

**Economic Development Authority of the City of Portsmouth
April 16, 2024
9:00 AM**

COMMISSIONERS PRESENT: Malcom Mitchell – Chairman
Neal J. Barber – Vice Chairman
Theresa J. Saunders-Smith – Treasurer
Anthony Brown
Matthew James

ALSO PRESENT: Brian Donahue – Secretary
Jeff Miller – Deputy City Attorney
Lavonda Graham-Williams – City Attorney
William Moody – City Council Liaison
Vernon Tillage – City Council Liaison
Flora Berisha – Finance
Kyera Pope – Finance

ABSENT:
Barbara Smith – Commissioner
Kelsey Swieringa – Assistant City Attorney
Alisa Winston – PRHA
Dr. L. Pettis Patton – Interim City Manager

GUESTS: Mark Hugel – City Councilman
Steve Edwards – Interim City Assessor
Ryan King – Harvey Lindsay
A'Daye Foster – Harvey Lindsay
Jolie Spiers – Hampton Roads SBDC

Welcome & Call to Order

- The Chairman called the meeting to order at 9:02 a.m.

Roll Call

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

Minutes

- The minutes from the March 19, 2024, Regular Meeting were presented and adopted.

ACTION: On a motion by Mr. Mitchell and seconded by Ms. Saunders-Smith, the Commissioners approved the minutes from the March 19, 2024, Regular Meeting as presented.

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

Financials

- Flora Berisha, Assistant Chief Financial Officer, presented the Quarterly Financial Report through March 31, 2024.
- The EDA's FY2025 Operating Budget was presented and adopted.

ACTION: On a motion by Mr. Barber and seconded by Mr. Brown, the Commissioners approved the FY2025 Operating Budget as presented.

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

Old Business

- **Minority Participation** – Portsmouth City Attorney Lavonda Graham-Williams presented findings from the City's Disparity Study. There was discussion on structuring EDA policy and the development of programs to increase participation of minority and women-owned businesses, addressing disparities across various categories and identifying barriers to minority participation in City contracting opportunities. Collaborative partnerships and outreach efforts to raise awareness among minority and women-owned businesses about available opportunities were also discussed.
- **HR Chamber – Small Business Support** – Jolie Spiers, Executive Director of the Small Business Development Center of Hampton Roads, provided an update on Portsmouth's budget allocation for SBDC services, which include programs and assistance for entrepreneurs across 16 localities. The SBDC, operating in Hampton Roads for over 30 years, offers diverse support including training, one-on-one assistance, and specialized programs like FAST, focusing on early-stage businesses' financial, managerial, and marketing aspects. The SBDC has proposed an increase in Portsmouth's local funding support from \$5,000 to \$14,500 annually. SBDC also introduced a proposal for the Portsmouth Contracting Institute, a collaborative effort to enhance small businesses' capacity and success in securing government contracts.
- **1220 High St.** – Mr. Donahue gave an update on the acquisition of the 1220 High Street which the EDA purchased on April 12, 2024, for \$315,000.
- **1117-1121 High Street** – Mr. Donahue provided an update on EDA Owned property at 1117-1121 High Street, indicating plans to request bids for roof replacement and make interior and exterior improvements to the property.
- **Waterfront Redevelopment** – Mr. Donahue provided an update on the planned redevelopment of the City's waterfront, highlighting the recent completion of AECOM's market analysis and development assessment with plans for additional services in the solicitation process. Procurement of due diligence items recommended by AECOM, including an environmental assessment, real estate appraisal, and geotechnical study of the property are underway at a total cost of \$21,318. Next steps involve briefing city leadership, developing a solicitation process, and possibly arranging a joint meeting between the City Council and EDA members to finalize project priorities and the solicitation process for development proposals.

- **Small Business Events Update** – Autumn Bailey, Senior Business Development Specialist provided the Board with an update on upcoming EDA sponsored small business events.

