Minutes
Portland Development Corporation
January 30, 2020

A meeting of the Portland Development Corporation (PDC) Board of Directors was held at 4:00 p.m. on Thursday, January 30, 2020, in Room 209 of Portland City Hall. Present from the Board was its President Julie Viola and Board Directors Tim Agnew, Councilor Tae Chong, Blaine Grimes, Jon Jennings, Jeffery Hicklin, and Steve Lovejoy. Directors James Dowd, Tom Dunne, Laura Reading, and Briana Volk could not be present. Present from the City staff were Business Programs Manager Nelle Hanig, Economic Development Director Greg Mitchell, and Senior Executive Assistant Lori Paulette. Grant/loan underwriters Vin DiCara and David McLaughlin were also present.

Item #1: President's Comments

Ms. Viola waived the comments.

Item #2: Review and accept Minutes of the December 19, 2019 meeting.

On motion made by Councilor Chong, seconded by Mr. Jennings, the Board voted unanimously to accept the Minutes as published.

Item #3: Review and vote on loan request from Portland Explorer Tourism, LLC, 320 Fore Street.
Note: Pursuant to 1 M.R.S.A. 405(6)(F) and 5 M.R.S.A. 13119—A, the Board may go into executive session to discuss proprietary information regarding this loan application.

Ms. Hanig introduced this loan application noting that Portland Explorer Tourism (PET) was established in May 2018 and provides year-round sightseeing and custom tours of Portland's Old Port, museums, shopping, fall foliage, and lighthouses in Cape Elizabeth and South Portland from a 12-passenger van. The business is family-owned and operated by brother and sister, Eric Pray and Catherine Escamilla, and Ms. Hanig then described their backgrounds. They are seeking a $34,000 loan to purchase a second van to expand their tours and do additional marketing to grow the business. She then introduced the owners.

Mr. Pray thanked the Board for their time, noting that this is a small family business which got up and running last January and has had over 500 tours in one year. They grew up in South Portland and their father has been a commercial lobsterman for over 40 years. They enjoy sharing their knowledge of the area with their clients. At this time, they would like to expand by adding an additional vehicle and expanding their marketing on the website and via social media.

President Viola asked about competitors, and Mr. Pray said that he is good friends with competitors, but his touring company caters to each individual. There is room for more touring companies as Portland is growing and bringing in more people. They also collaborate with local restaurants and shops by handing out brochures with information on what else they can do in this area after the tour.

Mr. Jennings asked about the base of their operations and loading passengers, and Ms. Escamilla noted that to be 320 Fore Street, using the Beer Hub as their address, which helps both businesses. Mr. Pray added that there is a sign for a charter van next to the Custom House, and also described loading/unloading, including when cruise ships are in.

Councilor Chong asked about the average price of a ticket, and Mr. Pray indicated that to be $31.00 during the tourist season, and $45 through winter where longer tours are provided for two and a half hours, averaging three tours a day.

. Ms. Grimes asked how they keep their information fresh for their clients, and Mr. Pray said that he still lobsters with his father on occasion, goes to the Port Hole in the mornings for coffee, and talks with waterfront owners which keeps his information up to date.

Mr. Jennings asked about purchasing tickets, and Ms. Escamilla said that most are purchased through Trip Advisor, as well as from the Beer Hub.

President Viola asked about increased marketing, and Ms. Escamilla described her marketing plans through social media and website, as well as working with the Visitors Center.

Ms. Grimes asked about hiring an additional driver. Mr. Pray indicated that they had someone in mind, and that it will be a full-time position.

Mr. Agnew asked about dealer financing for the additional vehicle, and Ms. Escamilla noted that they are planning to buy a used van – 2016 or younger with approximately 30,000 miles – and would rather not have many loans with dealerships.

There being no further questions, a motion was then made by Ms. Grimes, seconded by Councilor Chong to go into executive session at 4:19 p.m. pursuant to 1 M.R.S.A. 405(6)(F) and 5 M.R.S.A. 13119 to review proprietary information of the loan application. At approximately 4:35 p.m., the Board came out of executive session.

On motion made by Councilor Chong, seconded by Mr. Hicklin, the Board voted unanimously to approve the loan request upon the terms and conditions provided by staff and the loan underwriter.

Item #4: Business Assistance Grant Program for Job Creation – Guidelines Discussion

On motion made by Mr. Agnew, seconded by Mr. Jennings, the Board voted unanimously to create a sub-committee to review the guidelines and make any possible recommendations for the amendments to the full Board.

Directors Agnew, Chong, Lovejoy, and Hicklin then volunteered to serve on the sub-committee, and Ms. Hanig noted she would be in touch to coordinate a meeting.

Item #5: Treasurer's Report – December 2019

On motion made by Mr. Agnew, seconded by Mr. Jennings, the Board voted unanimously at approximately 4:30 p.m. to go into executive session pursuant to 1 M.R.S.A. 405(6)(F) and 5 M.R.S.A. 13119-A to monitor the loans listed on the Confidential Delinquency Report. At approximately 4:50 the Board came out of executive session.

On motion made by Mr. Jennings, seconded by Mr. Grimes, the Board then voted unanimously to adjourn.

Respectfully, Lori Paulette