

Newburyport Redevelopment Authority
City Council Chambers
May 11, 2016
Minutes

1. Call to Order

Chair Tom Salemi called a regular meeting of the Newburyport Redevelopment Authority to order at 7:03 p.m.

2. Roll Call

In attendance were members Tom Salemi, Marian Levy, Leslie Eckholdt, Bob Uhlig and Andy Sidford. Carol Powers was also in attendance.

3. Minutes

Leslie Eckholdt moved to approve the minutes of the April 13, 2016 meeting as submitted. Bob Uhlig seconded the motion. The motion was approved with Marian Levy abstaining.

4. Old Business

Parking Agreement

The NRA had previously decided not to extend the parking contract with the City until new parking rates were approved. The rates will increase to \$1 per hour on May 26 and the members now wish to enter into a one-year agreement with the City. This would allow them to pursue an extension of the hours in which paid parking is in effect. The contract would begin on July 1 to coincide with the fiscal year. A vote will be taken at the next meeting in order to allow time for information to be obtained from Richard Jones on the details and distribution of permit parking.

WNBP Remote Broadcast Parking

At the April meeting permission was granted pending the submittal of insurance information for the parking of a van on NRA land for the broadcasting of a radio show from Oldies on May 28. Carol Powers will contact the applicant about the insurance.

Memorial Day Weekend

The members and Michael Mroz discussed the plans for the visit of the tall ship *El Galeon* on Memorial Day weekend. The NRA is included on the insurance policy for all activities that take place on the Custom House lawn.

Waterfront Lot Improvements

Leslie Eckholdt reported:

- Mike Hennessey has not yet provided recommendations and costs for plant materials for the planters at the Pop Up Park. She recommended the funds that had been marked for a chess set be instead used for the planters. Bob Uhlig moved to approve an expenditure of up to \$2,000 for plant materials for the planters for the Pop Up Park. Leslie Eckholdt seconded the motion. The motion was unanimously approved.

- one quote has been received for the plants materials, labor and irrigation needed to improve six areas along Somerby's Way. Additional quotes are being sought. The expense would be shared with the Waterfront Trust.
- she has spoken with Mike Hennessey about rolling the shells at the Pop Up Park to further crush them. The members are in favor of the action but must approve any expense that would be incurred.
- she would like to replace the drinking fountain near the restrooms. Tom Salemi moved to approve spending up to \$3,000 on a new drinking fountain in the same approximate location as the existing one on the condition the design meets the regulations of the ADA and Massachusetts Architectural Access Board. Marian Levy seconded the motion. The motion was unanimously approved.

The members had previously discussed creating a Pop Up Park in the east lot, which is subject to an AUL. The change from a parking lot to a passive recreation area would require reporting to DEP and would necessitate the expenditure of time and money. Bob Uhlig recommended the NRA concentrate its efforts on the improvements to the west lot at this time. He and members of the Waterfront Trust discussed a 30-foot expansion of the park along berm parallel the embayment. The gravel would be removed to the edge of the parking lot and the area would be loamed and seeded. Leslie Eckholdt said according to Mike Hennessey the seeding should be done in the fall. Tom Salemi said it is unclear if the placement of the planned bocce courts would interfere with the flow of pedestrian traffic. He believes one bocce court would be sufficient. The members discussed an alternative surface material to the crushed shells. The shells are inexpensive, temporary and permeable, but are disliked by some. It might prove difficult to find an alternative that would meet their criteria. No decision will be made until the existing shells have been further crushed. Tom Salemi moved to approve as a general concept the design of the improvements to the west lot. Andy Sidford seconded the motion. The motion was unanimously approved.

5. New Business

Music Concert

Marian Levy described a free concert that is being planned for the waterfront stage on July 2 to benefit the Parks Commission. She suggested the NRA sponsor the event. Andy Sidford responded the idea is a good one but the NRA should not support it financially in order to reserve funds for the development of an expanded park. More details will be provided for discussion at the next meeting.

Long Term Vision for the Waterfront

The Ad Hoc Central Waterfront Committee has begun meeting again now that the parking garage has been approved. The NRA will begin exploring ways a minimum of 100 spaces could be removed from its parking lots. The members discussed the process they might follow to develop a concept for the expanded park. The previous designs were developed without financial support to implement them. On the other hand, it would be difficult to determine a budget and receive financial support without a concept. A general agreement must be reached about the cost of both capital improvements and

maintenance and how these would be funded. While the NRA might design the expanded park, it is not know which entity would implement it. The process must be a collaborative one and the role of the NRA must be determined.

Bob Uhlig presented two conceptual plans for reducing the amount of parking on the NRA lots. Either 155 or 165 spaces would be retained with the two plans. A decision to be made is whether the number of spaces should be removed from each lot proportionally or if parking should be removed from the west lot all together.

Tom Salemi opened the discussion to comments from the public. Elizabeth Heath said the NRA should focus only on going out of business. Sandy Small said the NRA and Waterfront Trust have different philosophies about passive versus active use of the waterfront. Scott Sutherland said while the Trust documents require its land to be used for passive recreation, the same restriction would not necessarily apply to land it acquires in the future.

6. Secretary's Report

The next meeting of the NRA will be tentatively scheduled for Thursday, June 16.

7. Treasurer's Report

Leslie Eckholdt reported the balance in the checking account is \$2,988 and the balance in the money market account is \$208,491.33. The amount of \$7,717.62 was received from the City for parking and \$500 was received from Not Your Average Joe's.

Tom Salemi moved to approve a retroactive payment of \$1,012.50 to the Waterfront Trust for the NRA's share of the maintenance contract. Bob Uhlig seconded the motion. The motion was unanimously approved.

Bob Uhlig moved to approve payments in the amount of \$150 to Gretchen Joy for minute taking and \$39.36 to Leslie Eckholdt for new beanbags for the Pop Up Park. Andy Sidford seconded the motion. The motion was unanimously approved.

Leslie Eckholdt moved to reimburse Tom Salemi \$50 for a gift card for Lisë Reid. Bob Uhlig seconded the motion. The motion was approved with Tom Salemi abstaining.

8. Council's Report

Carol Powers said she and Doug Bolick had a productive meeting. They discussed the finalization of the Everett Chandler survey and the eventual transfer of NRA property to the Waterfront Trust. Contour lines are being added to the survey. The recording of the survey would allow the removal of the AUL from the Trust property to proceed.

She recommended the NRA hire an attorney with expertise in the area of submerged tidelands. The goal would be to enter into a collaborative agreement for revenue sharing based on NRA land being crossed in order to reach the docks. The ownership of the submerged tidelands is not in question but there is a difference of opinion as to whether or not the leasing rights to these tidelands were transferred to the Waterfront Trust.

Andy Sidford moved to engage Glen Wood for up to four hours under the direction of Carol Powers to investigate the rights the NRA has to share revenue given its ownership of the submerged tidelands. Leslie Eckholdt seconded the motion. The motion was unanimously approved.

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9. Adjournment

Andy Sidford moved to adjourn the meeting at 9:20p.m. Bob Uhlig seconded the motion. The motion was unanimously approved.