

1                                   **City of Portsmouth, New Hampshire**  
2                                   **Portsmouth Citizen Response Task Force**  
3                                   **Remote meeting via Zoom**  
4                                   **Meeting Minutes for Wednesday, August 26, 2020, 2:00 P.M.**  
5

6   **Call to Order**  
7

8   Co-Chair James Petersen and called the meeting to order at 2:00. Karen Conard, City  
9   Manager, represented Staff and was the moderator. Patience Horton took minutes. This  
10   meeting, the 14<sup>th</sup> general Task Force meeting, lasted one hour. Agenda items were taken  
11   out of order. Votes were assessed with a show of hands.  
12

13   Task Force present:

- 14       1. James Petersen, Petersen Engineering, Co-Chair
- 15       2. Mark Stebbins, ProCon Construction, Co-Chair
- 16       3. Karen Conard, City Manager
- 17       4. Kim McNamara, Health Officer (City)
- 18       5. Senator Martha Fuller Clark, NH State Senate District 21
- 19       6. Russ Grazier, PMAC (Non-profit)
- 20       7. Ann Birner, PharmD (Health Care Professional)
- 21       8. Kathryn Lynch, (Non-profit Health-care Organization)
- 22       9. Karen Bouffard, The Real Estate Market, Inc. (Real Estate)
- 23       10. Valerie Rochon, President, Chamber Collaborative of Greater Portsmouth
- 24       11. Deborah Anthony, Gather Pantry Market (Non-profit)
- 25       12. Alan Gold, Economic Development Commission (City)
- 26       13. Bianca Monteiro, York Pulmonary Associates (Health Care Professional)
- 27       14. Sarah Lachance, Economic Development Commission (City)
- 28       15. Jim Lee, REMAX Shoreline (Real Estate)
- 29       16. Samantha Finigan, Gus & Ruby Letterpress (Retail Business)

30   Task Force absent:

- 31       17. Marylyn Morin, Pediatric Nurse Practitioner (Health Care Professional)
- 32       18. Jeffrey Goss, The Clipper Tavern (Restaurant)
- 33       19. Joe Scarlotto (Restaurant)
- 34       20. Nathan Moss, Citizen-at-large
- 35       21. John Golumb, POCO's Bow Street Cantina (Restaurant)

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37   City Staff present:

- 38       1. Peter Rice, Director of Public Works
- 39       2. Todd Germain, Fire Chief
- 40       3. Stephanie Seacord, Public Information Officer
- 41       4. Joe Almeida, Facilities Manager
- 42       5. Kristin Shaw, Deputy Health Officer
- 43       6. Robert Merner, Police Chief
- 44       7. Nancy Carmer, Economic Development Commission Manager

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Also present:

- 1) Petra Huda, City Councilor
- 2) Anne Weidman, Portsmouth Professional Alliance/JSA Architects
- 3) Andrew Bagley, Board member, PopUpNH
- 4) Laura Brown, Board member, PopUpNH

**Welcome and Approval of Minutes**

- Motion: Martha Fuller Clark moved to approve the Minutes of August 19, 2020. Kathryn Lynch seconded. It was made clear for the Minutes that 30-minute parking in the Worth lot is limited to six spaces. The motion passed unanimously with a show of hands.

**Bridge St Lot Subcommittee Discussion**

Russ Grazier: The PopUp is up and running and going strong, bringing in \$25,000 this second weekend. It is proving to be safe space with mask-wearing and social-distancing. The big issue is how to incorporate retail into it for the remaining weeks through October. There is space on Bridge Street for pop-up tents. River Run’s Tom Holbrook is organizing brick-and-mortar businesses that are interested in having booths there. The approval of the Health Department for Bridge Street merchants is being tied in as a factor.

There is an email address for the Task Force: [hotline@cityofportsmouth.com](mailto:hotline@cityofportsmouth.com). We got community feedback about loud volume during the first weekend, he said. By the second weekend, it was all smoothed out. Signage around the city has guided people to the Foundry garage very well, and more signage is planned.

Alan Gold: This might be a good fit for some of our local artists—sculptors, potters, painters, and others. They have limited space where they can sell their wares with most craft fairs having been cancelled, and this might help.

**Streets Subcommittee Update**

Peter Rice: We are looking at closing Penhallow between State and Daniel at night to allow pedestrian traffic. We are hoping for a consensus and agreement from the Task Force.

Mark Stebbins: The Penhallow opportunity and other potential pedestrian ways will be discussed at the Streets Subcommittee meeting following this one.

- Motion: Valerie Rochon moved for Task Force approval of closing Penhallow in the evenings to make a pedestrian way. Martha Fuller Clark seconded. In

89 discussion, Alan Gold commented that we are jumping the gun by approving it  
90 before it is set up. The motion passed unanimously.

91

## 92 **Health Subcommittee Report**

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94 For her weekly report, Ann Birner writes: Notes were provided describing yesterday,  
95 Tuesday, August 25th's Health Subcommittee meeting. An effort led by James Petersen  
96 to draft a "Frequently Asked Questions" (FAQ) document is just getting underway. The  
97 document will describe viral transmission and the role of air quality and exchange in  
98 public health, particularly relevant as the weather changes and more activities move  
99 indoors. Task Force members are encouraged to send questions to the subcommittee  
100 ([ann.birner@gmail.com](mailto:ann.birner@gmail.com)) for consideration.

