

Newburyport Redevelopment Authority
November 28, 2007

Present: Norton, Rick Taintor, Erford Fowler, Patty Dorfman, and Tim Brennan

Public Comments: none

Minutes: tabled minutes until later in the meeting.

Sign/Façade Applications:

- a) Woodman Associates Architects, 20 Inn Street – Chip Nutter represented the applicant in the request to replace the windows. Mr. Sidford asked if the windows were wood. Mr. Nutter said they are aluminum clad simulated divided lights. They are more energy efficient. Harvey brand, wood inside. The color will be a Benjamin Moore historical tan color. Ms. Dorfman motioned to approve and Mr. Taintor seconded. It was unanimously approved.
- b) Wood Wrights, Inc. – no one appeared for the applicant. Incomplete application. The color version shows the difference in lights. The application was not signed by the building owner. Mr. Sidford recommends true divided lights. Mr. Taintor felt it was a great change in the previous windows. Ms. Dorfman thought it would give more of a view of the merchandise than the previous. Mr. Norton suggested taking no further action on the application.
- c) Chico's, 19 Water Street – Anne Lagasse submitted a revised application. She said they have changed their plans in response to Mr. Sidford's comments. A black awning with white lettering was proposed. Mr. Fowler asked if the building had assigned parking. Ms. Lagasse said that ten spaces were dedicated to the residential condos upstairs. She said she would look into the parking lease in order to get more information for the park expansion project. The proposed signage met the size criteria. Mr. Fowler asked about the downspouts on the building. Ms. Lagasse said that they were not changing although they were not shown on the drawings. Mr. Brennan motioned to approve the application and Mr. Fowler seconded. It was approved unanimously.

Mr. Taintor showed members a map showing that the NRA has sign jurisdiction over only some of the properties listed on the application. Several were not part of the Urban Renewal Plan. The City Council is thinking of including all properties listed on the application within the new sign ordinance.

Treasurer's Report:

Mr. Brennan submitted a treasurer's report showing a balance of \$85,385.93. After checks to be issued tonight, the balance would be \$81,195.36. Mr. Brennan expected approximately \$21,000 more in payments to the Cecil Group. He also noted that the parking proceeds need to be reconciled with their spreadsheet. It appears they are about \$900 short, although curb stops or some other bill may be to blame. Mr. Norton said that the cost would be deducted over the course of two months but the spreadsheet does not reflect this. Mr. Norton would give Mr.

Norton contact numbers with Standard Parking so they can figure it out. They are also taking 33%; he thought it was 30%. Mr. Norton said he would check the contract. On a side note, Mr. Brennan had not yet contacted an auditor. Mr. Fowler motioned to approve the Treasurer's Report and Mr. Taintor seconded. It was unanimously approved.

Mr. Norton signed the check for the Cecil Group in the amount of \$6,758.64. Another invoice for \$3,988.75 representing the additional services by preparing extra plans and having David O'Connor attend a meeting. Mr. Taintor noted that this would take contract amendment in order to accept the services. The Board had previously approved a \$5,000 contingency. Mr. Norton will ask the Cecil Group to prepare an amendment to sign. Mr. Taintor motioned to approve the amendment and Mr. Fowler seconded. All voted in favor. The check will be signed at next month's meeting.

Mr. Fowler asked if a withdrawal letter has been received from Atty. Powers. Mr. Norton said he had not and he also hadn't received a recommendation from her for a new attorney.

Correspondence:

A letter from the Mayor reminding everyone to shut off the lights at night was received.

A few suggestions were received regarding the park planning. Ms. Eppa will make copies for members.

