ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

DATE: May 1, 2018 (Tuesday)
TIME: 5:30 – 7:30 p.m.
LOCATION: Room 209
Portland City Hall

1. Review and accept Minutes of previous meeting held on March 20, 2018.

2. Public hearing and vote to recommend to the City Council a Proposed Amendment to Chapter 2, Section 2-203 and Chapter 15, Section 15-8.
   a. See enclosed memo from Jon Jennings.

3. Public Hearing and vote to recommend to the City Council proposed Portland Downtown Expansion.
   a. See enclosed memorandum from Portland Downtown Executive Director Casey Gilbert.

4. Executive session: Pursuant to 1 M.R.S.A. 405(6)(C), the Committee will go into executive session to discuss real estate negotiations and provide guidance to staff for the following:
   a. Possible project scope change regarding the City Purchase and Sale Agreement with Ross Furman for sale of City property at 178 Kennebec Street (see enclosed memo and backup).

Councilor Justin Costa/Chair

Next Meeting Date: June 5, 2018 - 5:30 to 6:30/Joint Meeting with Housing Committee
6:30 to 7:30/Economic Development Committee
Minutes
Economic Development Committee
March 20, 2018

A meeting of the Economic Development Committee (EDC) of the Portland City Council was held on Tuesday, March 20, 2018 at 5:30 p.m. in Room 209 of Portland City Hall. Present from the Committee was its Chair Councilor Justin Costa and members Councilors Nicholas Mavodones and Spencer Thibodeau. Also present from the City Council was Mayor Ethan Strimling. Present from the City staff were Public Facilities Director Kathy Alves, Associate Corporation Counsel Michael Goldman, City Manager Jon Jennings (arriving as noted herein), Economic Development Director Greg Mitchell, Waterfront Coordinator William Needelman, Senior Executive Assistant Lori Paulette, and Special Advisor to the City Manager Julianne Sullivan.

Chair Costa opened the meeting with introductions and also noted that most of the items on the Agenda have been discussed previously by the EDC so the Committee is familiar with proposed terms.

**Item #1: Review and accept Minutes of previous meeting held on March 6, 2018.**

A motion was made by Councilor Mavodones and seconded by Councilor Thibodeau to accept the Minutes as presented. Chair Costa noted that the Committee did receive an email asking for a couple of edits. Councilor Mavodones said that he was comfortable passing them as presented, and Councilor Thibodeau agreed.

In regard to 44 Hanover Street, and “Mayor Strimling expressed concern . . . noting that the zoning allows for at least 136 units”, Mayor Strimling said that he would let staff know if an edit is necessary. Councilor Mavodones said that if so, staff can advise the Committee of that edit.
Chair Costa asked for a vote on the motion and it passed unanimously.

**Item #2: Public Hearing and vote to recommend to the City Council Third Amendment to Amended and Restated Lease with Ready Seafood Company at the Maine State Pier.**

Mr. Mitchell introduced this item noting that Ready Seafood has been a great partner with the City at the Maine State Pier since 2009, and this Third Amendment continues that partnership for an additional five years with rental increases of 2% per year. He then went over the terms, noting that parking – 10 spaces - would no longer be provided at the Thames Street lot. The Lease does provide for five on pier parking spaces for customer turnover and four overnight box truck parking spaces. In addition, there will be a rent credit of up to $150,000 during 2018 and 2019 for pier improvements that Ready will be making, and will be based on its actual expenditures. This is the continued private/public partnership at the site.

Councilor Mavodones asked if Ready would continue paying rent during improvements, and Mr. Mitchell indicated that it would. Based on documented expenditures, the rent would be reduced accordingly.

Councilor Thibodeau asked if this is a rent reduction of up to $150,000 for 2018 and for 2019, and Mr. Mitchell said it was cumulative – up to $150,000 during those two years. Councilor Thibodeau suggested adding the word “cumulative” in Section 6 of the proposed Third Amendment.

Chair Costa then opened the meeting for public comment.

Michelle Landry of Peaks Island asked for clarification of the parking that Ready needed to relocate from Thames Street.

Seeing no further public comment, the public comment session was closed.
Mr. Mitchell said that Ready had to relocate 10 spaces from the City’s Thames Street gravel parking lot, and Ready relocated those spaces to the Portland Fish Pier site.

Councilor Mavodones made a motion to recommend to the City Council passage of the proposed Third Amendment to Amended and Restated Lease with Ready Seafood; Councilor Thibodeau seconded the motion.

Councilor Mavodones noted appreciation for staff’s work on this, and that Portland is fortunate to have Ready Seafood remain at the Maine State Pier, while also expanding in Scarborough and Saco. They have been a great partner, adding jobs and economic vitality to the area.

Councilor Thibodeau agreed and having them as a partner in infrastructure improvements is really important for both parties.

Mayor Strimling also agreed.

Chair Costa agreed as well, noting the EDC has been providing guidance to staff in executive session on the proposed Third Amendment and is pleased to have Ready Seafood as a tenant, noting its benefits for Portland and pier infrastructure.

Chair Costa then asked for a vote on the motion and it passed unanimously. Mayor Strimling, although not a member of the Committee, expressed his support of the motion.

**Item #3: Public Hearing and vote to recommend to the City Council Third Amendment to Amended and Restated Lease with Bay Ferries Limited at the Ocean Gateway Terminal.**

Mr. Mitchell described the terms of the Third Amendment, noting that the original Lease started in 2016. The Third Amendment provides for the lease to continue for the 2018 season, and an option for an additional year in 2019. There are no changes to the fee schedule. Parking
has been removed, and the 2018 Updated Schedule is an Exhibit. Mr. Mitchell noted that Custom Border Protection (CBP) is requiring upgrades to Federal security equipment, which will be paid for by Bay Ferries and the Province of Nova Scotia.

Mayor Strimling noted in a conversation he had with Channel 13, Channel 13 had indicated that Bay Ferries and the Province would pay most of this upgrade, and Mr. Mitchell said that they will pay for all of it.

Mayor Strimling asked about the lost parking revenue and no increases in rent/fees. Ms. Alves responded, with Mr. Mitchell adding that because of the costs of CPB upgrades – estimated in the six figures – it is being recommended that the rent/fees stay flat. Ms. Alves said that the fees collected cover the City’s costs associated with this operation. Discussion followed about the fees/costs, with Ms. Alves noting she would get an estimate for 2018 revenue, and revenues from Nova Star.

Chair Costa asked about the CBP upgrades, and Mr. Mitchell said that for homeland security reasons, CBP requested that it not be detailed. He then described the process for the upgrades with the City entering into contracts and being paid upfront by Bay Ferries and the Province, with the CBP owning the upgrades.

Councilor Thibodeau noted that the Lease clearly states that the City is not responsible for any of the costs for the CBP Federal security upgrades.

Chair Costa opened the meeting for public comment.

Timmi Sellers of Peaks Island asked about the lost parking for both Ready and Bay Ferries.

Seeing no further public comment, Chair Costa closed the public comment session.

Ms. Alves said that lost parking for both was 10 spaces in the Thames Street lot.
Councilor Mavodones made a motion to recommend to the City Council passage of the proposed Third Amendment to the Bay Ferries Amended and Restated Lease; Councilor Thibodeau seconded the motion.

Chair Costa thanked staff for making this work, given the tight timeframe to be ready for the 2018 Season. This was a quite undertaking, but the parties came into agreement. He then asked for a vote on the motion and it passed unanimously.