101

102 The subcommittee, as part of autumn/winter planning, is developing a list of experts who  
103 might help understand certain aspects of the pandemic. Christine Burke, Wellness  
104 Coordinator for Portsmouth Public Schools, will join our next meeting. The  
105 subcommittee is considering development of a flow chart that will provide guidance in  
106 the event of a resurgence in COVID-19 cases.

107

108 Portsmouth's proposed City Mask Ordinance underwent multiple amendments during the  
109 second reading on August 18. The Health Subcommittee members wish to express  
110 concern to the City Council in two areas:

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112 1) Section 3.1101 now reads "All persons are hereby required to wear face coverings  
113 whenever they are in indoor or outdoor places which are accessible to the public,  
114 in which a physical distancing of six feet (6') between people who are not  
115 members of the same household is not maintained". The Health Subcommittee  
116 membership believes that face coverings should be required indoors regardless of  
117 the perceived ability to maintain the 6' physical distance.

118

119 2) Section 3.1102 now reads "A required face covering pursuant to this ordinance  
120 shall be any product that covers the nose and mouth of the person wearing it. The  
121 face covering may be commercially manufactured or personally created". The  
122 Health Subcommittee members are concerned that this definition does not exclude  
123 face coverings which are known to allow the virus to disperse and therefore are  
124 believed to lack efficacy in protecting the public health (compared to those  
125 constructed of tightly woven fabric or other soft materials, for example).  
126 Examples of these less protective face coverings include plastic face shields that  
127 are open at the bottom, and masks that are externally vented.

128

129 Many comments ensued, all in agreement with the subcommittee's perspective on these  
130 two points. A motion was made, seconded, and passed (with one "nay") that authorizes  
131 the Health Subcommittee to write a memo to the City Council expressing these concerns.  
132 The memo will be circulated tonight, Wednesday August 26, to all Task Force members

133 for their votes, which must be received by EOB tomorrow, Thursday, August 27, to be  
134 counted. Simple majority in favor will result in the memo being sent to the Council on  
135 Task Force letterhead.

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137 The weekly COVID-19 dashboard was reviewed. Massachusetts numbers look high  
138 compared to last week but are for an approximately 3-day period rather than a daily total.  
139 Maine cases are up two weeks in a row. The Johns Hopkins data show percent positivity  
140 down since last week in ME/MA/NH. The subcommittee will continue to follow these  
141 data.

142  
143 The testing FAQ document was distributed to the Task Force. A motion to ratify the  
144 document was made, seconded, and passed unanimously. *The Health Committee report*  
145 *was submitted by Ann Birner for the Minutes.*

146  
147 There was a general discussion during which Chamber President Valerie Rochon  
148 revealed the local merchants' earnest backing of a mask ordinance. Valerie accepted  
149 Health Officer Kim McNamara's request for a letter from the Chamber to the City  
150 Council about the merchants' appeal.

151  
152 Ann Birner reiterated the Health Subcommittee's key recommendations for the Memo  
153 that has been prepared to send to the City Council.

154  
155 1) § 3.1101: "All persons are required to wear face covering whenever they are in  
156 indoor or outdoor places that are accessible to the public in which a physical  
157 distancing of six feet between people who are not members of the same house is  
158 not maintained."

159  
160 Ann explained: So, if you conceivably have a six-foot distance, whether you're  
161 indoors or outdoors, you would not be required to wear a mask. Previously, the  
162 six-foot rule did not apply in the indoor setting.

163  
164 2) § 3.1102: "A required face covering pursuant to this ordinance shall be any  
165 product that covers the nose and mouth of the person wearing it. It can be  
166 commercially manufactured or personally created."

167  
168 Ann explained: Plastic face shields are not included as acceptable face coverings.  
169 In addition, we have asked the City Council to exclude vented face masks. Virus  
170 can be exhaled through the vent.

171  
172 In order for everyone to read the final memo to the City Council, James proposed  
173 emailing a copy of it, with the two recommendations, to all the members of the Task  
174 Force for their approval. Approval or disapproval and the success of the final draft would  
175 be assessed in a return email vote by a simple majority.

176

177 Stephanie Seacord had created a Task Force letterhead listing, along the left margin,  
178 every member of the Task Force by name. She had prepared a signature block for the  
179 two co-chairs and a place for the City Manager to sign (at her discretion, Stephanie said).  
180 The mission statement of the Task Force was included at the bottom of the masthead:

181

182 “The Citizen Response Task Force was created by the Portsmouth NH City  
183 Council in June 2020 ‘to help the City quickly and safely respond to the  
184 Governor’s guidelines for reopening in Portsmouth.’”

185

186 • Motion: Martha Fuller Clark moved that the Citizen Response Task Force  
187 endorse and support the two recommendations on behalf of the Health  
188 Subcommittee. Mark Grazier seconded. In discussion, Ann Birner asked for  
189 confirmation that the draft would be circulated via email and voted on. James  
190 Peterson said he would like everyone to see it in writing for everyone to vote on.  
191 The motion carried. Jim Lee voted against.

192

193 Adjourn

194

195 • Motion: Bianca Monteiro moved to adjourn. Kathryn Lynch seconded. The  
196 motion passed unanimously. It was 3:00.

197

198 Respectfully submitted,  
199 Patience Gifford Horton  
200 Task Force Recorder