

Newburyport Waterfront Trust
Online Meeting
October 18, 2023
Minutes

1. Call to Order

Chair Matt Pieniazek called an online meeting of the Newburyport Waterfront Trust to order at 7:05 p.m.

2. Roll Call

In attendance were Trustees Dan Mello, Steven Wallace, Matt Pieniazek and Leslie Eckholdt (left the meeting at 7:45). Mike Sullivan was absent.

3. Minutes

Steven Wallace moved to approve the minutes of the September 20, 2023, meeting. Dan Mello seconded the motion. The motion was approved by a 4-0 vote (Matt Pieniazek, yes; Dan Mello, yes; Steven Wallace, yes; Leslie Eckholdt, yes).

4. Treasurer's Report

The Trustees reviewed the draft budget Leslie Eckholdt distributed. The estimated income is \$179,000 and the estimated expenses are \$149,000, which would result in a net gain of \$30,000.

The reimbursement from the City is projected to be less than it was for the past fiscal year due to the reduced need for maintenance during construction. It is not clear at this time which areas would be maintained by the Trust and which would be maintained by the Parks Department when the construction has been completed. The mowing and lawn treatments would be best handled by SLS. At the Ad Hoc Committee meeting scheduled for November 1, Matt Pieniazek will bring up the need to determine the breakdown of the maintenance responsibilities.

Leslie Eckholdt said she decreased the amount of income from park use activity in the budget and increased the amount to be received from the Firehouse. The lease with the Firehouse during Covid remained at the same rate that it had been for several years. A new lease must now be negotiated and it seems an increase would be appropriate.

Dan Mello to approve the draft budget for 2023-2024. Steven Wallace seconded the motion. The motion was approved by a 4-0 vote (Matt Pieniazek, yes; Dan Mello, yes; Steven Wallace, yes; Leslie Eckholdt, yes).

The Trust currently receives \$5,000 annually from the Harbormaster's Department. Paul Hogg has stated the revenue was reduced during the past summer due to the weather. The Trustees discussed receiving a percentage of the dock revenue in order to address seasonal fluctuations. The Trust committed \$50,000 to the City for the repair of the bulkhead, while the Harbormaster's Department did not share in the cost, and this expense must be recouped.

5. Approval of Invoices

Steven Wallace moved to approve invoices from garden workers Catherine Russell in the amount of \$742.50; Christine Rau in the amount of \$499.50 and Sharon Parker in the amount of \$526.90 and handyman Tom Joy in the amount of \$1,133.01. Dan Mello seconded the motion. The motion was approved by a 4-0 vote (Matt Pieniazek, yes; Dan Mello, yes; Steven Wallace, yes; Leslie Eckholdt, yes).

6. Ongoing Projects

a) Winter Leases

The work to repair the bulkhead has been proceeding faster than expected. The embayment might be available for the winter boats, but the contractor is not willing to guarantee the work in that area would be completed. The boat captains would prefer to dock in the embayment. Their alternative for this winter would be docking Gloucester, which would not be feasible for them.

b) Bulkhead Repair

The Trust has been asked to pay the \$50,000 it committed for the bulkhead repairs. The Trustees were hesitant to provide the funds before the grant monies had been used, as this would result in a loss of interest income. Geordie Vining explained that the City Auditor requested that all commitments for the project be put into escrow accounts. The Trustees decided the amount of interest lost would not be significant.

Steven Wallace moved to make a payment to the City for the commitment of \$50,000 for the bulkhead repair work. Dan Mello seconded the motion. The motion was approved by a 3-0 vote (Matt Pieniazek, yes; Dan Mello, yes; Steven Wallace, yes).

c) Boardwalk Repair

Mike Sullivan will provide a plan showing the areas of the boardwalk where repair is a priority.

d) Website

Steven Wallace said he will provide an update at the next meeting.

7. Park Committee Report

a) Park Use Applications

No new applications were received.

b) Park Manager's Report

Edith Heyck reported that in October, the Geiger Center walk, Indigenous Peoples' Day and the Fall Fest took place. Mums and spring bulbs are being planted in the park and the final lawn treatment was completed. It has been suggested that oxalis

clover seeds could be planted along Somersby Way in the spring to fill in the bare areas among the pachysandra.

Steven Wallace moved to approve an estimate from SLS for the weeding of the Pop Up Park in the amount of \$900. Dan Mello seconded the motion. The motion was approved by a 3-0 vote (Matt Pieniazek, yes; Dan Mello, yes; Steven Wallace, yes).

Dan Mello moved to approve an estimate from SLS for weeding the remaining beds along Custom House Way in the amount of \$3,370. Steven Wallace seconded the motion. The motion was approved by a 3-0 vote (Matt Pieniazek, yes; Dan Mello, yes; Steven Wallace, yes).

8. Other Business

a) Signage Request

A high school student had requested to be allowed to mount a plaque on a light pole indicating the bulkhead was raised two feet to address sea level rise. He was informed that due to the park construction and the lack of a signage policy, the Trust would not be able to address the request until the late spring or early summer.

b) Meeting Schedule

The next meeting of the Waterfront Trust will be scheduled for November 15. Dan Mello moved to cancel the December meeting. Steven Wallace seconded the motion. The motion was approved by a 3-0 vote (Matt Pieniazek, yes; Dan Mello, yes; Steven Wallace, yes).

9. Adjournment

Dan Mello moved to adjourn the meeting at 8:29 p.m. Steven Wallace seconded the motion. The motion was approved.