**Item #4: Discuss results of the Employment Disparity Study Scope and Cost**

**Research for EDC Direction**

Ms. Sullivan said that the backup details anticipated costs and scope of such a study as done by other municipalities, but larger than Portland. These studies should be done before a municipality has policies on contracting preferences in order to prove that disparities exist, as there have been constitutional challenges.

Councilor Thibodeau noted that when this Committee was discussing proposed TIF policy amendments, particularly a suggested amendment that firms employed in the construction phase of a TIF-assisted project must demonstrate 25% of the works hours be performed by residents of Portland, minority and women employees, and Veterans of the Armed Forces, the Corporation Counsel’s office said that there first needs to be a study to determine if this was even an issue for Portland.

In response to Councilor Mavodones, who was not on the Committee last year, Mr. Goldman said that he would email his memo to the EDC at the time to Councilor Mavodones. The municipality has to prove there is a problem in local hiring practices.

Councilor Costa also noted that due to this issue coming up last year, the Portland Development Corporation amended its Business Assistance Program Guidelines for Job
Creation, where the guidelines noted the hiring of Portland residents; the amendment deleted that reference.

(Mr. Jennings arrived at the meeting at this time.)

Mayor Strimling noted that this study would determine if the City is hiring these people.

Ms. Sullivan suggested that a study could be done with other regional municipalities, and then described what the disparity study would examine and recommendations, and could take up to two years.

Councilor Thibodeau questioned whether Portland needed to undertake the study, if it would be a useful tool, and whether there are actual complaints about not hiring these categories of people/businesses.

Ms. Sullivan noted other cities who conducted such a study generally made some changes after.

Councilor Costa asked if there was any guidance from the courts, and Mr. Goldman indicated that the studies he has looked at have substantial legal analyses and having such a study done does not make you judgment proof.

Councilor Mavodones said that he would need to review Corporation Counsel’s memo to the EDC, and to also have a better idea of the costs that Portland could incur for such a study. He also indicated that the State of Maine and/or Federal government may have lists of women-owned, minority-owned, and veteran-owned businesses, but not all businesses register as such and there may not be many in Portland.

Ms. Sullivan noted that cities the size of Portland do not undertake such studies.

There was discussion among the Committee members whether Portland needed to conduct such a study; whether the City has been approached about discrimination in its
contracting; obtaining quotes for such a study; looking at doing this regionally – Mayor to Mayor discussion; and populations of other cities conducting such studies.

Mayor Strimling appreciated the Committee needing more information, and getting quotes would be beneficial; regional study is a good idea; and suggested hearing from a panel of veterans, minorities, and women on what they think.

Chair Costa said that he is hearing some openness to do this, but skepticism if there is even an issue. A quote for such a study would be a good starting point.

Mr. Jennings noted that Portland has not had issues in this regard.

Chair Mavodones also noted that the costs of such a study would need to be weighed against other projects needing to be done for Portland.

Mayor Strimling indicates quotes for a study would assist in decision-making.

Ms. Sullivan thanked the Committee for the feedback and would provide the Committee with more information.

**Item #5: Public Hearing and policy direction discussion regarding public and stakeholder input related to the Portland Ocean Terminal/Maine State Pier Redevelopment Plan.**

Mr. Needelman went through the attached PowerPoint presentation, which provided the Committee with some history, proposed concept, and feedback from the stakeholder outreach process as to where there was agreement and disagreements. Issues of parking for the Islanders were heard, as well as competition issues.

Mayor Strimling asked to go back to the parking slide, and Mr. Needelman said that this shows there is enough parking, per the Fort Hill Study, but the perception is that there is not enough. Mayor Strimling asked for a copy of the study.
Chair Costa asked about high level next steps, and Mr. Needelman suggested drafting an RFP, which may need an executive session with this Committee. As far as timing, there is no impending deadline; rather, the facility needs attention.

Councilor Thibodeau questioned the feasibility, and Mr. Needelman noted that the development community participated in the public outreach process, and there is interest in the opportunities the site would offer, which would be fleshed out through the RFP process.

Chair Costa then opened the meeting for public comment.

Mayor Strimling noted that he would need to leave shortly for a School Committee meeting.

Barbara Carter of Peaks Island express concern about the current congestion now with busses, taxis, cars, ferry cars, and cruise ships. This area is an accident waiting to happen and cannot begin to image adding more to the congestion.

Chair Costa said that two members of this Committee are familiar with the site, as he parks in the Casco Bay Lines (CBL) garage, and Councilor Mavodones works at CBL.

Randy Schaefer of Peaks Island noted that the Whaling Wall building would make for good parking and should be repurposed for that use. Lack of parking for Peaks Island residents depresses Island real estate values. He suggested that the City work with Peaks Islanders to find parking, with the possibility of the Islanders purchasing that parking.

Debbie Jordan of Peaks Island noted that the feels the City values Peaks Island for tourists versus residents, and this proposal will only increase congestion, parking issues, and competition for the Island.

Barbara Hopkins said that parking is the issue and need for Peaks Islanders.
Timmi Sellers agreed. She also noted that the Maine State Pier should be an education center, educating and welcoming people to Casco Bay, education on sea level rise, how to treat our islands and waters, history and neighborhoods for all the islands.

Chris Hopkins of Peaks Island also noted that parking is the issue for Island residents.

Doug Smith of Peaks Island said that he supports the comments made today. He has been there 15 years, and at the beginning there was adequate parking, but now it is not available nearby but 3 to 5 blocks away, and overnight parking is also needed. Peaks Island also has a high population of elderly and parking nearby is best for them.

Willis Spear, fisherman, noted that transportation and parking is needed for people who work on the waterfront to survive.

Kim Peasley of Peaks Island noted that not only the elderly but young families also have the same issue; young families are important to the Island.

Michelle Landry of Peaks Island disagreed that there is enough parking on the peninsula, and that the Island Residential Zone was not represented in the study. The Islanders have put thought into parking recommendations they have shared with the City, and the City and residents need to work together on the issue.

Ralph Ashmore echoed concerns of congestion, parking, and safety concerns, and also noted that there are unfair practices in garages, noting cases of being disbarred from a garage because spaces were shared with others, i.e., Islanders helping each other out when needed.

See no further public comment, Chair Costa closed the public comment session.

Councilor Mavodones commended staff on the thorough public outreach that was done and the feedback reported to the EDC. The second floor of the Maine State Pier is fallow and needs work. He indicated that he felt this was going in the right direction, while preserving the
deep water berth, and he also noted that he understands the parking issue but it is not solvable by repurposing the inside of the Whaling Wall building for parking as it was built for cargo.

Public/private partnerships are good, and competition is an unknown and would be narrowed to find a balance. Councilor Mavodones also indicated that a well-designed walkway could focus pedestrians in a safe fashion. Whatever goes in will generate more people, and pedestrian traffic would need to be improved and safer. He also was interested in the education factor noted by Ms. Sellers, and that he looked forward to reviewing a draft RFP.

Mr. Jennings indicated that there are two or three parking structures under development so another 800-1,000 new spaces will come on line.

Councilor Mavodones then noted that the dirt lots that have been used by the Islanders in the past were acquired by the City under City Manager Robert Ganley to leverage future development. At that time, Mr. Ganley had advised the Islanders that these lots would provide the Islanders with temporary, low cost parking.

Councilor Thibodeau also supported the process, noting that he did not want the Maine State pier to be a parking garage. Parking is an issue he hears most and suggested opportunities for islanders to purchase land for their parking, and also incentives for current parking garages to increase levels. He too liked the history/welcoming component as Ms. Sellers suggested and was good to go with drafting an RFP.