New Business

- **Real Property Investment Grants** – Mrs. Aimee Tracy, Business Development Specialist, presented a Real Property Investment Grant application for 847 Mt. Vernon Ave. as submitted by property owner Sean Ingram. The total project cost is \$21,359, with the grant request being \$10,679.50 or 50%.

ACTION: On a motion by Mr. Barber and seconded by Mr. James, the Commissioners approved the Real Property Investment Grant for 847 Mt. Vernon Ave.

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

- **73 Farragut St. Demolition** – Mr. Donahue stated that an Invitation for Bids (IFB) was issued in March for the demolition of EDA owned structure at 73 Farragut St. Four (4) bids were received for the demolition work and clearance of the property. The lowest bid received was submitted by CRW, Inc. in the amount of \$18,375. CRW is a women-owned business.

ACTION: On a motion by Mr. Barber and seconded by Ms. Saunders-Smith, the Commissioners approved the demolition and clearance of 73 Farragut St be awarded to CRW, Inc. at \$18,375.

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

- **Business Investment Grant Program Committee Update** – The Business Investment Grant Program Committee is chaired by Mrs. Saunders-Smith and Mrs. Smith. The Committee met with staff on April 4, 2024 and reviewed the program parameters for the Real Property Investment Grant, Smart Start Business Development Grant and Smart Start Business Acceleration Grant. The Committee plans to present its findings and recommendations for proposed modifications to the program at the EDA's May 2024 meeting.
- **Small Business Finance Committee Update** – The Small Business Finance Committee is chaired by Mr. Barber and Mr. James. Mr. Barber met with staff on April 2, 2024 to discuss providing financial support for small businesses that want to grow their businesses or take advantage of contracting opportunities but are limited in their resources. Several financing options were discussed including the possibility of bringing on a partner with the expertise to manage a financial program.

Closed Meeting

ACTION: At 11:27 a.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 or 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 acquisitions and 219 Pavilion Drive; (B) Pursuant to Virginia Code Subsection 2.2-3711 A.8 for the purpose of consultation with legal counsel employed or retained by a public body regarding specific legal matters requiring the provision of legal advice by such counsel, specifically regarding 0 Harbor Center Court and New Port;

and (C) Pursuant to Virginia Code Subsection 2.2-3711 A.6 for the purpose of discussing or considering 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 Hampton Roads Chamber of Commerce.

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

Open Meeting

ACTION: At 1:11p.m. Mr. Barber, seconded by Ms. 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. Barber - yes; Mr. Mitchell - yes; Mr. Brown - yes, Ms. Saunders-Smith - yes; Mrs. Smith - absent; Mr. James - yes. Approved 5-0 vote.

Items Submitted by Commissioners

- Mr. Mitchell invited Board Members to nominate a Portsmouth 501C3 Non-Profit at the closing of each quarter for the EDA to make a donation to and Mr. Brown recommended the Portsmouth Community Outreach Coalition, a nonprofit youth ministry and Mr. Mitchell recommended the Ida Barbour Early Learning Center founded in 1910 by Ida B. Barbour for children of working mothers, providing care for the homeless and neglected children.

ACTION: On a motion by Mr. Brown and seconded by Mr. Mitchell, the Commissioners approved to donate \$1,200 to the Ida B. Barbour Early Learning Center.

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

Report Backs

- Mr. Donahue stated the Portsmouth Invitational Tournament begins on Wednesday, April 17th through Saturday, April 20th at Churchland High School. The Economic Development department has sponsored the event this year and has tickets available for each Commissioner and a guest.
- The 2024 Portsmouth State of the City will be held on Friday, May 3rd at 12:00pm at the Rivers Casino Portsmouth. The EDA has a table reserved for the event there will be Portsmouth businesses joining as well.

EDA Meeting
April 16, 2024

Adjourn

- The meeting adjourned at 1:17pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Brian Donahue, Secretary

Malcom Mitchell, Chair