0 vote.

ACTION: At 11:49 Mr. Barber, seconded by Mr. Brown moved to allocate grant funds in the amount of \$15,000 to sponsor the SPPA for the 2025 Wall Street Mural Festival.

Roll Call Vote: Mr. Barber - yes; Mr. Mitchell - yes; Mr. Brown - yes, Ms. Saunders-Smith - absent; Ms. Cherry - yes; Mr. James – yes; Mr. Harmon-yes. Approved 6-0 vote.

ACTION: At 11:50am Mr. Brown, seconded by Ms. Cherry moved to award \$1,200 in grant funds to The Dream Center for the Quarterly Community Grant.

Roll Call Vote: Mr. Barber - yes; Mr. Mitchell - yes; Mr. Brown - yes, Ms. Saunders-Smith - absent; Ms. Cherry - yes; Mr. James – yes; Mr. Harmon-yes. Approved 6-0 vote.

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Items Submitted by Commissioners

- Mr. Harmon inquired about the construction taking place at the former 7-11 building on the corner of Effingham Street and London Blvd. Mr. Donahue reported that he will look into the activity.
- Mr. Mitchell reminded the board to send in recommendations for EDA meeting speakers.

Report Backs

- None

Adjourn

- The meeting adjourned at 11:52am.

Respectfully submitted,

Brian Donahue, Secretary

Malcom Mitchell, Chair