

CITY OF PORTSMOUTH



PRESS RELEASE

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City Committee Begins Work on Strategic Plan for Downtown Area

PORTSMOUTH, NH – In April, Mayor Blalock appointed a Strategic Planning Committee for Vaughan-Worth-Bridge Revitalization. Councilor Rebecca Perkins was appointed Chair of the Committee, which will focus on the City-owned parcels known as the Bridge Street lot, Vaughan Mall Lot (formerly Worth Lot) and the Vaughan Mall, as well as the public rights-of way between the future Foundry Place Garage and the Islington Street and Maplewood Avenue Intersection.

The Committee’s charge is to develop options for future use of City-owned property in these areas and report back to the City Council with strategic recommendations as to how the City can best use its property to revitalize this area in service to the community. The charge also states that topics to be covered should address land use, urban design, public infrastructure, and timing.

“The opportunity present in reusing these sites is very exciting and we have heard from many members of the community who have an interest in this,” Committee Chair Councilor Perkins said.

“Before moving too far into the process of data gathering and deliberating as a Committee we want to make sure we reach out early to the public,” said Perkins. On June 14th at 7:30 a.m., the Committee will conduct a site walk in order to visit the spaces together. The site walk will begin at Rock Street Park (the corner of Rock and Sudbury Streets). On June 28th, the Committee will sponsor a listening session to get initial ideas from the public at the Discover Portsmouth Center; this meeting will begin at 6:30 p.m.

According to Perkins, there is much work ahead for the Committee, but making this early contact with the public is a priority. “Our goal with the first listening session is to be as open as possible and let people speak their minds about how we can use these properties in the best interest of the City; people are welcome to share suggestions for our processes going forward or ideas about precedents we might want to look into.”

According to the Chair, the Committee plans to solicit feedback via a variety of modes including written comments through the City website at any time as well as inviting the public to present to the Committee at the June 28th listening session. More details about the listening session and ways to participate will be announced shortly. “The Committee wanted to be very thoughtful about allowing for public comment through a variety of modes and wanted to welcome participation even if people can’t attend the listening session.” said Perkins.

Members of the public can submit comments to the Committee at its webpage (<http://cityofportsmouth.com/VaughanWorthBridge.html>). Additional materials regarding the upcoming listening session on June 28th will be posted in the coming week. Meeting notices for both the June 14th site walk and June 28th listening session will be posted to the City’s meetings calendar.