

Newburyport Redevelopment Authority
Mayor's Conference Room
June 10, 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 Adam Guild.

3. Old Business

Adam Guild announced at the May 13 meeting that he does not wish to be reappointed at the end of his term. Tom Salemi moved to appoint Leslie Eckholdt as treasurer. Bob Uhlig seconded the motion. The motion was unanimously approved.

4. Pop-Up Park

ESS submitted its report on the test of the soil for contamination. While no special area of concern was found for the pop-up park, where there is to be no excavation, it was recommended that a layer of geotextile fabric be installed. It was necessary for the fabric to be in place before any other work on the site could be done. Hennessey Landscaping installed the fabric and has begun to establish the basic elements of the park.

Tom Salemi moved to ratify a payment in the amount of \$1,875 to Hennessey Landscaping for the installation of the geotextile fabric. Leslie Eckholdt seconded the motion. The motion was unanimously approved.

The NRA is working with the Chamber of Commerce to provide staffing for events in the park. Some restaurants have expressed interest in setting up a venue in the park. The park should be completed before any events are planned.

Leslie Eckholdt would like Hennessey Landscaping to maintain a portion of Somerby's Way. Bob Uhlig will ask him to provide a quote for the work.

5. Parking Lot and Lighting Improvements

ESS reported that some arsenic was found in the areas in the parking lot where the light pole bases would be installed. The contaminated soil would be removed and transported to a facility in Elliot, Maine. The light pole bases are being cast and should be ready at the end of July.

The City initiated the installation of a pole with three lights in the east lot. The cost of the work was higher than expected. Richard Jones asked if the NRA would be willing to offset the cost by bearing the expense of removing the soil for the installation of the pole. The price would be \$5,725 if the work were to be done at the same time as the installation of the bases in the west lot and \$7,260 if it were to be done separately. Leslie Eckholdt said she would not be in favor of bearing the expense, as the NRA has other demands on its funds. State Senator Kathleen O'Connor Ives has applied for \$25,000 in State funds to light the west lot, which the City should be able to apply

towards the expense of removing the soil. The NRA members wish to verify the figures before voting on the request. The quote is higher than that given to excavate for five poles in the west lot.

6. Counsel's Report

Carol Powers said she has come to an agreement with the City on the language for the temporary and permanent easements for the Rail Trail. She recommended the Chair sign the documents after she has confirmed the property descriptions. The project is to be advertised in August and work should begin next spring.

7. Secretary's Report

Leslie Eckholdt said the annual report is based on the fiscal year, which ends in June. She met with Carol Powers to review an annual report submitted by the City of Salem. She will compile the information after the close of the fiscal year and complete the report by the next meeting.

8. Treasurer's Report

The balance in the checking account is \$2,074.10 and the balance in the money market account is \$177,298.42.

Adam Guild moved to approve a payment in the amount of \$5,000 for the work shared with the Waterfront Trust to maintain the trees in the park. Leslie Eckholdt seconded the motion. The motion was unanimously approved.

Adam Guild moved to approve a payment in the amount of \$150 for minute taking for the June 10 meeting. Bob Uhlig seconded the motion. The motion was unanimously approved.

Bob Uhlig moved to approve a payment to Hennessey Landscaping in the amount of \$5,000 as a deposit on fill for the pop-up park, contingent upon the receipt of an invoice that indicates the relationship of the expense to that of the project as a whole. Leslie Eckholdt seconded the motion. The motion was unanimously approved.

9. Funding Updates

The NRA did not receive an EPA grant for an LSP. The Community Preservation Committee did not award any grant money for the NRA application. Nancy London will continue to work to identify other grants for which the NRA might be eligible.

10. Property Maintenance Report

Adam Guild suggested that as the NRA pays a portion of the salary of Edith Heyck, she should be asked to report on her activities on a regular basis.

Bob Uhlig said he reminded Richard Jones and Wayne Amaral that the City is responsible for replacing the planters in the parking lot. The City has purchased six new planters but they have not yet been installed. A conversation will take place with Andy Port about consolidating signage to reduce the visual clutter in the lot.

11. Minutes

Tom Salemi moved to approve the minutes of the May 13 meeting as submitted. Leslie Eckholdt seconded the motion. The motion was unanimously approved.

12. Long-term Vision

Tom Salemi responded to a comment by COW that not enough action has been taken by the NRA. He said the group has three new members, has applied for several grants, has partnered with the Waterfront Trust and is constructing the pop-up park. He said the members are working hard and have accomplished much. He said the forward momentum of the group has been held back to a certain degree while actions are being taking on a parking garage. Leslie Eckholdt said it is very expensive to build a park and the pop-up park is a way to determine on a small scale if this is a viable use for NRA property. Adam Guild said the comments made in a letter from COW that appeared in the *Daily News* were unfair. He said the members have dedicated much time and effort to their volunteer positions.

13. Public Comment

Mary Carrier, 4 Rawson Hill Road, said she is pleased with the pop-up park. She said it is a start. She is happy with the members and thinks they are trying.

Nick Metcalf, 110 Hay Street, Newbury, said the members of COW believe the NRA property should be under the control of Waterfront Trust, which is a permanent entity.

Lon Hachmeister, 281 High Road, Newbury, said the NRA should be expending its funds on the development of a long-term plan for its property.

Sandy Small, 25 Oak Street, said COW appreciates the changes that have taken place since Tom Salemi became Chair of the NRA. She said she would like the NRA to make a commitment to keeping buildings off of the waterfront.

Elizabeth Heath, 25 Oak Street, said she thinks the NRA property should be transferred to the Waterfront Trust, which she believes would have a legal mandate to maintain it as open space.

Joe DiBiase, 15 Frances Drive, said he does not approve of the use of the words “animosity” and “distrust.” He said the NRA members are volunteers whose opinion is different than that of COW members. He said it is wrong to incite mistrust.

Rob Germinara, 2 Ashland Street, said he appreciates work of the NRA. He said lower Custom House Way should be reclaimed as a public access and made a part of the plans for the waterfront.

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Bill Harris, 56 Lime Street, spoke about the history of lower Custom House Way. He said he appreciates Adam Guild's expertise in project management.

Joe Brown, 6 Cutting Avenue, said the NRA has made progress and he wishes it to continue. He said the Waterfront Trust and NRA should work together to increase parking rates. He would like the two groups to agree to create a 100-foot buffer between the bulkhead and the parking lots. He is in favor of an increase in the amount of open space and a reduction in the amount of parking. He wants the remaining Ways to the Water to be turned over to the Waterfront Trust.

14. New Business

Thom Gould, Chair of the Board of Directors of the Maritime Society, requested that the NRA transfer the remaining lawn that is not currently in its lease to the Maritime Society. The back lawn is an important part of the group's fundraising efforts and he wishes it to be an official part of the museum. The Maritime Society has a 99-year lease on the Custom House.

15. Adjournment

Adam Guild moved to adjourn the meeting at 9:15 p.m. Bob Uhlig seconded the motion. The motion was approved.