

**Newburyport Redevelopment Authority**  
Mayor's Conference Room  
April 11, 2017  
Minutes

**1. Call to Order**

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

**2. Roll Call**

In attendance were members Leslie Eckholdt, Bob Uhlig, Andy Sidford and Marian Levy.

**3. Old Business**

**A. Somerby's Way**

Leslie Eckholdt, Edith Heyck and Elizabeth Petty formed a committee to develop a landscaping plan for Somerby's Way. They are proposing to plant the six beds along the way with pachysandra. The cost of the project would be shared with the Waterfront Trust, which owns 18% of the property. Ten thousand plants would be needed at a cost of \$2,500. Volunteers would be used to install the ground cover, but a watering program would be needed. A bid was received for applying 1" of water to the beds each week for 13 weeks. The cost to the NRA for watering would be \$4,200. The Waterfront Trust would be responsible for \$900 of the cost. The watering program would be required for two years. Some NRA members were concerned about the cost and asked if credit would be given for weeks when no watering would be needed due to the weather. They would like the estimate to be broken down so they could have a sense of an hourly rate and requested that other alternatives be explored. The ordering of the ground cover will be put on hold until the watering issue has been resolved. In addition to the pachysandra, the committee is proposing to install shrubs behind the benches along the way to provide shade and to screen them from the parking lot. The cost of the shrubs would be approximately \$2,000. At the March meeting the members voted to expend \$5,000 for soil and plant materials for the beds. The discussion was tabled to the May meeting.

**B. Soils Testing in West Lot**

ESS is working to determine the location of petroleum in the soil in the west lot and to assess the risk it poses, as required by DEP. The work must be completed by May. Soil testing was done in five areas and urban fill was found. A petroleum odor was detected in some areas. Two monitoring wells were installed. Bob Uhlig will forward the results of the ground water sampling when they have been received.

**C. Tree Work**

The work to prune the trees in the east lot and to remove and replace the trees in poor condition at the entrance to the lot will begin shortly.

**D. Lower Custom House Way Public Easement Update**

The item has been referred to a City Council subcommittee and no action has been taken thus far.

**E. Submerged Tidelands**

Carol Powers has been in communication with Glen Wood, an attorney with expertise in the area of submerged tidelands. In question is the NRA's right to collect fees for passage over its property. Attorney Wood's firm has worked for the City in another capacity and the issue of a potential conflict of interest must first be resolved.

**F. Property Improvements**

1. Site Furniture

The remaining seven Adirondack chairs have been installed along the east berm. Leslie Eckholdt moved to approve the purchase of two cornhole sets for the PUP at a cost of \$400. Marian Levey seconded the motion. The motion was unanimously approved.

2. West Lot Park Expansion

Wilbur Shenk is in communication with CZM about the project to expand the berm being undertaken jointly by the NRA and the Waterfront Trust.

3. Free Library

Marian Levy is working to install a free library box in the PUP.

4. Seasonal Planters

Gretchen Joy will provide a proposal for installing and maintaining new material in the seasonal planters.

**G. Agreements and Leases**

1. Sea Level Oyster Bar

The changes being made at the Firehouse to accommodate the new restaurant do not involve NRA property. Carol Powers will communicate with the restaurant about the standards for cleaning the dumpster. The monthly rent of \$400 has been paid for February, March and April. Andy Sidford will send a letter to the restaurant regarding its responsibility to repair the doors on the dumpster enclosure and improve the shed.

2. Custom House and NRA Irrigation System Agreement

Carol Powers is working with Lisa Mead on a contract for the irrigation system for the lawn. She had requested this take the form of an agreement but instead received an amendment to the lease, which she does not favor. She would like the document to include the provision that the Custom House would be responsible for any hazardous materials uncovered during the installation process. No work has begun on the Rail Trail in the area. The installation of the irrigation system might be delayed until the fall, as events have been scheduled on the lawn beginning in May.

#### **H. Bank Account**

The Institution for Savings wished to receive the articles of incorporation before opening the new account, which have now been provided. The chair and treasurer will have the authority to make deposits and withdrawals and to sign checks. The monetary limit for requiring two signatures will be \$10,000. The officers of the NRA are as follows: Bob Uhlig, chair; Andy Sidford, vice chair; Marion Levy, clerk and Leslie Eckholdt, treasurer.

#### **I. Central Waterfront Update**

The meeting with the NRA, Mayor Holaday and the Waterfront Trust that was postponed due to the weather has not yet been scheduled. When it takes place Marian Levy and Leslie Eckholdt will represent the Trust. The NRA had developed two working committees, one to focus on financial issues and a revenue stream for maintaining an expanded park and the second to focus on the design of the park and allocation of the property. The Ad Hoc Central Waterfront Committee is planning to resume its meetings on April 26.

Bob Uhlig opened the discussion to comments from the public. Rob Germinara spoke in support of the resumption of the meetings of the Ad Hoc Central Waterfront Committee, saying progress had been made in the previous meetings. Bill Harris spoke of the need to look for long-term funding solutions and not rely solely on parking for revenue. Elizabeth Health said the City does not have a say in the distribution of the NRA property and the Waterfront Trust would only be self sufficient if the NRA conveys to it all of its land and the submerged tidelands. Bob Uhlig responded that the City does in fact have a stake in the matter and the NRA is striving for a balanced approach that would provide the best outcome for all interested parties.

#### **4. New Business**

##### **A. Property Use Application**

Andy Sidford moved to approve the application for the Yankee Homecoming Brewfest with no fee pending the receipt of an updated certificate of insurance. Leslie Eckholdt seconded the motion. The event, which is expected to attract 800 attendees, will take place on July 29. The tent installer will be asked to provide a certificate of insurance. The motion was unanimously approved.

#### **5. Reports**

##### **A. Clerk's Report**

No report.

##### **B. Treasurer's Report**

Leslie Eckholdt reported that on March 31 the account balance was \$297,822.90. Andy Sidford moved to approve the payment of invoices from Gretchen Joy in the amount of \$150 for minute taking at the April 11 meeting, from Tom and Gretchen Joy in the amount of \$112.50 for the assembly of the Adirondack chairs for the east berm and from the Waterfront Trust in the amount of \$371.25 for the NRA's portion of the park manager's salary. Marian Levy seconded the motion. The motion was unanimously approved.

**C. Counsel's Report**

No report.

**6. Minutes**

Leslie Eckholdt moved to approve the minutes of the March 8, 2017 meeting as submitted. Marian Levy seconded the motion. The motion was unanimously approved.

**7. Public Comment**

None

**8. Upcoming Meetings**

The next meeting of the NRA is scheduled for Wednesday, May 10.

**9. Adjournment**

Andy Sidford moved to adjourn the meeting at 8:35 p.m. Leslie Eckholdt seconded the motion. The motion was unanimously approved.