

Portsmouth Citizen's Response Task Force

Bridge Street Subcommittee Meeting

August 12, 2020

Present:

Russ Grazier, subcommittee chair and task force member
Deb Anthony, task Force member
Karen Conard, City Manager Portsmouth
Joseph Almeida, City of Portsmouth Facilities Manager
Stephanie Seacord, City of Portsmouth Public Information Officer
Josh Denton, Chair of Pop Up Portsmouth
Andrew Bagley, Secretary of Pop Up Portsmouth
Tristin Law, Pop Up NH
Robert Marsillia, City of Portsmouth Chief Inspector
Patrick Howe, City of Portsmouth Deputy Fire Chief
James Petersen, Task Force Co Chair
Peter Rice, Director of Public Works City of Portsmouth
Laura Brown, Pop Up NH Board Member
Joanna Kelly, Pop Up NH Treasurer
Ben Van Camp, VP Portsmouth Collaborative

These notes are general in nature and are intended to document topics discussed and are not minutes.

Questions Clarifications:

Russ Grazier asked about the possibility of closing Bridge Street starting Thursday 8/13/20 to allow for better and safer flow of people in and out of the venue. To address safety concerns of moving traffic during hours of operation.

Joe Almeida offered that he would be fine with closing off the area of concern on Bridge Street but would like to have it reopen at the end of each evening to allow traffic to flow when the area is closed for business. Joe offered that the gates on sight could be used to close off the street 30 minutes before the venue opens and then pull gates back to open street at the close of the venue each night. This responsibility will fall on the NH Pop Up Mgt. team.

Hours of Operation: Pop Up NH clarified hours of operation will be:

Thur. 3-10
Fri. 3-10
Sat. 12noon-10
Sun. 12noon-10pm.

Notes of Interest:

Tristan noted that there is an interest in doing a food drive at the gate. He will ensure that Pop Up NH will management the food drive.

Parking: Continued discussion of parking and incentives to get patrons to park at the Foundry Garage. There is no longer a fee to enter the food area so Josh noted Visitors will get a free bottle of water with proof of Garage Parking ticket. The City will continue to use signage to encourage parking at the garage.

Islington Creek Neighborhood has expressed concern about parking of the staff/volunteers who work at the venue which then takes a parking space for a much longer time. There was a question raised if the City could allow free parking at the Garage for staff and volunteers. Peter Rice assured the group that could be worked out. Tristan, Josh, and Peter will work on this.

Accessibility:

Russ questioned if there was a handicap access. Josh noted they are working on a Ramp system. Patrick reminded the group that any ramps need to be ADA compliant. Robert M agreed to inspect the ramp system on 8/13/20.

Summary of First Weekend:

Josh noted that his team felt it “went as well as it possibly could have”. He thanked the City staff for their extra efforts to be available and support the effort for a soft opening. Josh noted that Saturday night was very busy with sold out venue! The general vibe was that it was successful all around.

Questions moving Forward

Josh questioned if there was a smaller, quieter generator for the side of the stage. Joe A offered to look for a replacement of the generator. Also, Josh noted that some heavy cables were on side and needed to be returned to the City (he will return them to the City).

It was asked if the theater does not have a production could that area be used for overflow dining. It would need to be discussed with the Health Department (e.g. a plan should be presented to them)

Long discussion regarding some type of covering to allow for shade. There was a question if canvass covering could be dipped in fire retardant liquid to keep the price down. The answer was No as there is a problem with these types of coverings dripping molten material in a fire down where people might be. * Suggestion was that perhaps something smaller for each table. Peter offered to help in the search.

Josh asked if they could open on a Wednesday night to thank VIPs, Sponsors and volunteers who have made this possible prior to school opening maybe 8/26 or 9/2. This would be to thank them. It would be a private event, not open to the public and social distancing would be in place. The event would be a few hours. Russ suggested 6-8pm. There was no objection to this request.

Russ suggested that it would be very beneficial to be tracking the economic impact of this project.
For Example:

- Could the team Track the numbers of people working for restaurants, Pop UP Nh and in general the Venue.
- The number of attendees each day
- The number of organizations impacted by Pop Up NH Bridge Street.
- General dollars flowing b/c of this project

Noting a brief weekly overview of this data could be very informative to the City and Region.

Ben questioned if there was a way to track where attendees were coming from (local, regional, out of state)

Andre noted that the past weekend through brief conversations with folks were 80% local.

Retail

The question was raised if retail could be added. These would be on the street side (outside of both the theater and the food area) Likely 2/3 retailers with a 10X10 pop up and table. This would not be this coming weekend. Russ suggested that Pop Up NH speak and work with the Health Department to put a plan together for this. (Also noted revenue should be tracked as part of above plan to document the economic impact of this effort)

Other:

Josh asked about opening a 3rd food shed at some point in the future. That discussion will continue with City and this committee.

Discussion about locking the porta potties at night as it is evident that they are being used beyond the open hours. The pros and cons of this were discussed. Pop Up NH will start locking them.