

**Newburyport Redevelopment Authority**

**1/24/07**

**6:00 pm**

Present: Janet Marcus, Erford Fowler, Rick Taintor, and Tim Brennan

***Minutes:***

The minutes of the 12/20/06 meeting were approved 3-0. Mr. Taintor motioned the approval and Mr. Fowler seconded.

***Treasurer's Report:***

As Mr. Norton was absent, Ms. Marcus reported that there is approximately \$21K in the money market account after paying off the balance of the loan. Mr. Taintor mentioned that Mr. Norton recommended taking out enough money to cover the park planning contract prior to signing an agreement, although it could wait until March. Mr. Fowler motioned to accept and file the Treasurer's Report and Mr. Taintor seconded. It was approved 3-0.

***Signage Applications:***

A sign application for Ferry Wharf Gallery at 1 Water Street was received. Mr. Sidford noted on the application that he liked the proposed colors of the sign. The applicant owns the retail condominium and also had the signature of the condo association approving the signs. The proposal was for the replacement of two existing signs and one new one. Mr. Taintor questioned if the NRA had the authority to approve a sign on the side of the building where there was no door. Ms. Marcus told the applicant that they had the authority to approve the front and side signs and not the rear sign as the idea is to not destroy the aesthetics of the architecture of the building. Mr. Taintor motioned to approve the replacement of the two existing signs and Mr. Fowler seconded. It was approved 3-0.

An application to replace the sign at Pandora's Box at 14 Pleasant Street was received. The applicant requested to install a 2' x 2' sign, where the overall size of the wording would be even less due to the cut outs on the sign. Jen Wright of Jen Wright Signs said that this is a typical size sign for the street. She also mentioned that the landlord of the building is in Florida so she was unable to obtain his home address. Mr. Taintor motioned to approve the sign pending the receipt of the landlord's home address and Mr. Fowler seconded. It was approved 3-0. Ms. Wright also suggested that the NRA clarify their applications to prevent the issue of the "home address" in the future.

An application for signage at 16 Unicorn Street was received from Ballotin Chocolates. Lisa Bleicken, manager, requested to paint the doors their signature blue color and to install a wall and a projecting sign. The door frame would remain white and they would also replace the sash. Mr. Taintor did not feel that painting the door a different would be a concern. Mr. Fowler motioned to approve the sign and façade changes and Mr. Taintor seconded. It was approved 3-0.

Mr. Brennan arrived.

***RFP for Park Planning:***

Mr. Taintor, Ms. Marcus, and Mr. Norton met earlier in the morning with 13 individuals representing several different groups on the RFP. They also extended the deadline for questions until 2/7/07 with responses due by 2/14/07. Mr. Taintor will contact the individuals via email to let them know about the change in deadline for questions. He also mentioned that many of the people that showed up at the meeting were expecting stronger opinions/direction on the project. They were urged to start from the park design and then derive the number of spaces from there. Someone spoke of underground parking with pedestrian access on top although it would also have to prove to be financially feasible. Another suggestion was to ask the Waterfront Trust about a possible land swap near the boat launch. One other idea that came out of the meeting was to consider the area by the East Row, Daily News parking lot, and the Laundromat another Urban Renewal project. This could allow construction of a parking facility and the East Row owners could have some sort of covered parking. Ms. Marcus felt this was a fabulous idea and would be a convenient spot for parking.

***Firehouse:***

Ms. Marcus reported that she met with the manager of Not Your Average Joe's (NYAJ) last spring regarding the delivery trucks using the row in the East lot for loading. Due to the bad condition of the walkway and the continued use of it, NYAJ and the Firehouse agreed that they would be responsible for the maintenance of this area. Ms. Marcus previously wrote a letter requesting that they repair it before the ground froze but received no response. She said that she hand delivered the letter to both the Firehouse and NYAJ and also called three times. She spoke with Lisa Benoit of NYAJ who said she'd take care of the issue although Ms. Marcus has still not heard back from her. Ms. Marcus then wrote another letter to the president of the Firehouse requesting that the repairs be made or the NRA would hire Salisbury Landscaping and bill the Firehouse and NYAJ for the work. Apparently Salisbury Landscaping misunderstood and completed the work without proper authorization. At the same time, the Firehouse received a letter from the Mayor stating that if they paid for the materials, the DPW could do the work. He was under the impression that the DPW had been doing the work all along. Ms. Marcus then spoke with Matt Bowen of the Firehouse and offered to split the bill as they promised they would put forth \$200 towards materials. Mr. Bowen said that he had not received any of her letters and would have to speak with the Board before committing.

Ms. Marcus also noted that the agreement for trash disposal has also lapsed. The NRA requires that the Firehouse enter a long term agreement for that area. She said that the NRA was always paid by the predecessors although they gave up the rental income in order to help the Firehouse. Ms. Marcus said that she would call for a meeting between Matt Bowen of the Firehouse and the manager of NYAJ to discuss the situation.

***Urban Renewal Completion Plan:***

Ms. Marcus said that she spoke with John Fitzgerald of DHCD regarding an Urban Renewal Completion Plan. She said he was firm that there was no such requirement to have one and DHCD would not review it. He said that there were no restraints on developing the property and the NRA just had the responsibility of obtaining public opinion. Mr. Fitzgerald is a direct liaison to Redevelopment Authorities and will be invited to the 2/28/07 meeting for further discussion.

***RFPs for Parking:***

Ms. Marcus said that she would make some minor changes to the previous year's RFP and bring it for a vote during the February meeting. She hoped to have the RFP issued in early March and have responses due in April. Changes would include a renewal option, to allow the electronic deposit of receipts, and to allow charging all day on Fridays.

***Meeting Time:***

The regular meeting start time was changed from 6pm to 7pm in order to better accommodate Mr. Brennan's and Mr. Norton's schedules.

***URP Committee:***

Mr. Fowler submitted a memo with a motion proposing a new committee. He said that he spoke with Bill Harris, on his own, regarding establishing a committee to develop a revised Urban Renewal Plan. He said that he was mostly concerned with keeping taxpayers costs down and wanted to work closely with the City on the plan. He felt it was a critical time to start cooperating with the City. Ms. Marcus said that it was always the NRA's intent to cooperate with the City but said that some of the language in the motion was in direct conflict with DHCD's opinion. Mr. Taintor was not clear of the implications of the proposed motion and wanted to speak with Carol Powers prior to voting. Mr. Fowler said that working together would allow them more grant opportunities. The other members agreed that there were too many legal questions involved to pass a motion at this time.

The meeting adjourned at 7:38 PM.

Sincerely,

Dianne Eppa  
Note Taker