Chair Costa agreed that this is heading in the right direction, noting the current parking and traffic concerns which can be difficult. There is a high volume of users now and not at the same time. There would also need to be a connection to the working waterfront.

Mr. Jennings thanked the Committee and the next step is to begin to draft an RFP.
The Committee agreed, and Chair Costa thanked former EDC Chair and Councilor David Brenerman for his leadership on this item during 2017.

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 8:15 p.m.

Respectfully, Lori Paulette
Redevelopment Options for the MAINЕ STATE PIER

Stakeholder Engagement Results Economic Development Committee

March 20, 2018
Stakeholder Outreach:

- Waterfront Alliance +/- 20 participants
- CBITD Operations Committee +/- 8 participants
- Pier Tenants +/- 7 participants
- Seafood Industry +/- 19 participants
- Food and Beverage Industry 3 participants
- Islander/Public Open House +/- 15 participants
- Peaks Island +/- 50 participants

+/-120 individuals, some representing larger constituencies (CBITD Board Members, Peaks Island Council....)

- Economic Development Committee

Tuesday, March 20
Redevelopment on the Maine State Pier should be consistent with longstanding waterfront land use policies.
Over 20 public and private operations share the Maine State Pier

Integration and coordination is crucial

Current policies informing future pier changes were adopted in 2006
2006 Policy Statement, Summarized

The Maine State Pier:
- Is a **regionally significant** asset
- Is needed for the **Marine Passenger** industry
- **Needs investment** and revenues
- **Mixed Use** has a role on the Pier

Policies:
- **Preserve Deep Water Access** and Marine Utility:
- Create **Economic and Structural Stability** for the Pier through **Appropriate** Mixed Use Development
- **Respect and Enhance Other Vital Water Dependent Uses** of the Pier:

Development Strategies:
“The City will approach the future of the pier by **encouraging a mix of appropriate uses that both promote deep water berthing options and provide the revenues needed** to maintain the infrastructure for future generations....”
2006 Continued: Spatial Relationships for Non-marine Use

- The pier edge and deck adjacent to the pier edges must remain available for anticipated and future marine uses.

- Non-marine uses should be concentrated on upper floors

- Circulation areas, should focus activity to the interior of the pier, away from the seaward edges.

- Where non-marine uses are proposed, respect the interior of the pier as an urban pedestrian space and create a welcoming, safe, and attractive extension of the city fabric onto the pier.

- In general, non-marine activity should concentrate toward the northerly end of the pier, leaving the southerly harbor-side end of the pier available for marine and open space uses.
Multiple proposals have come forward since the Request for Proposals in 2007

Olympia Companies

Lease & Redevelopment of the Maine State Pier
Both proposals eventually walked away. The Great Recession of 2008 didn’t help.
City of Portland  2009
New England Ocean Cluster House  2015
Proposed Policy

Recognize changes since 2006

• The arrival and success of Ready Seafood in the southerly end of the POT
• Growth of Marine Passenger Transportation
• Growth of Hotel and Tourism Development

Remove expectations for wholesale redevelopment of the pier from the policies
What’s Next?

Portland Ocean Terminal: Immediate Context
Concentrating efforts on the “Northerly End of the Pier”
Portland Ocean Terminal: Current Uses

- Cruise Ship Support
- City Shop/Maintenance
- Private Leases
- Mechanical Core
- Circulation
- Tenant Storage: Variable
- City Storage: Seasonal
- Vehicles: Variable
Concepts for higher utilization of the Upper floor and Northerly End of the POT

- Consolidate and organize City and tenant marine operations and storage
- Retain Existing Marine Tenants – Charter, Tugs, Ready

Over 80% of the first floor would be retained for Marine Use
Concepts for higher utilization of the Upper floor and Northerly End of the POT

- Create a new security plan, protecting current marine operations, including: Tugs, Cruise Ships, others...

1st Floor Areas Proposed to Remain within the “105” secure zone
Create covered pedestrian way within westerly edge of the POT
Concepts for higher utilization of the Upper floor and Northerly End of the POT depend on improved circulation

- Improved entrance, pick up – drop off
- Walkway
- Coordinated with Casco Bay Lines
City of Portland Parking Study for Downtown, The Old Port, and The Eastern Waterfront

Final Report
September 2017
Total Parking Capacity: 15,669
Effective Capacity (85% of Total): 13,990
Est. Peak Season Weekday Demand: 14,280
Percent Land Area of Parking: ~ 21.8%

*Large difference in demand during off-peak vs. peak times*
Limited low-cost, extended parking options accessible from ferry terminal

**Potential Strategies:**

- Nonprofit Transportation Association
- Expand Specific Island Resident Parking Programs
- Higher Cost on-Street Parking in High Demand Areas
- Extend On-Street Meter Hours to 8pm
- Improve Parking Management & Technology
- Update Land Use Permit Parking Policies
- Shuttled Parking
- Transportation Network Companies (Lyft & Uber)
- Car Sharing (U-Car)
Introduce Market Style Retail Oriented to the interior of the pier

Concepts for higher utilization of the Upper floor and Northerly End of the POT
Prepare entire second floor for reuse

Potential Uses
- Office incubator complex
- Event and meeting space
THE MARKET at MAINE STATE PIER
1924 Tax Photo
Stakeholder Feedback:

Areas of General Agreement:

- The POT building and Pier circulation need improvement.
- The suggested redevelopment program is well considered and attractive.
- Loading and servicing should avoid causing congestion.
- Direct and indirect parking impacts should be considered.
- Compatibility and collaboration with Pier Tenants will be critical.
- Marine uses received greater support than non-marine uses.
- Address competition with existing restaurants, raw seafood retailers, and on-island grocery through market analysis.
- Smaller scale retail, with emphasis on prepared food and limited seating, generated the most positive feedback.
Stakeholder Feedback:

Differences of Opinion:

- Some participants believed that the circulation improvements (northerly roundabout and internal walkway) would greatly improve circulation on the pier, while others believed that the increased activity would exacerbate existing congestion issues.

- Many participants expressed support for small scale retail as an expansion of opportunity, while others expressed concerns over undue competition by a public entity over private enterprise. Concerns over competition were most strongly articulated by the Peaks Island participants.
Stakeholder Feedback:

**Peaks Island:**

- +/-50 attendees
- Negative response
- Adamant and unified:

*The City should not consider more uses on Maine State Pier until longstanding parking issues are addressed.*
Concluding Thoughts:

• The recent outreach process provided substantial input informing future use and development of the Portland Ocean Terminal.

• Staff has received enough feedback to assist in the drafting and issuance of a Request for Proposals (RFP) reflecting the suggested development program.

However, the significant concerns raised by Islanders (parking and pier congestion) and by members of the retail and development community (competition with private enterprise) warrant consideration both within and apart from any pending procurement process.
**Competition:**

The City should confirm healthy market conditions post development and avoid unfair competition with the private sector.

**Islander Parking:**

City of **Portland Parking Study** for Downtown, the Old Port, and the Eastern Waterfront, Sept 2017 Recommendations relevant to Islander parking concerns.

- Explore the Formation of a Non-Profit Transportation Association
- Explore expanding Specific Island Resident Parking Programs
- Improve Parking Management and Technology
- Explore shuttled parking
- Expand use of TNC (Lyft and Uber…) and Chare Share

Engagement with Island communities on parking and traffic issues should continue under any outcome.
Next Steps, Staff Suggestions:

• Public-private partnership in order to maximize leveraging private funds and non-municipal public funds.

