

Minutes
Economic Development Committee
November 19, 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, November 19, 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 could not be present. Present from the City staff were Housing and Community Development Division Director Mary Davis, Health and Human Services Director Kristen Dow, Associate Corporation Counsel Michael Goldman, Economic Development Director Greg Mitchell, and Senior Executive Assistant Lori Paulette.

Chair Costa noted that this would be the last meeting of this Committee until January. There will be a joint meeting of this Committee and the Health and Human Services Committee, however, on Tuesday, November 26, 2019, to review proposed marijuana regulations and accept public comment.

Item #1: Review and accept Minutes of previous meeting held on September 3, 2019

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

Item #2: Public hearing and vote, in the form of a recommendation to the City Council, on Proposed Option to Lease Agreement with Avesta Housing Development Corporation covering vacant land on the City's Barron Center property to support housing concepts to address senior homelessness in Portland.

- a) **See enclosed memo from Mary Davis and proposed Option to Lease Agreement.**

NOTE: Pursuant to 1 M.R.S.A. 405(6)(C), the Committee may go into executive session to provide City staff general policy guidance in this real estate matter.

Chair Costa noted that this Committee is familiar with this item/concept as it was reviewed earlier in a joint meeting of this Committee and the Housing Committee; the Health and Human Services Committee has also reviewed this proposed project.

Ms. Davis summarized this item noting that it is an Option to Lease a portion of vacant land at the Barron Center to Avesta Housing to help them continue to move forward with their due diligence, including financing. Avesta is proposing to develop a 36-unit assisted living facility, a 30-unit housing first development, and a 15-bed assessment center. The Option to Lease is not specific to what portion of the Barron Center Campus will be utilized as the projects are still in the planning stages, noting that it could be one, two, or three buildings. In order for Avesta to move forward, particularly with financing, they need to show site control.

Mr. Mitchell added that the option period is for one year for a total of \$1.00. When Avesta knows more of the scope of the project, the lease would be renegotiated with specifics.

Councilor Thibodeau asked about maximizing building footprints.

Mr. Mitchell said that a rezoning may need to occur for maximizing the building footprints.

Councilor Mavodones said that the project is a great outgrowth of the shelter discussion, and asked if there has been community outreach.

Mr. Totman, President of Avesta Housing, said that Avesta has met with leaders of that neighborhood three or four times and they are aware of the concept, and also realize that it is still evolving. Avesta has shared what they know so far and will continue to keep the neighborhood apprised, including new Councilor-Elect Chong for District 3. Parking would need to be considered in order to maximize development potential, as well as possible rezoning as Mr. Mitchell noted. The 3-pronged project is very complex, each with different funding to construct and pay for operations.

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

Councilor Mavodones made a motion to forward this item to the City Council with a recommendation for approval; Councilor Thibodeau seconded the motion.

Councilor Thibodeau thanked staff and Avesta Housing for the work thus far on this project, noting the housing that is needed and this will help in that regard.

Councilor Mavodones agreed and indicated this to be a good partnership with Avesta.

Chair Costa also noted the tremendous amount of work done and to be done. The City has had a longstanding relationship with Avesta Housing in addressing these needs for the community. There will be a lot more conversation on these proposed projects, and this is a positive step in the right direction.

Chair Costa then asked a vote on the motion and it passed unanimously.

Item #3: Communication related to Creative Portland operational changes.
No action required.

b) **See enclosed memo from Jon P. Jennings.**

Mr. Mitchell said that this is a communication item only for this Committee, and noted the memo from the City Manager in the packet. It is an update on operational changes for

Creative Portland (CP). It currently has two staff positions, an Executive Director and a Program Assistant, who are now contract employees on the City's payroll through December 31st. This operational change would make them full-time City employees as of January 1, 2020 as part of the Economic Development Department budget, with the CP Director reporting to him. TIF funds would continue to fund the CP positions, as it does for all salaries in the Department. The CP Board would oversee CP programs and be advisory to the City. The CP Board agrees with this operational change.

Councilor Mavodones thanked Mr. Mitchell for the update and has been aware of this through the budget process; Councilor Thibodeau agreed.

Chair Costa said that it is the right move and noted CP's good work in the community.

Item #4: Communication on EDC 2019 Accomplishments to forward to the City Council.

a) See memorandum from Greg Mitchell

Mr. Mitchell said that the memo in the packet summarizes the accomplishments of this year's EDC to forward to the City Council as a communication item.

Committee members thanked Mr. Mitchell and staff for their work in organizing the Agendas and backup, noting staff's responsiveness to the Committee's requests. Consensus of the Committee was to forward this item to the City Council as a communication.

On motion then made by Councilor Mavodones, seconded by Councilor Thibodeau, the Committee voted unanimously to adjourn the meeting at approximately 6:05 p.m.

Respectfully, Lori Paulette