

**PORTLAND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION
REGULAR MEETING MINUTES
Tuesday, March 12, 2024 at 7:00 PM
Portland Library – Mary Flood Room
20 Freestone Avenue**

1. CALL IN TO ORDER

Michael Nadolski called the meeting into order at 7:04pm

2. ROLL CALL

Members present: Angela Hammond, Karen Renner, Sarah Weeden,
Michael Nadolski

Members Absent: Robert Petzold

Staff Present: Dan Bourret (Town's Planner)

3. ACCEPT AGENDA

Karen Renner made a motion to accept the agenda, seconded by Angela Hammond, all were in favor, Motion carried.

4. APPROVAL OF MINUTES REGULAR MEETING 1/9/2024

The committee tabled the approval of 01/09/24 Meeting minutes until the April 9th meeting.

5. BUSINESS OF THE QUARTER AWARD

Gotta's Farm, a family owned business, was recognized by the committee this evening. Michael Nadolski and the committee presented The Quarter award to Jackie Gotta for their outstanding contribution to the community. The committee voted to presenting the award, Michael Nadolski requested the photo of the Gotta Family to be shared on the EDC Facebook page and to remind the Public the committee is still accepting Nominations.

6. MIDDLESEX COUNTY REVITALIZATION COMMISSION (MCRC) 2024 BUSINESS OPERATING GRANTS

Rebecca Mead of Middlesex County Revitalization Commission's (MCRC) Shared information about the grant and the requirements a business owner must have in order to qualify for the MCRC program. One of the main requirements is three years of Tax Return from the applicant needs to be attached with the application. Two years ago the organization was awarded extra funding through the DECD (Dept of Economic and Community Development). In order to help small business owners in Middlesex county during hardship or seeking improvement/growth in their line of work. MCRC provides up to \$25k to each business owner once they are approved. Currently, MCRC has received eight applications from Portland residents for the year 2024. All information is posted online and the deadline for accepting applications is March 31, 2024.

7. BRAINERD PLACE UPDATE AND PRESENTATION

Developer Dan Bertram of Bright Raven, gave an update regarding the Brainerd Place project via Zoom. Dan provided an update along with modifications to the site plans. Dan mentioned the following site plans modifications:

- 4-story building with 119 residential apartments/ commercial/retail/ restaurant/ on the first and fourth floors; and garage level with 130 parking spaces.
- Starbucks building is up, the goal is for a Fall opening;
- Two buildings (B1&B2) at a footprint of 8,004 sf each with first floor retail, second floor office connected by a central elevator tower with two second floor elevated bridges.
- Building B to Zoning Reg-to allow access from Main Street to drive-through window service on the side of the building other than a restaurant CVS pharmacy has withdrawn.
- Total commercial revised from 117,881 sf to 83,895 sf with corresponding revisions to mud standards and requirements
- Parking changes for building A and B revised

Dan Bertram is asking for the support from the public and the committee in order to move forward with these new modifications. The town will benefit greatly from this project, they will appear in front of the Planning and Zoning Commission on April 4, 2024.

8. 10 YEAR ANNIVERSARY OF SAVVY SWAP

The store plans to celebrate its ten years Anniversary on Main Street Saturday April 6, 2024. To commemorate this achievement the store plans to have a fashion show on its sidewalk for the public, which all are welcome to attend.

9. SEASONAL EVENTS: PORTLAND FAIR CHANGE OF LOCATION AND DONATIONS REQUEST

Kim Hanna, Treasurer of the Portland Agricultural Fair, shared with the committee that despite its success in the Fall of 2023, the Portland Fair faced many challenges. One of the challenges was financially. Kim Hanna and the commission had a brief discussion on how to raise funds for this year's Portland Fair. A fundraiser/Donation from the public was suggested, this information will be shared on social media platforms and through word of mouth. Kim Hanna also informed the commission that even though the Portland Exchange club has been the Portland Fair home for many years, in 2023 the fair endured an enormous challenge with excessive mud, due to rain. The plan is to move forward with a new location this year. A public announcement will be released by April 1, 2024 on a final decree, regarding a new location.

10. UPDATES: OTHER BUSINESS INPUT/FEEDBACK

Dan provided updates on a few existing projects, he is currently working on a Grant (BAR grant) along with Ryan Curley to get funding for a Canoe/Kayak boat launch over the Riverfront access, more information will follow.

11. NORDIC SPA APPROVAL

Pomeroy Nordic Spa was approved last week by Planning and Zoning. If all goes well, construction should begin this year, for next year's Grand opening. Pomeroy Nordic Spa is a Canadian owned Business, they have chosen Portland, Connecticut, as its only site (outside of Alaska) in the United States due to its location and scenery. The Spa will be open all year round, and it's expected to bring attention from many states that live off the East Coast.

12. PUBLIC COMMENTS:

13. ADJOURN

Karen Renner made a motion to adjourn the meeting, seconded by Sarah Weeden, all were in favor, Motion carried. Meeting was adjourned at 9:13pm

Respectfully Submitted,

Jade Richardson