



CITY OF SOUTH PORTLAND

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James H. Gailey
City Manager

EXECUTIVE
DEPARTMENT

MINUTES

Economic Development Committee

Wednesday, August 26, 2015
7:00 to 9:00 PM
City Hall – City Manager's Office

Attendees:

Ross Little – District 2
Steve Bushey - At-Large
Greg Perry - District 3
Peter Stocks - District 4
Jim Gailey – City Manager

Ed Palmer - Business
Craig Gorris - Business
Justin Leblanc - Business

Absent:

David Schneider - District 1
William Collins - District 5
Vacant - At-Large

Bob O'Brien - Business
Mike Vaillancourt - Business
Fawn Dunphy - Business

1. Approval of Minutes from June 17th and July 29th. M: Perry 2nd Gorris 6-0

2. Election of Committee Chair

Greg: Nominated Ross Little as Chair
Members spoke up in support of Ross, thinking he would do a great job.
2nd by Steve
5-0 (Ross abstained)

3. Economic Development Plan Discussion

Committee talked over the SWOT analysis that Karl put together.

Talked about survey and getting the work out. Craig Gorris will have the Visitor's Bureau talking with shoppers at the Mall for the next two weekends trying to get SP residents visiting the Mall to participate in the survey.

Peter shared his conversation with Superintendent Kunin about the survey and the Economic Development Committee's work.

Ross asked whether we can get more advertising for the survey as a last push towards the Committee's deadline. The Committee asked for the Sentry to be approached.

Peter will write an article for the Sentry.

Committee discussed some of the items under Weakness included in the SWOT.

Steve questioned the distrust of development approval process.

Greg – somewhat contrary to the “strengths”

Other areas talked about by the Committee included:

- Perception as a difficult city for business
- Non-transparency
- Gateways
- City Image
- Political Climate/Conflict over growth
- School System Performance
- The adding of Kaplan & USM under “opportunities”

Committee talked more on the idea of creating a non-profit entity to lead economic development and take economic development out of City Hall.

Further exploration of the following is needed:

- Incorporating papers
- Funding Mechanism
- Do we want a feasibility study?
- The entity would address many weaknesses and threats

Ross wants to keep the conversation around the non-profit on the Committee's agenda(s). Need to look at SEDCO in Scarborough as an example. Also need to look at another Business Awards in the Spring of 2016.

Peter – how do we condense the information down for the workshop?

Ross – Page 3 of the SWOT analysis is perfect

Craig – How does minimum wage and tar sands factor into the SWOT?

Committee talked globally how to address or not address those two items as they could be classified political.

Craig – there are 365 job openings at the Maine Mall right now
Ed – the minimum wage in Seattle has resulted in the loss of 1500 restaurant jobs in June and another 1000 in July.

Ed – we have 30-40 job openings in our resort call center right now and another 20 openings at the Marriott.

Ross – does Karl know about the minimum wage discussion in Portland? Asked Jim to make sure to check in with Karl on this.

Committee discussed the October 1st community workshop.

- Find those who attended Comp Plan meetings
- School Red Tote insert
- City Newsletter
- Chamber Facebook
- Target different groups in the City to get the word out
- Electronic signs around town (Mall, Credit Unions, Pleasant Hill Auto
- Facilitators (try not to use city staff) 10 people
- Flip-boards and markers
- Easels

Committee members wanted Jim to ask Karl what was being done with the survey results. Would the SWOT analysis be updated based on the survey?

Next meeting September 16, 2015 at 7:00 PM

Adjourned: 9:00 pm

Cordially,

James H. Gailey; City Manager