

Portsmouth Citizen's Response Task Force

Bridge Street Subcommittee Meeting

October 14, 2020

Present:

Russ Grazier, subcommittee chair and task force member

Deb Anthony, task Force member

Ben Van Camp, Chamber Collaborative of Greater Portsmouth

Peter Rice, City of Portsmouth Director of Public Works

Joseph Almeida, City of Portsmouth Facilities Manager

Stephanie Seacord, City of Portsmouth Public Information Officer

Andrew Bagley, Secretary of Pop Up Portsmouth

Tristin Law, Pop Up NH

Patrick Howe, City of Portsmouth

Ben Fletcher, Director for Parking

Petra Huda

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

Updates:

Pop Up NH prepares to close the site: The Pop-Up team updated the committee on preparations to close the site after the weekend of October 17. Tristan noted that the team had hitting their stride with very successful shows and weekends over the past weeks. He noted that they would begin to dismantle the site after this coming weekend.

Items such as Porta Potties were discussed Joe Almeida noted they could be picked on Monday after final weekend. Andrew noted the sheds might not be picked up until Nov 1. However, they could be clustered to allow more of the Lot to be opened. It was noted that until the sheds are gone it was some barriers or other materials would be needed to keep the sheds secure until they are able to be removed.

Peter Rice noted that they City will be able to work with Pop Up NH as they dismantle the site. Peter asked for Tristan to let him know when the rigging will be coming for the sheds to prepare for removal.

Attendance and Economic Impact: Russ asked Tristan if there were numbers to share regarding the revenue generated by the Pop Up at Bridge Street. Tristan reported that August-September \$97,308 came in for restaurant revenue and \$30,000 for performance. Since Oct.1 an additional \$30,000 for restaurants and \$9,000 in ticket sales.

Parking impact this year with closure of Bridge Street Lot: Ben Fletcher gave a very thorough report on the Parking revenue impact.

His report was very detailed informing the committee that the financial impact had to be viewed as a whole parking system in Portsmouth. He noted that the parking system is made up of 8 distinct parking areas including monthly garages as well as stay and pay parking lots. So, for example to determine the impact of the Bridge Street closure he sought to consider the question of where people might park with Bridge Street parking closed.

He reported on the activity of other parking lots, including increased use at the Foundry which is positive since there is a desire to increase use of that lot. The absence of Bridge Street did show that the financial loss there was recovered by a 58% increase in other 7 structures. He reminded the committee that other lots are not all comparable because of different pricing. (e.g. Bridge Street is an hourly cost while the parking garages max out at 3 hours)

His calculation showed that there was a net loss of parking revenue of \$24,962 to the City of Portsmouth after all other revenue from other parking structures was considered.

Russ noted the report and thanked Ben for such a detailed explanation of his calculation. Russ noted that he believed it was overall a good report. For example, while there were losses they were partially mitigated by other lots, the increased use of the Foundry Garage (previously cited as under-utilized) might now be more familiar to visitors and could benefit the community in the future.

The question was raised if similar issues were part of next Spring and Summer season on Portsmouth could the city consider a closure of another lot?

Peter noted that the summer months are the highest revenue time for the City. The consensus was that it would be very difficult for the City of Portsmouth and complicated to assess at this time.

Andrew asked if there was any evidence that the Bridge Street Pop Up had increased activity to the whole of downtown perhaps creating a net positive for the season.

Peter responded that likely the Bridge Street Lot and street dining were all positive for Portsmouth. However, with such a significant loss or revenue next year would be a serious challenge.

Ben F noted that the parking revenue supports a variety of activities that keep the downtown appeal strong.

Russ noted that the health of a community is more than just dollars noting the City has done amazing work to support the vibrancy of downtown. Noting we are all grateful for the use of the Bridge Street Lot.