

Newburyport Redevelopment Authority
12/20/06
6:00 pm

Present: Janet Marcus, Nat Norton, Erford Fowler, Rick Taintor (6:40pm), and Tim Brennan

Public Comment:

Rosalie Cuticchia of the Ferry Wharf Gallery was instructed to obtain the signature of the representative of her condo association in order to have her sign application placed on the agenda. Ms. Marcus also noted that the proposed 2nd floor sign was too large, if in fact it was to be on the 2nd floor. Ms. Cuticchia was asked to return the application to the Planning Office by January 15, 2007 in order to have it put on the January agenda.

George Roaf asked about the ownership of a piece of property behind the Ferry Wharf building. He was told that the parking area he was inquiring about belonged to the condo association and the drive-aisle belonged to the NRA.

Minutes:

The minutes of the 11/21/06 were approved. Mr. Norton motioned to approve, Mr. Fowler seconded, and they were approved 4-0. The minutes of the 12/13/06 meeting would be voted upon at the January meeting.

Treasurer's Report:

Mr. Norton reported that the total balance in the NRA accounts was \$69,911.34. The interest rate on the line of credit remains the same as before. He noted that Standard Parking made a few errors that were corrected in November. Allowing them to do bi-weekly deposits in the future would reduce the number of errors. In addition, Mr. Norton reported paying the balance of the line of credit to zero on 12/20/06. He was assured by the loan officer that the NRA will still be able to draw from the credit at any time. The balance in the accounts will now total around \$21,000. He suggested borrowing from the line of credit again prior to the planner being selected so that they had cash on hand to cover the contract. Mr. Brennan motioned to receive and file the Treasurer's Report and Mr. Fowler seconded. The motion passed 4-0.

Mayor Moak re: Focus Group Report

Mayor Moak explained that his administration has a priority location at Cushing Park for the proposed Senior Center. He said that George Roaf has a petition going around to asking for the senior center to be built on the waterfront. Mayor Moak said that there has never been any intention to build on the waterfront other than the possibility of a comfort station/info. booth. He requested that the NRA discuss the feasibility of a senior center on the waterfront and make a determination on the possibility. The parameters to be used in the discussion were a total of 11,500 s.f., a 6,000 s.f. footprint, 54 parking spaces, and 24-28 spaces for parking overflow. A function room to seat 160 would also be included.

Secondly, the Mayor submitted the Waterfront Focus Group's list of desires. He said that specific numbers of parking spaces were not being recommended and requested that the NRA review the focus group's list and address them in the RFP.

Mayor Moak was concerned with possible deed restrictions on the NRA land because of the future disposition of the property. He suggested that the NRA complete a Newburyport Central Business District Urban Renewal Completion Plan as the original Urban Renewal plan expired in 4/05. The purpose would be to identify all outstanding items that the NRA is required to complete. He felt this should be done prior to any major work taking place on the waterfront. Ms. Marcus acknowledged the Mayor's offering of the Planning Department's services and said that the NRA always intended on working hand in hand with the City. She said that the NRA just recently met with the Waterfront Trust and discussed the potential of the properties being put under one umbrella. This would be something that would be a part of the completion plan. (Mr. Taintor arrived.)

Ms. Marcus said the RFP would get them started and the resulting plan would become part of the completion plan. The Mayor added that the NRA has a moral obligation to continue with the adopted Urban Renewal Plan and a plan is required to finish up the project. He again said that Planning Office staff is available for assistance. Mr. Taintor said that a garage in the municipal lot could be proposed as compensation for removing the parking off the waterfront, which would bring in other state resources. He added that the NRA was being constrained by the Urban Renewal area being too small. He urged the group to adjust the area if at all possible, possibly extending the area more towards High Street or Prince Place.

The Mayor finished by saying that the City and NRA should meet together, research, and set goals taking into consideration the many interests and needs of all parties. He said that they cannot implement a plan without a completion plan that may also need to be approved by the City Council.

Sign/Façade Applications:

An application from Coldwell Banker at 59-61 State Street was received requesting to replace 200' of copper gutters. Mr. Norton motioned to approve the façade changes and Mr. Fowler seconded. It was approved 5-0.

An application for signage was received from Port City Tours. The intention of the sign was to reserve parking spaces on Merrimac Street for users of the tour. Mr. Taintor noted that the proposed location was on public property, not property of the NRA. Mr. Taintor voted to deny the application and Mr. Norton seconded. The group unanimously denied the sign because the proposed location was not on NRA property.

Correspondence:

An invitation to a Standard Parking reception was received. Ms. Marcus said she would forward a thank you from the NRA. Mr. Fowler questioned whether or not this would be a conflict as the NRA is a quasi-government agency.

Joe Brown requested copies of NRA documents. Ms. Marcus said the Planning Office should direct him to the coin operated copy machine in the Assessor's Office as is the procedure that City Hall staff uses upon requests for documents.

Report on Park Rules Committee

Mr. Fowler reported that he would meet with the committee again in January for further discussions.

Request for Proposals for a Park Planner

The Board continued to make edits to the RFP. Among spelling, grammar, and other minor errors, the Board decided upon the following edits.

- Mr. Norton suggested rewording the property descriptions in order to clarify that there were three properties, two of which were separated by Ferry Wharf Way.
- Mr. Norton wanted to change the suggestion of "automatic gates" to "in order to manage paid parking"
- Mr. Brennan wanted to add the words "landscaped or aesthetically pleasing" to the RFP as to show that they were looking for something more than simple stripes across the parking lot.
- The Waterfront Trust parcel would be added as a design exercise in order to see how much the plan could change if the parcels were ever combined. Mr. Fowler was concerned about the public perception if this scenario could not be done. Mr. Brennan felt it was more important to show the public that ALL options were considered.
- The parcel behind the Custom House was to be included as part of the denominator, although it would assume there would be no changes to that green space.

Mr. Brennan motioned to approve the RFP with the changes discussed and Mr. Norton seconded. The motion passed 5-0.

New Business

Mr. Fowler noted that the parking lots are in horrible condition and the rubbish and leaves should be cleaned up. He said that the NRA has the obligation to keep the lots looking decent. Mr. Norton suggested discussing a routine maintenance plan at the next hearing. The RFP for summer parking would also be a topic on the January agenda.

The meeting adjourned at 8:55 PM.

Sincerely,

Dianne Eppa
Note Taker