

Minutes

Remote Housing and Economic Development Committee

April 16, 2024

NOTE: This meeting was held via Zoom and can be viewed at this link:

<http://www.portlandmaine.gov/1695/Economic-Development-Committee> These Minutes provide a record of those in attendance, general discussion taking place, and motions made.

A remote meeting of the Housing and Economic Development Committee (HEDC) of the Portland City Council was held on Tuesday, April 16, 2024, at 5:30 p.m. via Zoom. Present from the HEDC were Chair Councilor Pious Ali, and members Councilors Regina Phillips, Roberto Rodriguez, and Kate Sykes. Present from the City staff were Housing and Economic Development Department Director Greg Watson, Housing and Community Development Division Director Mary Davis, Assistant City Manager Dena Libner, Permitting and Inspections Director Jessica Hanscombe, Manager of Licensing and Housing Safety Zachary Lenhart, Principal Administrative Officer Lori Paulette, and Housing Program Manager Victoria Volent.

Item #1: Review and accept Minutes of previous meeting held on March 19, 2024

On motion made by Councilor Phillips, seconded by Councilor Rodriguez, the Committee voted 4-0 to accept the Minutes.

Item #2: Presentation of the Annual Report from the Permitting and Inspections Department regarding Short and Long Term Rental Registration Program, and Housing Safety

Zachary Lenhart presented the Annual Licensing and Housing Safety Report to the

Committee. Items of note included: staffing (a breakdown of employees by department; new hires; openings within the department); long-term rental registration (the allowable increase percentage for calendar year 2024; renewal mailings; number of online renewals; number of properties and units registered for 2024; short-term rental registration data (wait list; number of properties and units registered for 2024); housing safety inspections (breakdown of inspections for the prior eight months); rent control enforcement, violations, and fines (the violation procedure process; total amount of YTD and 2023 code violation fees collected); rent control inspections (breakdown of type of inspection); rent control enforcement; rent board update; and joint Housing Safety and Fire Prevention staff meetings.

The Committee began their discussion with clarifying questions regarding short-term rentals, and discussed possible proactive strategies in regards to working with short term rental listing agencies. The topic of enforcement, complaints, registration, violations, and fees was discussed, as was staff's response in addressing the backlog of illegal rent increases. In addition to the current communication now provided regarding allowable annual rent increases, members noted two meetings should be held during the year to allow all residents to receive rent increase information in-person. The Committee requested to know the number of annual violation notices issued, the number of fines issued, and the amount of fees collected. The Committee also noted they would like to receive regular updates that cover each memo topic in more detail. Staff will address questions and comments raised by the Committee in a memo for the Committee.

Item #3: Communication Item: 2024 Committee Work Plan and Schedule

Greg Watson presented an update to the Committee regarding the 2024 Work Plan. Items of note include the May 7 presentation of the Planning Department's Housing Data

Dashboard, the May 21 Developer Forum, and the presentation of the 2023 Housing Report on June 18.

The Committee held a discussion regarding items they would like to add to the Work Plan which would include short-term rentals, social housing development, outdoor dining and parklets, the Jill C. Duson Housing Trust Fund and the CDBG allocation process.

Mary Davis discussed the HUD 5-year consolidated planning process which will begin next year.

Dena Libner recommended members redline the corresponding ordinance to facilitate discussion with Corporation Counsel and assist during meetings of the Committee.

Councilor Ali will work with Staff on scheduling.

Item #4: Executive Session - The Committee will go into executive session pursuant to 1 M.R.S.A. 405(6)(C) and 5 M.R.S.A. 13199-A to provide staff direction and negotiations for; (a) Review of the Affordable Housing Development Subsidy Funding Request for the Lambert Woods South Project located at 165 Lambert Street; and (b) Update on the RFP Process for sale of the Tax-Acquired Property at Diamond Cove known as the former McKinley Hospital property.

Councilor Ali introduce the item and noted the Committee would not be returning after Executive Session, and opened public comment.

Liz Trice- of Maine Cooperative Development Partners thanked the Committee for taking up this item.

Councilor Ali closed public comment.

On a motion made by Councilor Phillips, seconded by Councilor Sykes, the Committee voted (4-0) to enter into Executive Session pursuant to 1 M.R.S.A. 405(6)(C) and 5 M.R.S.A.

13199-A to discuss the review of the Affordable Housing Development subsidy funding request for the Lambert Woods South project located at 165 Lambert Street.

On a motion made by Councilor Phillips, seconded by Councilor Rodriguez, the Committee voted (4-0) to enter into Executive Session pursuant to 1 M.R.S.A. 405(6)(C) and 5 M.R.S.A. 13199-A to receive an update on the RFP process regarding the sale of the Tax-Acquired Property at Diamond Cove known as the former McKinley Hospital property.

The Committee entered Executive Session at approximately 7:10 p.m. At approximately 8:20 p.m., the Committee came out of executive session.

On motion made by Councilor Sykes, seconded by Councilor Rodriguez, the Committee 4-0 to then adjourn.

Next meeting is April 29, 2024

Respectively submitted, Victoria Volent