

Newburyport Redevelopment Authority
January 2, 2008

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

Public Comment:

George Roaf was present looking for a map of the contamination on the Waterfront.

Sign Applications:

An application was received from Runway at 1 Merrimac Street. Mr. Taintor said it was not exactly historical looking but the colors were just black and white. It will be installed on an existing bracket. Mr. Brennan made a motion to approve and Ms. Dorfman seconded. It was approved unanimously.

Approval of Minutes:

Sept. 25, 2007: No comments were made. Mr. Brennan motioned to approve and Mr. Taintor seconded. They were unanimously approved.

November 28, 2007 minutes were tabled until the next meeting.

December 5, 2007 were tabled until later in the meeting.

Treasurer's Report:

Mr. Brennan said that there was not much to update and the past two months bank statements have not arrived. Ms. Eppa suggested Mr. Norton or Mr. Brennan set up online banking. The NRA had an additional payment to Cecil and about \$3K in revenue. There is still around \$85K in the account. Mr. Brennan also spoke with Ambrose, Donahue, and Condon about an audit. They will make a recommendation regarding the type of audit to be done and the associated costs involved. Mr. Fowler asked if an annual report was supposed to be filed in January. Mr. Norton said he would follow up. Mr. Taintor asked if the firm did other types of public audits. They said that it was within their capabilities to do it.

Correspondence:

Mr. Norton said that he sent a letter to Rep. Costello letting him know where the NRA is at and what they are doing in terms of the park redevelopment. A meeting was set up for 1/9/08 to discuss the NRA's schedule and financing possibilities.

Mr. Taintor mentioned that MVPC has grants for brownfields for site assessment that they haven't spent. Ms. Dorfman spoke with someone at EOEa who told her that funds were no longer available. She was referred to Ms. Finneran at the State's brownfields program.

Mr. Norton discussed the curb stops on the waterfront lots. He spoke with Brendan O'Regan about his suggestions. They had previously agreed with Tony Furnari to store the curb stops at the DPW barn. He suggested not plowing the dirt portion of the East lot and putting bollards in the West lot to prevent the plows from driving over them. Mr. Norton said that it appeared that

they did a good job plowing after the recent storms. Mr. O'Regan, the Mayor, and Mr. Norton will meet in the future to discuss the long term plan for plowing.

Mr. Fowler asked why the floats were still in the parking lot, not at Cashman Park as they planned. Mr. Steele told Mr. Norton that they would be moved to Cashman once plans were made for the NRA property. Mr. Fowler was concerned about the safety as he has seen kids climbing on and around them. Mr. Norton suggested that it should be the Harbormaster's responsibility next year to properly secure the floats elsewhere.

DEP Notice of Non-Compliance:

Mr. Norton said that he spoke with Atty. Carol Powers. She had nothing to report yet. Her plan was to discuss the proposed changes with DEP and complete the draft. Mr. Norton will try to sign the document as soon as DEP approves the changes. Members voted to approve signing of ACO with any changes that Atty. Powers can negotiate on the NRA's behalf. Mr. Taintor motioned and Mr. Fowler seconded.

Mr. Norton asked if anyone read the article regarding the waterfront contamination in the Daily News. The reporter included quotes from DEP. Mr. Norton noted that he was never reached for comment as the article states. Some facts were incorrect but for the most part it was correct.

Meeting procedure changes:

Mr. Norton suggested having a subcommittee for signs. Mr. Taintor suggested having the subcommittee review the applications and make a recommendation to the members. Mr. Brennan suggested possibly paying Mr. Sidford for a more involved review of the applications. Mr. Norton thought there needed to be a clearer set of guidelines and a set procedure. Mr. Fowler said that signage ordinance has been taken out of committee and it will go back before the Council for a vote. There is still a question of who will do the review. The application needs to be updated to reflect the new ordinance. Mr. Taintor will speak with Nancy Colbert on this issue. Mr. Taintor asked if the NRA was still interested in reviewing façade changes. There seems to be a question if the NRA has authority over façade changes. Ms. Dorfman felt that it seems like its misplaced authority and the Historical Commission should be the ones doing the historical review as they have the expertise. Mr. Norton suggested spending some time going over façade review and find if there is any other review authority. Ms. Dorfman suggesting having someone on the NHC as a member of the subcommittee, if it were allowable. She said they are also passionate and knowledgeable.