• RFP process to attract public-private interest to support the suggested POT Redevelopment program.
MEMORANDUM

TO: Economic Development Committee

FROM: Jon Jennings, City Manager

DATE: April 27, 2018

SUBJECT: Amendment to the Portland City Code Chapters 2 and 15 Re: Removing Responsibility of Property Owners for City Debts associated with Property

I. ONE SENTENCE SUMMARY

This action seeks to amend the Portland City Code in order to rectify situations wherein an applicant is unable to obtain a permit or license from the City as a result of overdue personal and/or real property taxes owed by someone other than the applicant.

II. BACKGROUND

This action seeks to amend the Portland City Code in order to rectify situations wherein an applicant is unable to obtain a permit or license from the City as a result of overdue personal and/or real property taxes owed by someone other than the applicant.

Without this amendment, leaseholders and property owners have discovered that unless the past due debts/amounts owed by other individuals are paid, they will not be able to receive a permit or license from the City. While this has allowed the City to collect on past due amounts, the payments have often come as a surprise to property owners or lease holders who have vocally objected to paying old debts of others as unfair. The City Manager and his staff agree that requiring such payments is not in the best interest of the City and is therefore hereby requesting that the Portland City Code be amended to allow him discretion to address these issues as they arise.

III. INTENDED RESULT AND OR COUNCIL GOAL ADDRESSED

This will make the process of applying for permits and licenses in the City easier, and thereby addresses the City’s goal to be more customer-friendly.

IV. FINANCIAL IMPACT

According to the Finance Director, a small amount of revenue will be lost through these amendments, but collection efforts can and will be made by other means.
VI. STAFF ANALYSIS AND BACKGROUND THAT WILL NOT APPEAR IN THE AGENDA DESCRIPTION

The City Manager has received complaints from local businesses/property owners about delays in the issuing of building permits that were the result of unpaid personal property taxes of prior tenants. As such, he worked with his Finance Director and Permitting and Inspections Director and Corporation Counsel to draft these amendments to rectify the situation.

VII. RECOMMENDATION

The City Manager and his staff recommend approval of this change.

Corporation Counsel approves the amendment as to form.

VIII. LIST ATTACHMENTS

Amendment to Portland City Code Chapters 2 and 15 Re: Removing Responsibility of New Property Owners for City Debts associated with Property

Memo from Christopher Huff, City Assessor

Email from Denine Leeman, Chief Operating Officer, East Brown Cow Management, Inc.
AMENDMENT TO PORTLAND CITY CODE
CHAPTERS 2 and 15
RE: ENDING COLLECTION OF PAST DUE PERSONAL PROPERTY TAX FROM
SUBSEQUENT PROPERTY OWNERS

BE IT ORDAINED BY THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF PORTLAND,
MAINE IN CITY COUNCIL ASSEMBLED AS FOLLOWS:

1. That Section 2-203 is hereby amended to read as follows:

Sec. 2-203. Applicability.

The provisions of this article shall not apply to the following:

(a) Debts subject to the jurisdiction of the bankruptcy court;

... 

(f) Debits and/or Amounts owed, which the Director of City Manager or his or her designee, Finance in his or her sole discretion, determines are not owed by the applicant seeking an approval, license or permit from the City and/or which should—may be the subject of a resolution by a court of law rather than through the mechanisms provided by this Article.

2. That Section 15-8 is hereby amended to read as follows:

Sec. 15-8. Standards for denial, suspension or revocation.

(a) Grounds. In addition to any other specific provision of this Code authorizing such action, a license or permit may be denied, suspended or revoked upon a determination of the existence of one (1) or more of the following grounds:
(1) Failure to fully complete the application forms; knowingly making an incorrect statement of a material nature on such form; or failure to supply any additional documentation required or reasonably necessary to determine whether such license is issuable, or failure to pay any fee required hereunder;

(7) The applicant's or licensee's real or personal property taxes, or final judgments due and payable to the city, are determined to be in arrears as of the date of the license or application; or that real or personal property taxes or final judgments due and payable to the city on account of the premises for which application has been made or a license issued have not been paid in full as of the date of the license or application. Real or personal property taxes or final judgments that are less than thirty (30) days past due at the time of the license or permit application, that are less than $500.00, or that are determined by the City Manager of his or her designee not to be owed as per §2-203(E), shall not be considered in arrears for purposes of this section.

(b) Hearings.

...
MEMO

TO: Jon Jennings
FROM: Chris Huff
DATE: 11/1/2017
RE: Ordinance Review

Jon,

Within the last few weeks, an issue has come forward several times that I would like to ask you to review for a potential change in the City ordinances.

Issue
Property owners have tried to pull a building permit only to have the permit denied because a former tenant in the building had an outstanding unpaid personal property tax bill due. In one case, the tenant closed their business and vacated the building 3 years ago. They left their FY15 personal property tax bill unpaid. The property owner attempted to take a permit for electrical work and discovered they had to pay the personal property bill of the former tenant from 3 years ago.

In another case, a tenant was evicted for not paying rent and utilities to the property owner. The tenant also did not pay their personal property tax bill for multiple years. Once evicted, the tenant set-up their business in another location. The property owner attempted to pull a permit to fit-out the space for a new tenant only to discover that to do so, they would have to pay the personal property bill of the former tenant. This tenant stiffed them for months of rent and utilities, was evicted and relocated their business. They are open and operating today and still not paying their personal property taxes at their new location. Yet the property owner has to pay their outstanding personal property tax bill, including lien fees, penalties and interest, in order to fit-out the space to attract a new tenant.

Ordinances
Chapter 2, Article VI, Section 2-201 states “The purpose of this article is to ensure the payment of funds due the city by requiring that persons who owe money to the city pay their just debts before undertaking any new activity involving the city. (Ord. No. 274-90, 3-19-90)”

Chapter 15, Section 15-8, Paragraph 7 states “The applicant’s or licensee’s real or personal property taxes, or final judgments due and payable to the city, are determined to be in arrears as of the date of the license or application; or that real or personal property taxes or final judgments due and payable to the city on account of the premises for which application has been made or a license issued have not been paid in full as of the date of the license or application.”
While Section 2-201 states specifically that it is “the persons who owe money to the city” and Section 15-8 states “the applicant’s or licensee’s real or personal property taxes,” it is the following language that is making property owners responsible for these taxes that are not in their name: “or that real or personal property taxes or final judgments due and payable to the city on account of the premises for which application has been made or a license issued...” (emphasis mine).

**Resolution**

It is reasonable and understandable why any unpaid *real estate* taxes would prevent a property owner from pulling a permit or being approved for a license or other service from the City. However, *personal property* taxes are the responsibility of the business and/or business owner. Making the property owner responsible to have to pay the personal property debts of their tenants does not seem fair and this unintended consequence could be construed as a disincentive to economic development to an owner wishing to improve their property to attract a new tenant.

Perhaps a review of this ordinance and a clean-up of the language or consolidation of these two sections of the City Code would be beneficial. Other suggestions to consider would be placing language on permit applications or on the permit website advising that unpaid debts will prevent a permit from being issued. The City could also start to be more aggressive with collecting personal property taxes, including filing UCC-1’s and even seizing property. It’s also important to note that the City has no formal notification process to alert a property owner that a tenant within has a debt owed to the City.

Thank you, Jon, for taking the time to review this and deciding whether it should be advanced to a Council Committee.

