

## **Newburyport Redevelopment Authority**

City Hall Auditorium

October 26, 2016

Minutes

### **1. Call to Order**

Chair Tom Salemi called a regular meeting of the Newburyport Redevelopment Authority to order at 7:03 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. Firehouse Lease**

Negotiations are underway for a new restaurant taking over the lease from Not Your Average Joe's. The owner of the Sea Level Oyster Bar would like to improve the dumpster area and the shed. The NRA wants to maintain control over the location of the shed and dumpster due to the planned reconfiguration of the waterfront. A license and use agreement exists for the dumpster area. This agreement, which gives the NRA the power to move the dumpster, would be extended. A lease would be created for the shed, which has been used on an informal basis to this point.

Tom Salemi moved to authorize Carol Powers to work with George Carey to negotiate a new license agreement for the dumpster area and a lease for the shed. Marian Levy seconded the motion. The motion was unanimously approved.

### **4. Custom House Lawn**

Ken Jackman, Chair of the Custom House Maritime Museum, said bids have been received for burying the irrigation system and sodding and reseeding the Custom House lawn. He wishes to have the work done before the rental season for the space begins in May. The organization has a 99-year lease with the NRA for the building. The board requested the entire lawn area be included in the lease for the remainder of its term, which would end in 2100, and to have the transfer completed by December. The NRA members expressed their reluctance to enter into a long-term agreement for the area at this time due to the changing plans for the waterfront. Leslie Eckholdt suggested the NRA contribute to the maintenance of the lawn. Carol Powers said the Maritime Society vigorously uses the land and charges for this use. As the NRA does not share any revenue from the use of its land, she would not recommend such a contribution. Mr. Jackman was asked consult his board and provide the NRA with a proposal for a shorter-term agreement.

Leslie Eckholdt said she is uncomfortable the Maritime Society is allowed to use the land without a written agreement. In February 2012 the NRA gave permission for the Maritime Society to manage the land provided the appropriate insurance is in place. Carol Powers said she would prefer a more formal arrangement.

## **5. Central Waterfront Framework**

The conversation on the development of a framework for an expanded park was continued from the October 6 meeting. The two conceptual plans presented at that meeting were refined based on the discussion. These plans were based on the commonalities in past designs: an increased amount of open space along the water's edge, new park to the east and west of the embayment, a decrease in the amount of parking, a bike path and a visitor center. The two conceptual plans presented differ in their form and the location at which the bike path would cross the park. Andy Sidford said his plan provides a sense of arrival at singular important space. The form is similar to the existing park but is easier to read. Bob Uhlig's plan is dominated by the broad sweep of the bike path through the park. The strong curve would drive the form of the smaller connected spaces and the parking areas. His plan showed differing parking configurations that would leave 140 to 150 spaces on NRA land. Approximately 200 parking spaces would be eliminated from the waterfront. The discussion on the conceptual plans will continue at the November 9 meeting before a larger audience.

The number of Ways to the Water was discussed. Carol Powers said the confirmation plan lists five ways – Custom House, Somberby's, Central Wharf, Ferry Wharf and Railroad Avenue. She said four of these are in place. The alignment of the fifth, Ferry Wharf Way, might be modified as long as it provides a view to the river. Scott Sutherland said there should be six ways. A change in their number could be accommodated without altering the concepts presented. The Waterfront Trust asked Everett Chandler to add the 2-foot contour intervals and the mean high tide mark to the survey. The NRA asked that existing conditions, such as the location of the berm, be included.

## **6. Minutes**

Bob Uhlig moved to approve the minutes of the October 6, 2016 meeting. Leslie Eckholdt seconded the motion. The motion was unanimously approved.

## **7. Treasurer's Report**

The September bank statement was presented at the October 6 meeting. Tom Salemi moved to approve a payment to Gretchen Joy in the amount of \$150 for minute taking for the October 26 meeting; to Tom and Gretchen Joy in the amount of \$175 for Pop Up Park maintenance, to Casa Design in the amount of \$95.00 for an umbrella rib and to the Waterfront Trust in the amount of \$1,453.37 for park maintenance in October. Bob Uhlig seconded the motion. The motion was unanimously approved.

Leslie Eckholdt received a quote of \$100 to prepare the irrigation system for the winter. The work has been completed but a bill had not yet been received.

## **8. Secretary's Report**

The next two regular business meetings will be scheduled for Wednesday, November 9 and Wednesday, December 14, both at 7:00 p.m. Bob Uhlig will begin work shortly on the annual report.

**9. Council's Report**

Carol Powers sent a draft revision to the Trust document to the members for review. At the request of Bob Uhlig, she will draft an agreement for the restrooms. The structure is on NRA property but the Authority has no influence on its operation. The facility was closed early in October despite the warm temperatures. Leslie Eckholdt contacted the office of the City Auditor concerning a letter received about a fall on the ice on NRA property. The City had not received the letter. Kathy Leo will handle the matter.

**10. Other Business**

**Pop Up Park**

Fall clean up is underway. The furniture may be stored at the recycling facility for the winter but there is no urgency for this. The umbrellas have been removed for the season and the favorable weather has allowed the use of the park to continue. The red settees will be left in place during the winter and the Adirondack chairs will remain on the berm.

**11. Adjournment**

Tom Salemi moved to adjourn the meeting at 8:27 p.m. Leslie Eckholdt seconded the motion. The motion was unanimously approved.