Mr. Taintor and Mr. Norton were not going to be available on the 30th for the next meeting. It was rescheduled to January 23, 2008.

Mr. Fowler suggested having the agenda be closed the Thursday at 4pm prior to the meeting. Minutes will also be sent out as well as sign applications and the Treasurer's report on that Friday prior to the meeting so that materials can be reviewed beforehand.

Park Planning:

The group discussed the concept plan. They discussed a small change in the layout and providing a buffer between the parking and the street at the prior meeting. Mr. Taintor suggested

getting rid of the whole row of trees on the berm to open up the view of the water and to plant more trees back away from the water to buffer it from the parking lot. The purpose of the berm was to buffer the parking from the water. He also suggested having the bike path go through the trees and the green space. He also suggested planting more trees against the private parking lot. The view of the water would remain while you drive into the parking lot. He suggested a play lot area in the area where they suggested removing some parking spaces along with a historic interpretive area, informal area, and a formal area. He also suggested a commercial building facing the Green Street parking lot such as visitor center, café, and/or art gallery or museum. If a commercial building is proposed, they also have to consider the increase in demand for parking. Mr. Norton suggested maybe filling up to the berm instead of lowering the berm. The Matthews memorial must be kept somehow on the existing berm. Mr. Fowler suggested more plantings around the hydrants and electrical equipment. Mr. Taintor said that he wanted a building (not necessarily commercial) because of the gap. It would continue the downtown area and would hide the parking lot.

Mr. Brennan suggested something similar to the round gazebo building at the Courtyard. It is primarily glass and low height. It could be used for weddings or for functions. Columns could have a historical timeline on them to provide an educational aspect. Mr. Taintor said there was a similar building at Rhodes Wharf. This type of building would have less impact as it was not very visible. The rest of the members agreed it was a good idea. Mr. Fowler suggested having a second floor for more views. Mr. Norton suggested it being like a lighthouse. Mr. Brennan suggested moving the play area to a place where there is a better view of the river. It should also have a decorative fence to prevent the children from running off. Mr. Taintor suggested having some seating where the fencing is facing each other to help conversation. Mr. Fowler suggested a dog bag dispenser.

Mr. Brennan thought the performance area was big enough but Mr. Norton felt that the area was underutilized. Public restrooms would be provided at the Custom House but Mr. Norton felt they were a must and whatever building was built, they should be provided. Public gardens were high on the wish list. Ms. Dorfman suggested a public garden combined with the sculpture park. Mr. Brennan asked if there was room for a small performance area, for people such as jugglers, with a small seating area. It could also turn into a movie area in the summer. Mr. Fowler said that idea was similar to Amesbury near the Pizza Factory. Mr. Norton felt that it could be the same area as the place where weddings would take place. Mr. Fowler felt a skating rink would be a great idea for the lawn during the winter months to get some use out of it. Mr. Taintor said that frames can be used to build the rink. He suggested it could even be in the parking lot. Ms. Dorfman thought it was a good idea to put a commercial building across from the Green Street lot as buildings previously existed there historically.

Mr. Taintor told members about a historical pool near the Peabody-Essex museum that shows the shoreline as it existing in the past along with the existing shoreline. Mr. Brennan thought it would be a good area to include an area for vendors and pushcarts. Mr. Fowler wanted the group to consider Yankee Homecoming in the planning. Ms. Dorfman wanted to consider the sound interfering with other program spaces.

Mr. Taintor said he will speak with Dave O'Connor and give him the list of the items the NRA is looking for. He will come up with two or three concept plans for the next public meeting. Then one final concept plan will be decided upon.

The minutes of 12/5/07 were reviewed. Mr. Brennan wanted to clarify that he was not at the entire meeting as the minutes showed. He arrived 10 minutes prior to the end of the meeting. Mr. Fowler motioned to approve the minutes and Mr. Taintor seconded. They were approved unanimously.

The meeting adjourned at 9:09 pm

Sincerely,

Dianne Eppa
Note Taker