Chris
On Tue, Mar 27, 2018 at 2:44 PM, Denine Leeman <dleeman@eastbrownecow.com> wrote:
TO: Jon Jennings, Mike Russell

CC: Mayor Strimling, City Councilors, Jason Grant

RE: City Withholding Building Permits Due to Tenant Personal Properties Past Due

I am writing to all of you regarding the attached email correspondence a sprinkler contractor received pertaining to sprinkler work to be completed at 100 Commercial Street in Portland. Soley Wharf LLC applied for permits to install a new sprinkler system in part of the building while there is a vacancy, as it has been completing like work over the last couple of years to improve life safety in the building, even though not required to do so due to the historic nature of the building. We have been working with the City of Portland fire department to upgrade services in stages over a period of years.

The email seems benign. However, there are no unpaid Property (Real Estate) Taxes currently due. The City of Portland is now actively holding back the issuing of building permits due to past due PERSONAL property taxes of TENANT’s equipment for their private businesses. Additionally, this practice just began and is being exercised pertaining to personal property taxes incurred as much as 8 years ago, owed by now defunct businesses, but never successfully collected by the City. I believe that Casey Gilbert may have made you aware of this concern.

I certainly would understand the need for this type of enforcement action if we were discussing Real Estate Taxes of buildings. East Brown Cow takes great pains to always handle payments timely on its buildings, regardless if the Tenants are contractually obligated to reimburse the Landlord. But I do not understand why it is happening for personal property taxes of Tenant’s businesses.

My staff reached out to ask if this was a mistake, speaking to both City Treasurer Melissa Norton and staff at the City Clerk’s office. Both discussions led to the explanation that the City Council voted last fall to begin enforcing Section 15-8 of the City’s Code of Ordinances for denial, suspension, or revocation of Licenses and Permits treating the concept of “applicant’s or licensee’s real or personal property taxes” to be interpreted to mean an entire address or building to be denied permits or licenses when pertaining to past due business personal property taxes of tenants. I can only imagine that this decision was either not clearly discussed and oversights were made, or it was a deliberate attempt at “collective punishment” causing building owners or other businesses who were at critical junctions in their normal course of business, or relocating their business, to pay past due personal property taxes owed by others. I cannot find any committee meeting notes or votes made by Councilors, but I am copying them to this email as some have heard our concerns and should know that the response to discontent is being answered as a directive of enforcement in this manner from the City Council.

I brought this issue up at a Portland Downtown (of which I am a Board Member) meeting almost two months ago where I asked other Building Owners if they had experienced the same issue recently. I heard two other large building owners in the City had similar issues, one losing a
potential long term tenant and incurring late delivery penalties for being unable to get a permit for tenant improvements. East Brown Cow Tenants elsewhere in the City were unable to open for business because they were not able to get required inspections or permits due to a past due personal property tax of $1.06 for a tenant that left in the middle of the night 7 years ago, and a current tenant who apparently simply owed interest for a late personal property tax payment made late. We are concerned that we will not be able to continue to do business not knowing if we will be able to get permits to complete work on tenant improvements or Building upgrades due to outstanding debts that are not ours and not in our control.

And please note, if the City is trying to collect personal property taxes from businesses that went dark years ago and have not paid personal property taxes, it is almost inevitable that the Landlords of these tenants have endured a much greater write-off of uncollectible rents.

For all the time and work the City has invested in new software, and additional staff to improve the permitting times for the City at the peak of a construction boom in Portland, I can’t see how this approach for collecting past due PERSONAL property taxes of defunct companies can help the process. I would expect that the City would have some standard of internal processes which either writes off uncollectable accounts, or pursues those who owe the debts to the greatest extent of the law, rather than trying to disrupt the businesses of those who have done nothing wrong.

I am happy to meet with you to discuss this issue further or answer any questions you may have on the experiences I have had concerning this issue.

Regards,

Denine Leeman

Denine Leeman
East Brown Cow Management, Inc.
Chief Operating Officer
100 Commercial Street, Suite 306
Portland, Maine 04101
dleeman@eastbrowncow.com
207-775-2252 (o)
207-773-7422 (f)
MEMORANDUM

TO: Chair and Members of the Economic Development Committee

FROM: Casey Gilbert, Executive Director, Portland Downtown

DATE: April 25, 2018

SUBJECT: Portland Downtown Proposed Expansion

I. ONE SENTENCE SUMMARY:

Portland Downtown is seeking to expand its current district footprint to include additional downtown district adjacent properties per the provided expansion map.

II. BACKGROUND:

As part of Portland Downtown’s 5-Year Strategic Plan, Growth, along with Vitality, Experience, and Advocacy, is a strategic initiative area that has been given thoughtful consideration and research by our volunteer Board of Directors. A Growth Ad-Hoc Committee was formed, from which the attached memo was developed. As the city continues to experience growth in both commercial and residential development, so too does the need for Portland Downtown’s supplemental level of programs and services for downtown property owners.

III. INTENDED RESULT:

Portland Downtown provides supplemental services to property owners within the district, including tax exempt properties. In the current district, there is approximately $160M in tax-exempt property and $840M in taxable value, for a total Downtown Improvement District (DID) valuation of $1B. The proposed expansion will add approximately $68M in taxable value (an 8% increase to current taxable value) to the DID. The expansion will allow Portland Downtown to extend its programs and services to a DID adjacent area that has demonstrated a demand for our programs and services via See, Click, Fix requests. Within the proposed expansion area, there is growth and development currently underway or approved to begin by the City, which will add more residential and commercial density to the urban downtown core.

IV. FINANCIAL IMPACT:

Property owners within the expansion area will receive a supplemental tax bill, based on Portland Downtown’s mil rate, which is voted on by the City Council each June. The proposed expansion would provide Portland Downtown with approximately $67,000 in additional revenue towards its annual budget, based on the current mil rate of .92. It is expected that the mil rate may increase this year, when Portland Downtown’s budget is approved by the City Council in June.
V. PORTLAND DOWNTOWN ANALYSIS AND BACKGROUND:

Please see attached memo.

VI. RECOMMENDATION:

The Portland Downtown Board of Directors voted to recommend approval for the geographic District expansion per the provided map.

VII. LIST ATTACHMENTS:

- Portland Downtown’s Growth Ad-Hoc Committee memo
- See, Click, Fix requests for proposed expansion area for 2017
- Portland Downtown’s 5-Year Strategic Plan
- Geographic Description for proposed FY19 DID (including expansion area properties).
- Public meeting notice for additional proposed DID property owners.
Growth Ad-Hoc Committee: Recommendations

Kim Volk, Chair
David Packard, Co-Chair

February 13, 2018

Introduction

Portland Downtown (PD) is a 501(c)4 nonprofit organization, which was established in 1992 through a collaborative effort, and with broad support, to bring renewed vitality to downtown. Property owners, businesses, and residents came together to form a board of directors and outline a bold mission in support of this goal. Through an act of the Maine State Legislature and approval by the City of Portland’s City Council, “Portland’s Downtown District” was established as the 1st Business Improvement District (BID) in the state of Maine. Portland Downtown’s mission is to maintain a clean and safe downtown while building and promoting a vibrant business, residential, and tourism destination. The mission is achieved through a Supplemental Services Agreement (SSA) with the City of Portland, along with unique programming and events. Organizational oversight is provided by a volunteer board of directors, who are elected by downtown property owners and stakeholders, and via working committees who develop annual goals in support of the mission - and the organization’s 5-year strategic plan.