An email was received from Bill Harris regarding a grant opportunity from DOT. He suggested implementing a ferry service and off-peak lots as a congestion mechanism. Mr. Taintor said that Salisbury is considering water-taxi service to Newburyport. Another rumor is that a hotel may be going into Striper's across the bridge. Mr. Norton suggested a joint grant between Newburyport and Salisbury. Mr. Taintor thought it may not be a long shot. Mr. Fowler felt it was a good idea to see if the Planning Department could head the work. Mr. Taintor also suggested the Merrimack Valley Transit Authority getting involved. The grant is not a planning grant and is for construction type activities. Mr. Norton also suggested the Maritime Society getting involved. Mr. Taintor said the benefit to the NRA would be to take pressure off the parking lots. Mr. Taintor said he would also speak with Nancy Colbert about the grant. It appears that there are many things that the grant could fund.

Mr. Brennan said that he was at a school funding task force meeting where Mr. Kelleher brought up the NRA's income. He was discussing using the parking lots to somehow fund school activities. Mr. Brennan tried to clarify some misinformation about the parking revenue.

DEP Notice of Non-Compliance:

Mr. Norton said that he got some advice from an LSP at work and finally got the DEP file that Atty. Powers had previously requested. The LSP has reviewed the paperwork and Mr. Norton said that he has had several conversations with him. Mr. Norton asked him how the NRA should proceed, a proposal of timeframe, and cost to seek closure. The NRA has authorized \$2,000 already so Mr. Norton signed a \$1,500 contract to review documents, negotiate with DEP, meet with the NRA, and make a recommendation about the Administrative Consent Order. The LSP will modify the schedule and the conditions of the ACO to remove fines among other things.

The NRA will then be obligated to hold the schedule that was agreed upon in the ACO. It must also be reviewed by the NRA's attorney as it is a legal document. Mr. Norton said that EPA grants could be sought later for Brownfield's assistance if contamination is found. The fact that lead has been found is not surprising given the site's history. He felt it was nice that it is being done in conjunction with the park construction. Mr. Fowler mentioned the situation with the Perkins Park contamination and wondered if the City would be on the hook for the cleanup for the NRA land. Mr. Norton suggested finding an attorney that specializing in this type of work to be under retainer for the next two or so years. A meeting was scheduled for December 5, 2007 at 5:30 pm. Mr. Norton said he would draft the RFP and bring it to the next meeting.

The regular December meeting was rescheduled to January 2, 2008 at 7pm. The January meeting was scheduled for January 30, 2008.

Minutes: The minutes of 10/24/07 were corrected. Mr. Fowler motioned to approve the minutes as amended, Mr. Taintor seconded, and all voted in favor.

Mr. Norton will fill out Unemployment form and get a check issued for the fine.

NRA Meeting and Procedure Changes:

a) Mr. Taintor recommended using subcommittees. He said it's been difficult getting everything done within one monthly meeting. He suggested a pre-review with sign applications. Basically all authority to ask questions has been delegated to Andy Sidford, which the Board never really gets to speak with. Another subcommittee could deal with the Cecil Group that looks at issues outside of the meeting. Another subcommittee could be for property maintenance which would include speaking with the Waterfront Trust and the clean up of the lots, etc. Each subcommittee can only be two members. Mr. Brennan said that he was happy with the way it is going. Ms. Dorfman felt there was room to improve efficiency. She suggested using consent agendas for routine business. The NRA members could review in advance and approve the consent agenda as a whole. She felt it would be very efficient for sign applications and waterfront use applications. The subcommittees then could contact other members prior to the meeting to get them up to date on their progress. One member would be responsible for communication with the rest of the members. Then members would be ready to act when they arrive at the meeting. Mr. Fowler said that the Council will have the topics on an agenda, it would be sent to a subcommittee, and then they would report their findings. He suggested that the members review the City Council rules and think about implementing some which would include deadlines to get items on the agenda. Agendas, minutes, and any other meeting information would be delivered to members by a certain time. Mr. Norton said that in order for the consent agenda to work, you need subcommittees. The sign subcommittee was discussed last year but never really implemented. Mr. Taintor was planning on checking for completeness then making a recommendation to the rest of the NRA. Mr. Norton suggested having the subcommittee members make their own suggestions on how to better run the process. Another subcommittee could be formed for the DEP project. Mr. Brennan was concerned that this would add more work. He felt that consent agendas don't make much sense with only five members. He suggested maybe paying someone such as Mr. Sidford to do a more detailed review of sign applications. He felt he would not have enough time to participate in any subcommittees. Mr. Norton felt that subcommittees would just assure everyone that work is getting done and would

give a point person for each concern. He was also concerned that subcommittees would also make decisions that he wasn't comfortable with. Mr. Fowler agreed about the differing opinions regarding the subcommittee members. Mr. Taintor will make recommendations for the next meeting regarding the process and procedure for signage.

