

Newburyport Redevelopment Authority
Newburyport Public Library
December 12, 2012
Minutes

1. Call to Order

A regular meeting of the Newburyport Redevelopment Authority was called to order at 7:00 p.m. by Acting Chair John Morris.

2. Roll Call

In attendance were members John Morris, Tom Salemi, Patty Dorfman and Adam Guild. Also in attendance was Carol Powers.

3. Reading of Mission Statement

Patty Dorfman read the mission statement.

4. Minutes

The approval of the minutes of the November 14 meeting was deferred.

5. Public Comment

Peter Fitzsimmons, 7 Arlington Street, said he would like low-income housing to be included in the development, as the number of units in the City is diminishing.

Mary Carrier, 4 Rawson Hill Road, commented that the buildings shown on the Union Studio plan take away a large part of the waterfront. She asked if other plans might be a part of the RFP and if all NRA members agreed to sell the land. John Morris said the public would be able to comment on the RFP and the NRA members are open to new ideas. He also said the sale of the land is an option, but a decision on this has not yet been made.

Susan Hern, 22 Broad Street, asked the berm is to be removed, saying people enjoy sitting on it. Tom Salemi said that in the Union Studio plan a plateau would extend from the berm toward the properties.

Joy McFarland, 11 K Street, asked if a small hotel would be considered for the upper floors of one of the buildings. Tom Salemi said he does not know if there would be an interest in a hotel. Adam Guild said the Union Studio plan is a conceptual one that would give developers an understanding of the desires of the community. The RFP would include guidelines for the developers, who would use them as a basis for their proposals.

Laurel Allgrove, 22 Beacon Ave, questioned the appropriateness of an RFP because of environmental issues, saying a developer might be concerned that the property is in the floodplain.

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Jim McCauly, 27 Storeybrooke Avenue, asked if the NRA members have experience running \$25 million projects. Adam Guild said they have hired a real estate advisor whose projects would exceed this mark. Mr. McCauly also asked if discussions have taken place about mitigation for the contaminated lots. Carol Powers explained an AUL was recorded and is in compliance with State regulations.

Dianna Kerry, 38 Temple Street, suggested that developers be required to submit models of their proposals.

Jim Critchlon, 566 Merrimack Street, asked about the decision to have public comments take place before new business. Patty Dorfman explained the meetings are working ones and are not public hearings.

Dominique Dear, 5 Warren Street, offered suggestions for engaging the public in the process.

Tom Freund, 6 Colby Lane, Byfield, said the waterfront is a focal point that distinguishes the city from other communities and it should not be closed off with development. He said the waterfront should be an open one and parking should be kept at a distance from it.

6. Treasurer's Report

Adam Guild said the balance in the checking account is \$4,890.50 and the balance in the money market account is \$182,758.29.

Adam Guild moved to approve an invoice from Barry Abramson dated November 14 in the amount of \$8,850 for 44.25 hours of work between October 25 and November 14. Patty Dorfman seconded the motion. The motion was unanimously approved.

Tom Salemi moved to approve a payment in the amount of \$150 for minute taking for the December 12 meeting. Patty Dorfman seconded the motion. The motion was unanimously approved.

7. Parking Agreement

Richard Jones said the two-year parking agreement is about to expire. He said the agreement has been satisfactory to the City and he would like to extend it for two years. The agreement includes a lot reduction clause. Adam Guild, a member of the Parking Advisory Committee, said that while the agreement has been financially positive for the NRA, he would not want a developer's ability to begin work within the next two years to be impacted. Carol Powers recommended that the agreement be extended for one year. She said if additional environmental reviews were to result in extraordinary expenses, the NRA would wish to be free to generate the required income. Patty Dorfman moved to extend the parking agreement to December 31, 2013. Adam Guild seconded the motion. The motion was unanimously approved.

8. New Business

Patty Dorfman said she met with Mayor Holaday about a brochure being circulated by the Citizens for an Open Waterfront. She said there are inaccuracies in the brochure and it does not accurately depict the scale of the Union Studio design. She said the Mayor and members of the Planning Department would attend a regular meeting of the NRA to discuss the brochure and plan one of their own.

John Morris said a letter was received from Andy Port stating he is taking steps to move the project forward and he urged the NRA to hire experts with respect to permitting, procurement and closeout obligations and the geotechnical assessment of the project site. He said the services of the experts for the four tasks would cost approximately \$25,000. Mr. Morris said it would be appropriate to move forward with the geotechnical assessment of the site at this time by hiring an expert to take the initial review of the site to the next level. He recommended that Adam Guild be the point person for this task because he has experience in this area. Mr. Guild said he believes the services of the expert would be approximately \$10,000 and the solicitation of three proposals would be required. He would bring the information back to the members for discussion and approval. Carol Powers said work on the permitting, procurement and closeout obligations is underway. She also said the scope of the geotechnical work should not be a full-scale one but rather should include the elevation to ground water and soil compaction information.

9. Upcoming Meetings

The next meeting of the NRA will be held on January 2. Subsequent meetings will be held on January 16, January 30, February 13, February 27, March 13 and March 27.

10. Adjournment

Patty Dorfman moved to adjourn the meeting at 8:15 p.m. Adam Guild seconded the motion. The motion was unanimously approved.