

Minutes
Economic Development Committee
March 5, 2019

NOTE: These meetings are now live-streamed, which 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 meeting of the Economic Development Committee (EDC) of the Portland City Council was held on Tuesday, March 5, 2019, at 5:30 p.m. in Room 209 on the second floor of Portland City Hall. Present from the Committee was its Chair Councilor Justin Costa and members Councilors Nicholas Mavodones and Spencer Thibodeau; Committee member Councilor Pious Ali arrived as noted herein. Also present from the City Council was Mayor Ethan Strimling. Present from the City staff were Fire Chief Keith Gautreau, Associate Corporation Counsel Michael Goldman, City Manager Jon Jennings, Economic Development Director Greg Mitchell, Acting Police Chief Vern Malloch, and Senior Executive Assistant Lori Paulette.

Chair Costa noted that Councilor Mavodones had a hard stop at 7:15 p.m.

Item #1: Review and accept Minutes of previous meeting held on February 19, 2019.

On motion made by Councilor Thibodeau, seconded by Councilor Mavodones, the Committee voted unanimously to accept the Minutes as presented.

Item #2: Presentation and discussion regarding proposed land exchange concept between the City of Portland and the Maine Department of Transportation – Jon Jennings

Chair Costa noted that there would first be a City staff presentation, followed by discussion between Committee and staff. This would be further discussed in executive session to provide guidance to staff on negotiations.

Mr. Jennings said that he and MDOT have been in discussions for over a year now, with MDOT first contacting the City about its desire to acquire the land under the International Marine Trade Terminal, which it currently leases from the City. This has now evolved into possible land exchanges. Mr. Jennings noted that Planning and the Economic Development Departments did a thorough search of State-owned property. The Wye property was discussed a year ago and not for a homeless shelter but for a public safety building – with the concept of combining both Police and Fire administrations – and shed non-revenue producing assets. The Police Department was built in 1973 and is expensive to maintain now, noting that there is an estimate of \$600,000 to replace windows and parking is an issue as well as others.

Mr. Jennings said that a concept could be for a future RFP for a development partner who would build a Public Safety Building and lease it back to the City. With this concept, the City would not have maintenance costs.

Mr. Jennings noted that MDOT also included the Miss Portland Diner park and ride lot and the Union Branch rail line, on which MDOT would build a shared use path at their expense. There are also other properties in discussion but not ready for public presentation.

(Councilor Ali joined the meeting at this time.)

Chief Malloch echoed Mr. Jennings' concerns about the costs to maintain the current Police Department. The City has been continuously adding money for maintenance, most recently for the elevator. He also noted windows leaking; lack of fire suppression in various

areas; ADA non-compliant in various area; the basement leaks where PD also has self-defense training and limited evidence storage because of the leaking issue; and parking is tight.

Councilor Mavodones asked about call volume and any possible issues at the Wye site, and Chief Malloch did not see any issues.

Captain Gautreau also noted that Central Fire does not meet ADA standards, and it would be very costly for the City to get it up to code.

Councilor Mavodones said that co-locating PD and FD administrations seemed to make sense. He asked if Central Fire Station would no longer be a station, and Captain Gautreau noted that it would be; administrative and command staff would move to the new location.

Councilor Mavodones asked if this kind of co-locating is done nationally, and Chief Malloch said that, although he can't speak to it nationally, Westbrook does this. Chief Gautreau said that Gorham has also done the same thing. Mr. Jennings added that South Portland does as well.

Councilor Thibodeau asked about the size of the building, and Mr. Jennings said that this is at the beginning stage and wanted guidance before allocating money to the endeavor.

Councilor Ali asked if this move would effect response times in other areas of the City, and Chief Malloch said that it would not. Their model will remain the same and described the model, particularly when one shift ends and another begins.

Chair Costa said that the Committee would now move into executive session, while also noting that this is the beginning stage for guidance to staff. There will be opportunity for public comment, and there will be no decision tonight.

Item #3: Executive Session: Pursuant to 1 M.R.S.A. 405(6)(C), the Committee will go into executive session to provide staff guidance related to the following:

- a. **Review and discuss possible negotiations for a land exchange between the City of Portland and the Maine Department of Transportation; and,**
- b. **Review and discuss possible negotiations for proposed City of Portland and private partnership to establish a pilot initiative for a boardwalk between the Maine State Pier and Ocean Gateway.**

Councilor Thibodeau made a motion to go into executive session pursuant to 405(6)(C) in order to provide guidance related to Items #3(a) and (b) above; Councilor Ali seconded the motion.

Chair Costa asked if there was any public comment regarding going into executive session.

Karen Snyder of the Munjoy Hill area asked if there would be further discussion/action after the executive session.

George Rheault of Bayside noted that two public bodies are involved with 3(a) and questioned the need for an executive session and why there were no representatives from MDOT present.

Seeing no further public comment, Chair Costa closed the public comment session.

Chair Costa noted that after the executive session, there would be no further public discussion or actions taken; the meeting would adjourn at that time. Negotiating land exchanges is an appropriate topic for executive session.

Chair Costa then asked for a vote on the motion and it passed unanimously at approximately 6:03. The Committee came out of executive session at approximately 7:11 p.m., and the meeting then adjourned.

Respectfully submitted – Lori Paulette