The growth ad-hoc committee was formed by the Executive Committee in response to outcomes from the board retreat in February 2017. As one of Portland Downtown’s four major strategic initiative areas (Vitality, Experience, Growth & Advocacy) as defined in its 5-year strategic plan, growth represents an opportunity for the organization, for its constituents, and for the larger community. Expansion and improvement of programs, services, and events would translate to improved outcomes with regards to cleanliness, safety, beautification, and vibrancy, and - in turn, economic development.

As part of the committee’s process, the members reviewed historic documents, including the original organizational by-laws and charter, and charted trends in the organizational mil rate and budget since its inception, 25 years ago.
Recommendations

Based on the committee's research, the following recommendations are presented to the Portland Downtown Executive Committee and Board of Directors for consideration. With the budget process fully underway at the City of Portland, and a duty to notify downtown property owners in a timely manner of changes that may affect their PD supplemental tax bill, the growth committee is requesting that the board finalize a vote on the recommendations no later than April 2018.

In summary, the Growth Committee is recommending the following:

I. Include properties that were excluded due to an administrative error during the last update to the DID (Downtown Improvement District) footprint;
II. Add properties to the footprint that are currently downtown adjacent, primed for growth, and in need of a supplemental level of services;
III. Develop a budget that will support enhanced program service delivery to all downtown property owners;

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I. Include properties that were excluded due to an administrative error during the last update to the DID (Downtown Improvement District) footprint

Update the legal description, to include the following properties that were added in the 2004 order expanding the boundaries of the Portland Downtown District:

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1 City of Portland, City Council Order 158-03/04
II. Add properties to the footprint that are currently downtown adjacent, primed for growth, and in need of a supplemental level of services

On the west side of the district, extend the boundary at Park Street to continue south to Pleasant Street, continue east to High Street, continue south to Commercial Street, and continue east to merge with current district boundary on Commercial Street at Maple Street.

On the east side of the district, extend the boundary at Franklin Street to continue south to along Franklin Street to Federal Street to merge with current district boundary on Franklin Street, to include several Federal Buildings, and add Lincoln Park.

On the south side of the district, include all properties that front on Commercial Street from Franklin Street on the east to Wright’s Wharf on the west.

Based on 2018 City of Portland tax rolls provided by the City Assessor’s office, the total current district valuation is $1,007,843,070, of which $831,437,320 is taxable.

The total tax assessed value of the proposed district expansion is $143,046,170, of which, $68,020,890 is taxable.

Therefore, the proposed district footprint has a total taxable value of $899,458,210. (Please refer to attached map).

III. Develop a budget that will support enhanced program service delivery to all downtown property owners

For the past 10 years, Portland Downtown has prepared its annual budget based on the mil rate last set in 2007 at .92 mil.
Here's an historical look at the mil rate for Portland Downtown:

![Downtown District Mil Rate: 2001 - 2017](image)

The expectation was that property values would increase at a rate that would allow for expansion of programs, such as the cadet program and graffiti busters, and keep pace with increases to the Supplemental Services Agreement with the City of Portland, as well as administrative and operating costs, health insurance, rent, etc. The organization has been operating at a net zero budget, with relatively flat supplemental tax revenues. Additionally, tax revenues have not kept pace with the change in the SSA, which has increased by as much as 9.42% in one year as compared to a 3.97% increase in DID tax for the same year (2015).

Here's an historical look at the change in the DID tax assessment compared to the change in the supplemental services contract since FY2012:

![Change in DID Tax Assessment compared to SSA Contract: FY 2012 - FY2018 (by %)](image)
Another important element for an organization is maintaining a rainy day fund. In addition to being mandated by the organization’s founding documents, a rainy day/contingency fund allows the organization to continue to deliver programs and services to its constituents in the event of an economic downturn, or for other unexpected situations. The proposed FY budget will enable the organization to create a healthy rainy day fund, which will ensure organizational sustainability and continued fiscal responsibility.

As downtown grows and changes, adding residents, expanding businesses and new construction, so too, does the organization have to grow to meet the demands of an evolving city. Rather than set an arbitrary mil rate, the board approached the budget from the perspective of returning the greatest ROI to the property owners. By focusing on improving programs that produce measurable and positive outcomes, such as the cadet program, beautification, and graffiti removal, the organization will be better able to serve a broad range of constituents. As well, retaining qualified staff, who can support the organization’s mission, programs, and events is essential.

The benefit of a BID is that the supplemental tax revenue collected is returned directly to the downtown, and its spending is prioritized by a board of directors whose majority stake are the property owners themselves, along with a wide range of constituents - from retail, to nonprofit, residential, hotel and finance. The power of this collective decision to pool tax dollars to leverage for direct spending is a model used all over the United States, and the world, to transform cities toward ever greater economic strength and vitality.
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Total Value: $65,958,570
Fix It! Portland Requests: 2017
Within Downtown District Proposed Expansion

116 Requests for Service

- Sidewalk Snow Violation: 46
- Sidewalks: 5
- Snow Removal: 2
- Sidewalk Ice Condition: 1
- Sidewalk Plowing: 3
- Graffiti: 14
- Sidewalk Snow Violation: 46
- Sidewalks: 5
- Snow Removal: 2
- Sidewalk Ice Condition: 1
- Sidewalk Plowing: 3
- Graffiti: 14
Portland’s Downtown District
5-Year Strategic Plan
June, 2015

Introduction
Portland’s Downtown District was established in 1992 through an act of the Maine State Legislature under the “Maine Municipal Development Districts” statute. It was incorporated as a 501C(4) non-profit called the Downtown Improvement District, Inc. The initial overriding goal, as taken directly from the enabling legislation, was to “promote and enhance the image of downtown Portland, Maine, as a safe, clean, well-managed area in which to live, visit, shop and conduct business.”

The legislation document goes on to describe many of the goal elements that PDD still performs today. More recently, these were incorporated into the mission statement established during the organization’s previous strategic planning process:

Portland’s Downtown District is in the business of maintaining a clean and safe downtown while building and promoting a vibrant business, residential and tourism destination.

While PDD’s original goals have remained relatively constant over the preceding 23 years, Portland has evolved to become one of the leading cities in New England, and, arguably, the economic engine for Maine. The downtown in particular has built its reputation as an important visitor destination, and a popular place to live, play and work. Portland now receives national accolades for its successes, and regularly makes top ten lists for its scenic beauty, restaurants, active arts culture and quality of life.

PDD deserves at least some of the credit for the city’s resurgence. Working mostly behind the scenes, Portland’s Downtown District has been committed to maintaining a clean and safe environment for visitors, workers and residents. It has consistently produced popular city events, developed a successful website, distributed printed visitor brochures and maps, and worked hard with other partners to create value for its property owner constituents.

Current State – Spring 2015
Today, Portland is a city in major transition. Older infrastructure is requiring upgrades along with major capital projects that need prioritizing and funding. Transportation and parking pressures
must be addressed so that the city maintains its walkability, while vehicular access to, and through, the downtown is not adversely constricted. New housing is needed to satisfy demand in all economic groups from affordable to workforce to retirement. While development projects should be carefully considered and encouraged, zoning schemes must also be scrutinized so as not to limit appropriate private investments. Open space and historical complexities must be balanced against the city’s growing economic needs. Social service capabilities require a new collaboration of all downtown organizations, along with funding to mitigate acute problems like homelessness and panhandling.

This is a long list of transitional growth issues! Yet, Portland’s Downtown District’s mission and original goals still remain relevant today. Our role in Portland’s future success will require establishing priorities in the areas of Downtown Vitality and the Downtown Experience. And, the organization must fill a leadership void and become a stronger voice for the city.

