



EXECUTIVE
DEPARTMENT

CITY OF SOUTH PORTLAND

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James H. Gailey
City Manager

MINUTES

Economic Development Committee

Wednesday, May 11, 2016

6:00 PM

City Hall – Lower Conference Room

Attendees:

Martha Riehle – District 1
Ross Little – District 2
Bob O'Brien – Business

David Schneider – District 1
Greg Perry – District 3
Joshua Reny – Asst. City Manager

Absent:

Stephen Bushey – District 3
William Collins – District 5
Craig Gorris – Business
Ed Palmer – Business

Peter Stocks – District 4
Fawn Dunphy – Business
Justin Leblanc – Business

1. Committee Chair Ross Little called the meeting to order at 6:09 p.m.
2. Motion by Riehle seconded by Perry to adopt the minutes of the meeting of April 19, 2016 as printed. All in favor.
3. Ross opened the meeting and welcomed Tom Hall, owner of Hall Internet Marketing, to discuss branding and marketing with the committee.

Tom began by explaining the importance of understanding your audience. If the committee creates a website to entice business relocation and expansion, what is the pitch? What is the City's competitive advantage? And why would they be interested? It is important to be specific, not clutter website and marketing materials with too much data that forces people to filter.

Greg noted that a lot of this is covered in the recently adopted Economic Development Plan, including key statistics, the city's strengths, and the types of investment the city needs.

A marketing company wouldn't necessarily be the entity that helps shape the message and brand, which is work that needs to be done at a foundational level by people who really understand it. Then, all of the marketing, website, etc. would be built from that foundation.

One of the important questions that will need to be answered is whether we are undertaking a re-branding of "the city", or is this a branding of the face of economic development?

Tom stressed that it is very important to have consistency of effort, consistency throughout all branding, logos, colors, styles, messaging, etc. Greg proposed that this branding effort, and launching of the website, be thought of as a catalyst and once embraced then we can focus on consistency and transition.

Tom recommended the process the committee pursues is efficient and focused. It is easy to get bogged down in process, feasibility studies, etc. Ross agreed and suggested the team develop clear deliverables and milestones. Tom will review the Economic Development plan and provide the committee an outline of recommendations and estimated costs. The committee thanked Tom for taking the time to meet and discuss these issues.

The Committee discussed next steps regarding the website and marketing. There was consensus that a comprehensive approach is need rather than simply soliciting proposals for a new website. A website, promotional materials, and trade booth will come out of a branding effort that kicks things off.

The Committee discussed the process to approve this effort and securing the necessary resources. The group felt it would be important to make a proposal to the City Council and update them on the efforts being made to date and the plan for the year ahead. There was consensus that the Committee should present a 12 month phased roll out of these efforts, including branding and website as first project, an annual business awards event in the fall, rolling out marketing plan and attending trade shows in the winter, and next spring requesting funding to formally launch the ED Corp. The Council should be aware of these projects and their estimated costs.

4. The Committee postponed discussion on the sub-committees and discussion on committee rules and officers until the next meeting.
5. Roundtable – Marty asked to have an Economic Update item moved to top of agenda so that discussion on economic news and business developments are at the start of the meeting. This change will be made on next agenda. Josh and Greg provided some updates on new business developments.
6. Adjournment

Next meeting will be held on June 8, 2016. Motion by Perry seconded by Schneider to adjourn the meeting at 7:34 p.m. All in favor.

Cordially,

Joshua Reny, Assistant City Manager