

Newburyport Redevelopment Authority
City Council Chambers
December 9, 2015
Minutes

1. Call to Order

Chair Tom Salemi called a regular meeting of the Newburyport Redevelopment Authority to order at 7:00 p.m.

2. Roll Call

In attendance were members Tom Salemi, Leslie Eckholdt, Bob Uhlig and Andy Sidford. Marian Levy was absent.

3. Parking Lot and Lighting Improvements

The City has begun the excavation for the light poles bases. It is not yet known when National Grid will remove the two poles on NRA land. National Grid does not own the third pole and this pole shall not be removed.

4. Pop Up Park

Lisë Reid was very helpful with removing the furniture from the park for storage during the winter. Leslie Eckholdt and Marian Levy raked the leaves in the park and took 18 bags to the Crow Lane yard waste facility. A monthly maintenance plan should be developed for the park for next year. The NRA could enter into its own agreement with a landscaper or be added to the Waterfront Trust's landscape contract.

Ways to increase the use of the park should be explored. Members of the community could be asked to initiate activities. Because more shaded is needed, four umbrellas might be added for the movable tables and chairs. Bob Uhlig will bring ideas for umbrellas to the January meeting. Leslie Eckholdt will work with the City Council to obtain a permit for serving food.

5. Ad Hoc Central Waterfront Committee

The cost of the parking garage in its proposed location has been questioned. The number of spaces that would be removed from the waterfront with the construction of the garage is relatively small, making the cost difficult to justify. Additional sites for the location of the garage might be explored. While this development might not impact the long-term vision for the waterfront, it might slow down the process. The Committee will meet again on December 21.

6. New Business

Custom House

The bids for the proposed Harbormaster's facility were higher than the budget and the project has been redesigned. The utility corridor was originally to have been located under Custom House Way. The cost of removing and replacing the brick to accomplish this proved to be prohibitive and New England Development was again contacted about allowing an easement for the utility corridor to the east of the Custom House. The company agreed to grant an easement to the area within ten feet of the property line because this land could never be developed. At the same time research revealed public rights exist on the east side of the Custom House. While the public way does not cover the entire distance to the water, it does extend beyond the Custom House. The existence of this way would allow the utility corridor to be located 15 feet from the

Custom House. At the point the public way terminates, the corridor would shift to be within the 10-foot easement from New England Development.

Geordie Vining will be asked to attend the next meeting to describe the changes to the fisherman's monument.

Property Improvements in 2016

The members discussed the possibility of developing a pop-up park in the east lot. Bob Uhlig identified land that has been inefficiently used. A reconfiguration of the parking would allow a park to be added near the berm with only a minimal loss of spaces. In order to keep the cost of the park low, the grade would not be elevated to that of the berm. An elevation change would allow for a better view of the river, but would require space for a ramp and would involve more funds than the members would be willing to commit at this time. Crushed shells could be used for the surface to distinguish the park from the parking lot and to create continuity with the existing pop-up park. The goal would be to create a space with a minimal expense and furniture that could be used elsewhere in the future. A site in the west lot was also discussed. This area would afford better views of the water but would be more of a transition space. The members do not wish to take on too many projects at one time and will continue exploring the creation of a pop-up park in the east lot at the next meeting.

7. Secretary's Report

Leslie Eckholdt will remain as Secretary until the January meeting. She said the Council Chambers has been booked for the second Wednesday of each month in 2016. The group discussed instead holding its meetings on the third Thursday of each month in the upcoming year.

8. Treasurer's Report

Leslie Eckholdt reported the balance in the money market account as of December 1 was \$214,343.53 and the balance in the checking account was \$3,081.00.

Bob Uhlig moved to approve a payment in the amount of \$150.00 for minute taking for the December meeting; to the Leslie Eckholdt in the amount of \$35.002 for swags for the Pop-up Park and to National Grid in the amount of \$46.89. Leslie Eckholdt seconded the motion. The motion was unanimously approved.

9. Council's Report

None

10. Minutes

Bob Uhlig moved to approve the minutes of the November 9, 2015 meeting as submitted. Leslie Eckholdt seconded the motion. The motion was unanimously approved.

11. Public Comment

None

12. Adjournment

Andy Sidford moved to adjourn the meeting at 8:10 p.m. Leslie Eckholdt seconded the motion. The motion was unanimously approved.