In the fall of 2014, the Chamber of Commerce cast light on the current economic realities of Portland in its annual benchmark report. On the surface the city appears thriving, but as the Chamber has pointed out underneath the foundation is hardly solid. Income, housing costs, tax burden and other key metrics are underperforming when compared to similar sized peer cities in New England and across the country. These issues are of similar concern and importance to PDD.

**Looking Forward**

Portland’s downtown has physically grown beyond the PDD borders which were established over two decades ago. Today it reaches into the surrounding downtown areas and pockets of real estate that were not included within the original footprint. An expansion of Portland’s Downtown District is needed to allow the organization to provide more resources to these newer regions, incorporate the businesses into our marketing strategies, and more importantly to bring additional voices in support of the organization’s goals.

The next 5 years will present significant challenges as well as opportunities, and is a crucial period for Portland’s long term social and economic future. Clearly, there are conflicting views on where that future should take the city, and there is no overriding leadership coming from the public or private sectors. Often voices representing narrow interests are able to have a significant influence over local decisions, with more traditional organizations or business interests left out of the discussions. Even the normal
process of government is impacted with the ‘legislation by referendum’ phenomenon Portland is currently experiencing.

Though unintended, this lack of broad thoughtful leadership and consensus building has the potential for harming the positive economic advances and reverting Portland back to the difficult times that spawned the organization in the first place!

Portland’s Downtown District has always supported a healthy mix of economic development, business and income growth, combined with maintaining the city's superior quality of life. PDD is in the unique position of speaking for the downtown’s largest cross section of constituents - property owners, businesses, residents and employees. In the end the current situation and potential for the next five years, presents a clear opportunity, and responsibility, for Portland’s Downtown District to help shape the dialog and influence the future of Portland.

**Strategic Planning Process**

Many paths can be taken to achieve a strategic plan. Ultimately, its purpose is to set goals and initiatives that are expected to be achieved over a reasonable timeline. It is not a business or operational plan, as these are more granular and short term, and generally adopted in support of the strategic plan. Clearly, a good strategic plan will not simply be an exercise conducted according to bylaw requirements, but a document that guides the organization forward.

The process was conducted over six months in expectation of adoption by June FY15, the end of the current year. Below is the timeline to achieve the final document:

1. 1st Draft was reviewed by all board members prior to the January 15th board meeting/morning retreat.
2. An electronic survey was sent to PDD constituent groups for strategic planning input.
3. The same survey mailed to PDD property owners.
4. Survey results were closed and tabulated by January 31st.
5. Board members offered additional input, changes and prioritization of items.
6. A 2nd draft was completed in March and reviewed by the board electronically.
7. Changes and refinements were made in April and May.
8. The final document will be approved at the June board meeting.

The Strategic Plan is organized into Four Key Initiatives. These are the broad, core categories that will define the focus of the
organization through 2020. Incorporated into the Key Initiatives are the specific goals to be achieved during this 5 year cycle.

**Strategic Plan Key Initiatives**

**A. The Downtown Experience Initiatives**

Portland is an old city with narrow streets, crooked sidewalks, historic buildings, public parks, a working waterfront, 4 seasons of weather, and a resulting charm that is not seen in a city of its size anywhere in America. Our core responsibility is to be the leaders for maintaining the downtown, and these Downtown Experience priorities incorporate our traditional “clean and safe” goals.

Property owners rightfully expect a certain level of baseline public services from the city of Portland paid for by property taxes. Our investment in a supplemental level of services is where PDD is able to make a major difference. To provide this, we contract with the city of Portland annually on a Supplemental Services Agreement.

Portland is generally a safe city but PDD must remain vigilant as perception for many is reality. This requires continuous work to create a comfortable experience for visitors, employees and residents. We manage safety concerns through a close working relationship with the police and fire departments, hired cadet patrols, human service agencies and city staff.

Top strategic priorities are:

1. **Expanded police and cadet presence** – to add more foot patrols and expand the hours and coverage in the downtown.

2. **Create and hire a new position called Community Services Coordinator** – with property management skills to monitor ‘the streets’ and work closely with city staff and property owners.

3. **Improved street lighting** – by addressing poor lighting in darker downtown zones. Consider ways to fund city lighting upgrades.
4. New signage and banners – to improve wayfinding and replace aging banners

5. Focused effort on homelessness and panhandling – Work with city staff and shelter agencies to find common ground in solving these problems. Research legislation to reduce panhandling

6. Increased landscaping and plantings – Consider ways to beautify the downtown such as an “adopt a planter” program and volunteer landscapers. Work closely with “Friends” groups to support park maintenance.

7. More resources for graffiti removal and education – Closely monitor Learning Works and consider additional removal vendors. Provide frequent information to property owners on latest removal techniques.

8. Additional public restrooms – identify sites for new public restroom facilities, or other alternative concepts. Seek funding sources.

9. Sidewalk brick and tree well repair – Inspect and log all sidewalk issues and create priorities for use of CIP funds. Replace trees and reconstruct tree wells, or brick in unused wells and remove old asphalt repairs.

10. Improved snow removal procedures – Refine rules for parking bans in the downtown and closely monitor removal following storms

11. Recycling and waste removal – In conjunction with the city, implement a recycling and food waste removal plan.

12. Management of supplemental services agreement – create a new working model for oversight. Monitor and track See, Click and Fix performance.

B. The Downtown Vitality Initiatives

Our ‘Downtown Vitality’ strategy will be contemporized through a stronger focus on marketing and online communications. Major downtown events like the Old Port Festival, Winterfest and Light Up Your Holidays present an
opportunity for partnerships to achieve even greater success, and to share some of the operational burdens.

Much of our vitality efforts will be directed toward the support of downtown businesses, especially those on the street level that struggle to compete with online companies and national competitors located in South Portland, Freeport and the other surrounding communities. Our new website will feature a comprehensive calendar of events and provide help to visitors with parking, transportation and other needs.

1. Develop and execute a long-term consumer marketing and communications plan – focus will be in support of downtown businesses, mainly retail, and expanding local and long-distance visitations on a year-round basis

2. Hire a Marketing and Communications Coordinator – to focus on executing a marketing plan, and managing the website, database, and internal and external communications.

3. Establish www.portlandmaine.com as the online hub for Portland – feature local events, business information and how to travel to downtown Portland. Create a plan to monetize elements of the site.


5. Event partnerships – provide our city knowledge and marketing capabilities to support other downtown events

6. Improve the Park and Shop Program – update this program to better serve the public, merchants and parking lot owners.

7. Complete a parking and transportation study – to inform city leaders and provide solutions

8. Research and monitor the health of downtown businesses – acquire information about retail sales and track performance
9. Maintain business database – continually update business information and communicate effectively to individual sector groups.

10. Seek sponsorships and grants – to provide funding for events and other marketing or maintenance initiatives

11. Support acquisition and recruitment of new businesses and residents – by participating with other organizations, and remaining engaged on all housing and zoning issues

C. The Advocacy Initiatives

Portland’s Downtown District should take carefully considered positions on major issues that affect our constituents. Moreover, PDD is positioned to be in a leadership role with regard to all issues than impact the future of Portland. This responsibility requires an advocacy process that seeks input from the community, vetted through a committee of the board of directors.

1. Establish a formal advocacy policy – a committee should be formed to create the procedures for adopting positions. The executive director should speak publicly for the organization.

