

Newburyport Waterfront Trust
January 14, 2013
Police Station Conference Room
Minutes

1. Call to Order

A meeting of the Newburyport Waterfront Trust was called to order by Joe Brown at 7:00 p.m.

2. Roll Call

In attendance were members Catherine Russell, Joe Brown and Scott Sutherland.

3. Merrimac Ale House

Joe Brown emphasized that because a quorum was not present, no decisions would be made or votes taken. The meeting was held for the purpose of discussion only. Mr. Leone was expected to attend the meeting with revised plans for the restaurant that show an enhancement of the park. The plans that were presented at the November 5 meeting were for a 431-seat restaurant. The number of seats has been increased to 591, a 37% increase that would have a greater impact on parking. The revised plans show a realignment of the parking spaces. Andy Port said the sidewalk of the east side of the building is essential.

Bill Harris said the cinderblock portion of the structure encroaches on Somerby's Landing. A park that was aligned with Green Street was created in 1889. When the landing was created a portion of the park was lost. The original plan was not recorded at the Registry of Deeds but was a part of City records. The current survey is accurate according to a plan from 1947, but the Somerby grant is now available where it previously had not been.

Scott Sutherland said he has seen nothing in the Trust's mission statement that indicates it is obliged to provide parking. Bill Harris said the City obtained legislation to discontinue park use in 1960 and for many years the area was used only for parking. When the park was rededicated, parking became a permitted use. He said the Trust currently must provide parking at Riverside Park for maritime and park use. He said the parking is necessary for the Trust to fulfill its primary mission. If the City were to provide parking elsewhere, it would be possible for Riverside Park to be used entirely as a park. He said restaurant parking should not displace park and boat users. He also said the restaurant would block views of the river and, by increasing congestion, would create a public safety hazard. Joe Brown said the Trust has a duty to those using the park and the boats at the Transportation Dock.

Andy Port said parking is best not addressed by the Trust, but should instead be considered by the Planning and Zoning boards and the NRA. He said the change to the cinderblock portion of the structure would not impact the park, as it would not result in a larger footprint. He said the issues about Somerby's Landing were resolved many years ago. He added that it is not within the jurisdiction of the Trust to make decisions about parking or the size of the restaurant. Joe Brown responded that the Trust has an interest in the public safety aspect of the parking. He also said the right of way between the Davis Auto and Brown's Wharf buildings that is indicated on the plan does not exist.

Joanne Purinton said the obligation of the Trust is to protect, support, and perhaps

expand, maritime assets. She added that the intersection of Merrimac and Green streets is already a busy one.

4. General Discussion

Snow Removal

Joe Brown said the Trustees should vote at the next meeting to approve the agreement with the City for snow removal. The issue was discussed at the November 5 meeting but a vote was not taken at that time. He also questioned the accuracy of the plan that was attached to the agreement. He said he thought Custom House Way was to be covered under the agreement. Catherine Russell said the way had been eliminated from the agreement this year.

Riverside Park Signage

Jen Wright was awarded the contract for the sign for Riverside Park. Catherine Russell will work with her to finalize the text. The sign is not to be installed until the spring and its location would be decided at that time.

Winter Leases

Scott Sutherland said the Trust has winter lease agreements for four boats. Payments for two of the boats have been received in full and the payments for the other two boats would be due on January 15.

Seaport Grant Committee

The contract for the oversight of the bulkhead work was awarded to Bourne Engineering and includes project planning, the development of specifications and assistance with the bidding process. The scope of work is being reconsidered, as funds are currently available for only half of the estimated \$4 million needed. The committee decided that rather than making repairs to the entire bulkhead, work would begin on certain sections while additional funding is being sought. The Seaport Advisory Council would possibly award additional funds provided that progress on the project has been made and the funds have been used. The existing steel is in good shape with the exception of some weep holes that have enlarged and a portion of the splash zone at the high tide mark. Bourne is to make recommendations on priority areas and project phasing.

Webpage Update

Scott Sutherland said the website is up and running. The contents of the Yahoo site have been transferred to the website with the exception of some maps and photographs. The public will be able to access agendas, the calendar and park use applications. The Yahoo site has not yet been disconnected from the City website. Scott Sutherland recommended that the Trustees delay making final decisions about the website until the new site that is being developed for the City has been completed. Joe Brown said he would like the emails that had been sent through the Yahoo site to be preserved.

5. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 8:10 p.m.