

Minutes

Remote Housing and Economic Development Committee

January 4, 2022

NOTE: This meeting was held via Zoom and 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 remote meeting of the Housing and Economic Development Committee (HEDC) of the Portland City Council was held on Tuesday, January 4, 2022, at 5:30 p.m. via Zoom. Present from the Committee were Chair Pious Ali, and members Councilors Tae Chong, Roberto Rodriguez, and Councilor Andrew Zarro. Also present from the City Council was Councilor April Fournier. Present from the City staff were Acting Housing and Economic Development Department Director Mary Davis, Corporation Counsel Michael Goldman, Chief of Staff Dena Libner, Principal Administrative Officer Lori Paulette, and Housing Program Manager Victoria Volent.

Item #1: Zoom Meeting Information – no Committee action required.

Item #2: Review and vote on November 16, 2021, draft meeting Minutes.

On motion made by Councilor Zarro, seconded by Councilor Chong, the Committee voted unanimously (4-0) to accept the Minutes as published.

Item #3: Discussion of Housing and Economic Development Committee priorities for 2022

The Committee held a discussion regarding how often they would like to meet each month. The consensus of the Committed, based on anticipated workload, is twice monthly meetings.

Mary Davis introduced the Housing and Economic Development Committee Work Plan priorities for 2022. Items for discussion were broken down into five categories; Economic Development Policy; Affordable Housing Policy; Affordable Housing Public-Private Partnerships; Real Estate Transactions; and Annual Reports and Actions. The Committee held a discussion on priorities. Councilor Chong indicated an interest in adding a focus on increasing economic opportunities, and developing more housing to the Work Plan. Councilor Zarro's priorities include a review of procurement spending, a review of the relationship between the City and Portland Buy Local, revisiting the outdoor dining ordinance, and conducting a discussion on wages and the importance of workers against the backdrop of the impact of the Citizens Referendum. Councilor Rodriguez would like the HEDC to play a role in creating a working environment that represents the labor force through bargaining negotiation initiatives. Councilor Chong added HEDC may need to invite speakers to address any impact from adoption by the State legislation of recommendations from the report *Commission to Increase Housing Opportunities in Maine by Studying Zoning and Land Use Restrictions*, and he would also like the HEDC to explore workforce development with agencies that serve underserved populations to introduce them to higher paying jobs. This may include inviting local business representatives to discuss their hiring needs to the HEDC. Chair Ali would like to look into using underutilized municipal buildings for job training through Adult Education to develop skills that open opportunities to hirer paying jobs.

The Committee asked Michael Goldman to explain which Committee should address bargaining negotiations. Per Mr. Goldman, the Council assigns projects to committees. In regards to bargaining negotiations, the Council, Acting City Manager and Human Resource Department should have that discussion. In regards to economic development and the Tourism

Improvement District, staff intends to add this to the Work Plan with a possible recommendation to the Council.

The Committee discussed the format for future meetings agreeing that if the Work Plan includes a presentation from staff, then staff will begin the meeting with their presentation. Committee members agreed they would not place strict time limits on how long a member may discuss an item. Agenda items will not include a start nor end time for discussion.

Mary Davis asked for Committee direction and consideration regarding items for the January 18 agenda. She also requested direction from the Committee on where to place possible agenda items (as noted in her memo *2022 Housing and Economic Development Committee Proposed Work Plan*) into the 2022 Work Plan.

Councilor Chong indicated that when items appear on the agenda around a topic, he would like speakers invited to the HEDC meeting to add to the discussion. Meetings should have a common theme instead of moving from one topic of discussion to another. For example, when affordable housing on the agenda that would be an opportunity to bring in speakers to discuss the housing crisis, and how the citizen referendum has slowed down housing projects within Portland. When the waterfront dredging project is on the agenda, that would be an opportunity to discuss waterfront economic and workforce opportunities.

Michael Goldman noted placement of items on the agenda and whether to bring in speakers is a discussion that should be held between the Committee, the Committee Chair and the staff member assigned to the Committee.

The Committee held a discussion on determining the process for inviting speakers to their meetings. Chair Ali indicated members should bring their requests to him and he would work with staff on their behalf.

Chair Ali opened the meeting to public comment. Seeing no one, the public comment period was closed.

Staff asked if the Committee had any questions regarding the Work Plan list or the draft agenda schedule, or any questions regarding the guidelines and priorities for the allocation of City resources that will be incorporated into the 2022 Affordable Housing Development application.

A motion was made by Councilor Zarro to adjourn the meeting, seconded by Councilor Rodriguez. Chair Ali asked for a vote on the motion and it passed unanimously (4-0) to adjourn the meeting at approximately 6:36 p.m.

Respectively submitted, Victoria Volent