2. Create a process to solicit community input – utilize surveys and meetings to elicit feedback and support.

3. PDD Representation – to remain informed in all city decision-making, PDD should provide a member(s) to all city committees, task forces, and study groups. The executive director should be a member of other organization boards, such as the Chamber and CVB.

4. Consistent communication to constituents – PDD should frequently communicate its position to all constituent groups. It should seek supporters to attend council and committee meetings

5. Continuous board and committee recruitment – to maintain fresh perspectives and keep a ‘pipeline’ in place
D. The Growth Initiatives

Portland’s downtown has grown significantly since PDD was established in 1992. However, the organization’s footprint has not grown beyond its initial boundaries. A specific plan is needed to expand.

1. Add properties within the current footprint but not presently included in the assessment – for a variety of reasons a significant amount of property was excluded or has been redeveloped since the district was established.

2. Expand east of Franklin Street - to include the India Street Neighborhood and the waterfront area down to the current Portland Company property

3. Consider expansion to the Bayside Neighborhoods – to include some of downtown Portland’s fastest growing areas

4. Consider expansion to include the total Downtown TIF – The newly enacted ‘downtown TIF’ includes nearly all of the commercial area in the central peninsula of Portland.

5. Consider acquisition of other ‘like purpose’ downtown organizations – there are a number of non-profits that have similar roles and are often inadequately funded and staffed. PDD could incorporate them under our umbrella.

6. Evaluate a two-tier assessment program – analyze the financial and operational issues with offering a different rate for residential and commercial properties

Summary

Portland’s Downtown District is completing an organizational transition much like the city itself. By the end of June it will be launching a new website to better represent its high profile URL, portlandmaine.com. At the same time it will be changing its name to simply Portland Downtown, removing the ‘district’ label and broadening its focus to be more inclusive of all constituent sectors in the city.

This five year plan lays out an ambitious strategy for the 23 year old organization. While the plan does not establish many of the specific details or timelines to complete each goal or initiative, it
identifies the path toward positioning Portland Downtown as a leader in the future evolution of the city.

Some strategic goals are likely to be completed more quickly than others. And, while certain goals may be dropped, others will likely be added by future boards. This is a normal process in a dynamic organization. In fact, the strategic plan should be reviewed annually and a business plan created for each fiscal year cycle.

Finally, Portland Downtown will only be as strong as its volunteer board of directors and committees, supported by talented staff members. A continuous effort should be made to recruit and retain a team of influential people with a passion for Portland and a positive outlook for the future.
The following is a written description of the perimeter of Portland’s Downtown District as of July 1, 2018:

Congress Street, both sides - State Street to High Street (including the lots fronting on the southwesterly corner of the intersection with State Street);

High Street, both sides - Congress Street to Deering Street;

High Street, northeasterly side - Deering Street to Cumberland Avenue;

Cumberland Avenue, southeasterly side - High Street to Franklin Arterial;

Franklin Arterial, southwesterly side - Cumberland Avenue to Commercial Street;

Commercial Street, both sides - Franklin Arterial to High Street (including Maine State Pier, Long Wharf, and Portland Fish Pier);

High Street, northeasterly side - Commercial Street to Pleasant Street;

Pleasant Street, northwesterly side - High Street to Park Street;

Park Street, northeasterly side - Pleasant Street to Congress Street.
April 25, 2018

Warm greetings from Portland Downtown,

As a follow-up to our meeting at the Maine Historical Society on Tuesday, April 10th, we wanted to notify you about several upcoming public meetings that will address the proposed expansion of Portland Downtown.

If the expansion is approved by the City Council in June, your property will become a part of the Downtown Improvement District. What this means is that you will pay a supplemental tax which will directly support our efforts to keep downtown clean, safe, and vibrant. The collective supplemental tax paid by downtown property owners is used to fund the programs and services that comprise our nonprofit organization’s annual operating budget. For more information about Portland Downtown’s mission, programs, services, and events, please visit portlandmaine.com.

You are encouraged to attend or make public comment at the May 1 and June 18 meetings as noted below. All meetings will take place at Portland City Hall.

City of Portland’s Economic Development Committee Meeting
- Tuesday, May 1st at 5:30pm (Room 209)

City of Portland’s City Council Meeting
- 1st reading of the proposed expansion agenda item: Monday, June 4th at 5:30pm (City Council Chambers, 2nd floor)
- 2nd reading, public hearing, and vote on the proposed expansion agenda item: Monday, June 18th at 5:30pm (City Council Chambers, 2nd floor)

On the reverse, please find the information included in the original letter, sent in March, inviting you to the meeting at Maine Historical Society (please note that this meeting has already occurred).

Should you have any questions at any time, please feel free to contact me via phone or email: (207) 772-6828 x212 or casey@portlandmaine.com.

Casey Gilbert
Executive Director, Portland Downtown
March 15, 2018

Warm greetings from Portland Downtown,

Since 1992, Portland Downtown has been providing a wide-range of programs, services and events to our downtown property owners. Not only do our property owners benefit from our offerings, but so does the wider community. As a 501c4 nonprofit, with a mission to make downtown clean, safe & vibrant, it is our duty to ensure that the impacts of our mission are experienced by those who live, work, and visit downtown. From our award-winning Police Cadet Program in partnership with the Portland Police Department, to our award-winning Graffiti Busters Program in partnership with LearningWorks and the City of Portland, we design our programs to reflect the needs of downtown and to be in-line with our mission. To keep downtown vibrant, we hang colorful banners year-round, plant flowering plants in flower pots, and have invested in more than 200 decorative forms that make up Pandora's amazing Winter Lights display, which illuminates the streets, parks, and buildings in downtown. The Downtown Directory, published in partnership with the Portland Press Herald, showcases our diverse mix of businesses – from restaurants and retail, to service and points-of-interest. The directory is distributed far and wide and mailed all over the country to people interested in visiting our beautiful coastal city. However, our greatest impact is in the work of our downtown public works crew, who keep the streets and sidewalks clean and free of snow, so that people can explore downtown unencumbered. Our five-person downtown works crew keeps our parks looking beautiful, our sidewalks free of litter, and much of what they do happens while the rest of the city is asleep – so it seems to happen magically! Portland Downtown also produces many beloved community events throughout the year, including the Tree Lighting in Monument Square, Downtown Worker Appreciation Day, and Old Port Festival. We do all of this with four full-time administrative staff and an outstanding volunteer Board of Directors.

So, why share this with you today? As the city grows and develops, so too does the definition of downtown. While Portland Downtown currently provides beneficial programs and services to over 750 properties on the peninsula, there are many that we do not serve, as we are bound geographically as a Business Improvement District. Through the research of our Growth Ad-Hoc Committee, we have discovered that there are properties adjacent to our current footprint that would benefit from our programs and services and are primed for inclusion in Portland Downtown. Your property has been identified as part of a collective group that we would like to include in our upcoming fiscal year. What that means for you as a property owner is a supplemental tax that will be mailed separately from your property tax bill, with a millage rate that is 1/20th of the city’s millage rate. In return, you receive the full benefit of Portland Downtown’s programs, services, and advocacy.

We’ve arranged a gathering so that you can ask questions, meet current Board members and stakeholders, and get to know us a little better. On Tuesday, April 10th at 5:30pm at the Maine Historical Society, we’ll have presentations, Q&A, and refreshments. We hope to see you there! Please RSVP to Taffy Eaton at taffy@portlandmaine.com or 772-6828 x214.

Casey Gilbert, Executive Director
Kim Volk, Chair, Board of Directors
Questions?