

Newburyport Redevelopment Authority
City Council Chambers
November 9, 2016
Minutes

1. Call to Order

Chair Tom Salemi called a regular meeting of the Newburyport Redevelopment Authority to order at 7:00 p.m.

2. Roll Call

In attendance were members Leslie Eckholdt, Bob Uhlig, Andy Sidford, Marian Levy and Tom Salemi. Carol Powers was also in attendance.

3. Central Waterfront Framework

The presentation was opened with a description of the process through which a framework for an expanded park on the waterfront was developed. As a first step past plans were reviewed and the NRA developed two designs from their commonalities. These designs were presented and refined at the October 6 and 20 meetings. A single concept was then derived from the response to these plans. The key elements of the framework include an expansion of green space from both the waterfront and to the east and west of Market Landing Park, a reduction of parking, the development of a visitor center with year-round restrooms and the preservation of the Ways to the Water. The conceptual plan will be presented at the meeting Mayor Holaday has scheduled for November 22 with the NRA and the Waterfront Trust.

Andy Sidford said there are many small public spaces in Newburyport that provide a sense of connection and flow but the Bartlet Mall is the city's only large space. He sought to design a park that both conveys a sense of arrival and feels like a small park. The park space in the design is defined by the bell-shaped curve of the bike path that runs through it and connects to the Rail Trail to the east and the west. The path would be bordered with flowering trees. Larger green spaces would be located near the water's edge. Parking would be situated away from the water and would extend to both the Harbormaster's facility to the east and the Ale House to the west. An alternate design was presented with a widened Somberby's Way, which would provide the benefit of a broader view of the water from Green Street and a separation of parking and buildings through a pedestrian promenade. This alternative might prove difficult to implement because New England Development owns the land beyond the Brown's Wharf Building.

The meeting was opened to comments from the public. Nick Metcalf, 27 Ferry Road, asked about the potential for conflict between cyclists and pedestrians in the park. Andy Sidford said stop signs for cyclists would be placed at the intersections of the pathways.

Joe DiBiase, 15 Frances Drive, asked about the elevation of the new open space. Andy Sidford said while this level of detail is not being considered at this time, it might

be logical to expand the berm to allow more people to sit there and to raise the grade in area that is currently parking to allow better views of the water.

Rob Germinara, 2 Ashland Street, asked about the future ownership of the park and what the cost would be to construct and maintain it. Tom Salemi responded the NRA would participate in the funding of the park but would expect other members of the community to share in the effort. He added one rationale behind creating a framework for the park is to determine how the NRA property might be allocated. The

Bill Harris, 56 Lime Street, said the revised Trust documents could allow for some flexibility with regards to the location of the Ways to the Water as long as public access is guaranteed. He said the NRA has a duty to keep Central Wharf Way in its current location and extend it to the waterfront. The view corridor from Unicorn Street was to be preserved and an opening was created in the granite blocks along the boardwalks to allow access at this point. He would not favor the proposed diagonal layout of Ferry Wharf Way. He said the Ways were designed to be perpendicular to the water and he said is concerned about congestion on the boardwalk.

City Councilor Jared Eigerman said he supports the concept of equivalencies with regards to the Ways. He said the Ways were located in the stipulation agreement so as to preserve view corridors when it was anticipated buildings would be constructed on the waterfront. This becomes less of a concern when the area is to be left open. The location of the Ways does not need to be exact. He added New England Development intends to present its proposal at a meeting in early December, which might provide an opportunity to discussion the relocation and extension of Somerby's Way.

Lon Hachmeister, 281 High Road, Newbury, said he is concerned about the proposed locations of Ferry Wharf Way and Central Wharf Way locations because it would require a longer distance be traveled to reach the street from the waterfront. He said the main difference between the COW plan and the NRA plan is the location of the bike path.

Mary Haslinger, 299 High Street, said she finds the plan appealing. She asked about permitting and was told any plan for the waterfront would require a Chapter 91 license.

4. Secretary's Report

None

5. Minutes

Bob Uhlig moved to approve the minutes of the October 20, 2016 meeting. Marian Levy seconded the motion. The motion was unanimously approved.

6. Treasurer's Report

Bob Uhlig moved to approve a payment to Gretchen Joy in the amount of \$150 for minute taking for the November 9 meeting and to Tom and Gretchen Joy in the amount of \$87.50 for Pop Up Park maintenance. Marian Levy seconded the motion. The motion was unanimously approved.

7. Council's Report

Carol Powers said she and Tom Salemi met with the owner of Sea Level Oyster Bar about the shed and dumpster area. The restaurant owner promised to increase the level of maintenance of the dumpster and wishes to add signage about it being reserved for restaurant use. The NRA will replace the doors on the shed, which are in poor condition. The restaurant owner intends to paint and maintain the structure and requested to have exclusive use of it. The Waterfront Trust uses a portion of the shed for gardening tools. Wilbur Shenk and Scott Sutherland said the use of the shed is important to the Trust. The members agreed to allow the Trust to continue using a portion of the shed but requested a lock be installed on the doors immediately. The damaged brick on a corner of this portion of the shed should be repaired as soon as possible. The NRA will arrange for the repairs and the Trust shall share the expense. Leslie Eckholdt moved to authorize Andy Sidford to retain a contractor to repair the brick and replace the doors for a cost not to exceed \$2,000. Tom Salemi seconded the motion. The motion was unanimously approved.

8. Other Business

Pop Up Park

Leslie Eckholdt will arrange for greens to be added to the planters for the winter. Bob Uhlig suggested Adirondack chairs be placed on the east berm next season.

9. Adjournment

Andy Sidford moved to adjourn the meeting at 8:26 p.m. Bob Uhlig seconded the motion. The motion was unanimously approved.