Ms. Colbert suggested that the NRA still do the sign review. Otherwise, it will be a new committee or a staff person. A checklist could be provided to a staff member to just review each application. The NRA decided to get comments by January 9th regarding procedural changes.

There is still an outstanding question whether the NRA has authority over façade changes. Carol Powers never answered the question.

Park Planning:

- a) Mr. Taintor talked to David O'Connor to see where they stood. He said they were waiting for the members' direction to proceed. Mr. Taintor took the raw numbers and did a scoring sheet. Five themes that more than half of the participants wanted: Recognize history, connect with bike path, public restrooms, expanding the performance area, and a public garden. Mr. Brennan said that there about 80 people, the survey that was mailed out. He felt it was hard to give much weight to the survey this time. He said they should listen carefully but use it more for new ideas and not as a sense of what the community as a whole wants. Mr. Taintor didn't think many new ideas came from the meeting. The NRA needs to decide what they want the meeting to be for and they can't act as if the meeting didn't happen. Mr. Brennan wanted to assure that for instance, that no lot would be built just because of this survey alone. He also thought the group should commit to a certain number of spaces. Mr. Taintor said the NRA needs to decide if they want to use the layout Cecil provided as a starting point. Ms. Dorfman thought the meeting was to find new ideas and although the group isn't representative of the whole City, the survey shows that something like recognition of history is a very important feature that residents want. Mr. Norton felt the most significant thing he heard was the suggestion not to try cramming everything into one park. For instance, there is already a playground on the waterfront at Cashman Park and the Bartlet Mall is used for a skating rink, weather permitting. He said they need to look at each theme and determine if it's good for the waterfront. Mr. Fowler also mentioned that the park isn't just for residents, it's for tourists too, and the two must be tied together. He noted that you can't satisfy everyone but they should be considered. Mr. Norton said the theme or purpose of the park has never been discussed. Is it to support businesses, attract tourists, or for the residents? Mr. Taintor said that it was their job as NRA members to balance everything. He suggested going home, thinking about the number of spaces, sketching something out on the base plan, and then getting together to meet with ideas. Mr. Brennan wanted the group to decide upon a certain number of spaces (or parking area) using the graphical depiction that Cecil did. He said he was open to considering reducing the number of rows depending on what other members thought. Mr. Fowler said his concern was the break even point and how they were going to sustain the park. Mr. Norton said that the East lot is underutilized. More parking is put in the area where there is less demand and cutting back in an area where there is full demand. Ms. Dorfman asked to look at the big picture and noted that retail development is also shifting east with Chico's going in and

the Tannery down the street. Any hotel that goes in on the west side will have to provide their own parking in that area. She said she foresaw a bigger demand on the east side. Mr. Norton suggested cutting of the piece of parking west of Ferry Landing, which is about 20 spaces or so. Mr. Taintor agreed and thought more consideration should be given to the bus stop area. He said a bus needs a place to idle. Mr. Norton suggested maybe developing the east side first in phase one. The members then discussed how they want the base plan to change. The fine details would be worked out later. Mr. Taintor also suggested a buffer along Merrimac Street. All members agreed upon basic changes. Mr. Brennan said that they could then agree upon three to five elements to include into the concept plan. Mr. Norton said that Geordie Vining told him that the fishermen drive over to the embayment during the winter months.

10:01 Adjourned

Sincerely,

Dianne Eppa
Note Taker