

Minutes
Economic Development Committee
January 21, 2020

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, January 21, 2020, 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 Tae Chong, Nicholas Mavodones, and Spencer Thibodeau. Present from the City staff were Economic Development Director Greg Mitchell and Senior Executive Assistant Lori Paulette.

Chair Costa welcomed Councilor Chong to the Committee.

The Chair also noted no action items on this one item Agenda to discuss the 2020 Work Plan and Goals, with Committee members to add additional items of interest they would like to see on the Work Plan.

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

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

Item #2: Review, discuss, and provide direction to City staff on the Committee's 2020 Work Plan and Goals.

Mr. Mitchell said that the packet includes accomplishments during calendar year 2019 for the EDC, as well as the proposed meeting schedule, meeting the first Tuesday of every month

beginning in March. February will have two joint meetings with the Health and Human Services Committee on February 4th and 25th to discuss City proposed marijuana regulations. February 4th would be a Committee discussion to provide direction to staff, with the 25th targeted for a public hearing and possible vote the City Council. February 18 would be a regular EDC meeting to discuss the IDEALs project, proposed redevelopment plans from the Maine State Pier to Ocean Gateway, and the Portland Harbor Dredge Project/BUILD Grant Application update, including funding scenarios.

Councilor Mavodones said that he will not be able to participate in the February 18th meeting, although he would like to, but the Committee and staff can update him. Mr. Mitchell noted that those items will be introductory, and staff will be bringing them to the Committee as they mature for further discussion/recommendations from the Committee.

Chair Costa noted that it would be difficult to reschedule IDEALs at this point, but also agreed that these items are introductory. It would also be a goal to have a recommendation on marijuana regulations sent to the City Council at the joint EDC and HHS February 25th meeting.

Regarding the March 3rd regularly scheduled EDC meeting, Chair Costa noted that this may need to be rescheduled due to the Presidential primaries that date, and the fact that the City Clerk's office may need as many rooms as possible in City Hall for that primary.

Councilor Mavodones suggested that the third Tuesday of the month be placed on the Committee's calendars and Room 209 for reservation. Committee consensus agreed, noting that those meetings can be canceled if no business is ready.

In lieu of the March 3rd EDC meeting, Mr. Mitchell noted that the Housing Committee has its regular meeting on March 4th, where it is being discussed to have a joint meeting with the EDC to review, in executive session, three properties for possible disposition, i.e., 22 Randall Street, 165 Lambert Street, and the former West School property on Douglass Street. Regarding public

notice to property owners within 500 feet of these properties, this would be done when the Committee discuss City property disposition matters in open session.

Councilor Mavodones noted that it would be beneficial for the Committee to have an update, if available, on environmental issues at the former West School site.

Mr. Mitchell said that the Phase I ESA has been done for the West School, and the Phase II ESA is underway and should be completed shortly. Mr. Mitchell then noted a few more items to be included in upcoming meetings, including Portland Adult Ed updating the Committee on their workforce training efforts from the City TIF investment; one possible commercial credit enhancement agreement request; Annual TIF District Activity Report; and, Portland's Downtown annual documents. Regarding the latter, Mr. Mitchell noted business improvement districts no longer have a 30-year termination; the Legislature amended it so that the municipality can continue these at their discretion.

Mr. Mitchell then noted other items his Department is working on but not yet scheduled for the EDC including public-private partnerships to support investment in remote public parking in support of increased transit service to the Portland peninsula; possible land exchange to support realignment of Kennebec Street from Brattle Street to Forest Avenue; and, Homeless Service Center RFP oversight and developer selection.

Councilor Mavodones questioned the last item, noting that the City Council is still working on a final Resolution for its goals for such a Center.

Mr. Mitchell noted that, when ready, the Committee would review an RFP for sale or lease of the property to a developer who would construct and manage the facility, with the City entering into a long-term lease agreement for the space as a Homeless Service Center.

Regarding future TIF investment recommendations, Chair Costa noted that with the revaluation currently underway and anticipated to be completed for FY2021, this Committee will

look at the area-wide TIF Districts to discuss and recommend investment options.

Councilor Thiobodeau suggested a few items he would like to discuss at future meetings, including the Portland Landing \$750,000 Federal Grant, City-owned Angelo's Acre and whether to move forward on a sale or not, and neighborhood planning – marketing/branding/highlighting various neighborhoods.

Councilor Mavodones said that he is good with the Work Plan as drafted, which includes the Council goals.

Councilor Chong said that he would like to discuss Portland being open for business in all places, suggesting investing in these areas with appropriate signage and public art, for example. If the City invests in these areas, other private investment would follow. He then highlighted a few of those areas, including Pine Tree shopping center area – that area to the Westbrook line, Stroudwater, St. John Valley, to name a few, that need to be more inviting and walkable. There have been buildings empty for years in these locations. Housing affordability is also needed, and suggested TIF investment to target higher wage jobs, as well as manufacturing jobs.

Chair Costa also noted that there have been some CDBG changes where some of these areas may be eligible for investment from that funding source. Mr. Mitchell said that this can be further researched and will get back to the Committee.

Chair Costa said that he would like to see information sharing from the business community/trade groups/industry sectors as to what works/does not work for them to get their perspective, including investment opportunities and access to investment opportunities.

Councilor Chong questioned TIFs and possible investment in the “blue economy” for sustainable use of ocean resources for economic growth, suggesting an information sharing could be done with the Gulf of Maine Research Institute.

Chair Costa thanked the Committee for their feedback, and also noted that information sharing may good during the Summer months.

On motion then made by Councilor Mavodones, seconded by Councilor Chong, the Committee voted unanimously to adjourn the meeting at 6:30 p.m.

Respectfully, Lori Paulette