

Minutes

Remote Housing and Economic Development Committee

April 29, 2024

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

<https://portlandme.portal.civicclerk.com> 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 Monday, April 29, 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 Associate Corporation Counsel Avery Dandreta, Corporation Counsel Michael Goldman, Assistant City Manager Dena Libner, Principal Administrative Officer Lori Paulette, and Housing and Economic Development Department Director Greg Watson.

Item #1: Review and accept Minutes of previous meeting held on April 16, 2024.

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

Item #2: Review and vote on a recommendation to the City Council for the Annual Agreement, Development Plan, and Assessment Rate for the Portland Tourism Development District for FY2025.

Mr. Watson provided a summary of the item, noting that the City Council first approved the creation of the Development District at its September 6, 2023, meeting. This is funded via assessments on hotels with 40 or more lodging rooms, in a similar fashion as Portland Downtown District. The assessment is proposed to remain the same rate as FY2024, with the

City to receive 10% of the assessment for administration of the District and possible infrastructure projects to benefit the District, i.e., wayfinding, placemaking, restrooms, trash receptacles. Councilor Sykes asked about possible street car transportation, and Mr. Goldman said this and others can be looked at on a case-by-case basis.

Mr. Watson said that the packet has a report on the District from Visit Portland, and he noted that the tourism industry, and being more widely promoted via this District, benefits hotels and their ancillary businesses and employees, as well as the arts, waterfront, and food and beverage industries to name a few. It is anticipated that, with a favorable recommendation from this Committee, it would go to the City Council at a June meeting.

Ms. Tillotson thanked Mr. Watson and for his participation as a Board Director for the District. She noted that she engages with the Community and City Councilors to learn what is important for them and hears, among other things, workforce development and DEI. She thanked the Committee and staff for the support and looks forward to more work as the District goes on.

Mr. Watson also noted that the backup material for this item inadvertently omitted in the Development Plan an amendment to it that was added at the Council meeting approving the District, particularly “Ten percent (10%) of the Sales, Marketing, Promotions, Destination Development, and Special Events budget shall be allotted specifically to reach the BIPOC, LGBTQ+ markets, and community DEI efforts.” The backup material was republished with this included in red lettering on p. 21 of 46.

Councilor Sykes noted that she learned a lot from Ms. Tillotson when she first came on the Council and would support this item.

Councilor Phillips agreed and noted she would like to see more about reaching people of color, noting, for instance, on the Board of Directors, employees, strategic plan, etc.

Ms. Tillotson said that the Board has been talking about this as well, and VP is hiring a person for outreach and a strategic plan.

Councilor Rodriguez noted that he did not support this initially as he thought this could happen without City involvement but by the hotels. He also noted concerns for employees in the hospitality business not earning enough to live in Portland, as well as appreciated DEI efforts that would be done by Visit Portland.

There was discussion about employees in the hospitality business, particularly that that industry likes to promote from within and that employees without a college degree, for example, can climb up the ladder, and that they also offer training.

Chair Councilor Ali suggested that Visit Portland talk with PATHs about this, and Ms. Tillotson noted that she would put them on the list, adding that high school grads in this business learn a lot, particularly teamwork.

Chair Councilor Ali opened the meeting for public comment; seeing none, the public comment session was closed.

On motion made by Councilor Sykes, seconded by Councilor Phillips, the Committee voted 4-0 to forward this to the City Council with a recommendation of approval.

Item #3: (Public Comment) Review and vote on Committee Work Plan Schedule for calendar year 2024.

Mr. Watson noted that at the last meeting of the Committee, it discussed this item and now the Committee should formally vote to approve it to forward it to the City Council as a

communication. He noted that outdoor dining, short-term rentals, and social housing development are on the schedule as a result of the previous meeting.

Chair Councilor Ali opened the meeting for public comment; seeing none, the public comment session was closed.

On motion made by Council Rodriguez, seconded by Councilor Phillips, the Committee voted 4-0 to approve the work plan and forward it to the City Council as a communication.

Item #4: (Public Comment) Pursuant to 1 M.R.S.A. 405(6)(C) and 5 M.R.S.A. 13119-A, the Committee will vote to go into executive session to provide guidance to staff regarding the Thames Street Purchase and Sale Agreement performance extension.

Chair Councilor Ali noted for the public in attendance that the Committee would next to go into executive session after which the meeting would adjourn so this would now end the public session of the Committee meeting.

Chair Councilor Ali opened the meeting for public comment; seeing none, the public comment session was closed.

On motion made by Councilor Rodriguez, seconded by Councilor Phillips, the Committee voted 4-0 at approximately 6:23 p.m. to go into executive session pursuant to 1 M.R.S.A. 405(6)(C) and 5 M.R.S.A. 13119-A to provide guidance to staff regarding the Thames Street Purchase and Sale Agreement performance extension.

At approximately 7:25 p.m., the Committee came out executive and on motion made by Councilor Phillips, seconded by Councilor Rodriguez voted 4-0 to then adjourn.

Respectfully submitted – Lori Paulette