

Newburyport Redevelopment Authority
City Council Chambers
August 12, 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 Andy Sidford.

3. Minutes

Tom Salemi moved to approve the minutes of the June 10 meeting as amended. Leslie Eckholdt seconded the motion. The motion was approved with Andy Sidford abstaining.

4. Pop-Up Park

The pop-up park is open. Tom Salemi said he has seen many people using it and he thinks it is a good addition to the waterfront. He has received comments that more shade is needed. Umbrellas might be purchased next season. Due to some changes from the original plans, the cost of the park was \$21,000 rather than the \$16,000 that was anticipated.

Leslie Eckholdt said it was a delight to work with Mike Hennessey, who donated an irrigation system for the park. She said Lisë Reid, Molly Ettenborough and Ann Ormond were helpful in setting up the park. She and Tom Salemi will work together to coordinate continued staffing for the park. She added the plant materials along Somerby's Way are not in good condition and the area should be addressed next spring.

Ann Ormond would like to hold a pizza event in the park on Friday, September 18 as a part of the Savor Newburyport food festival. She has provided a certificate of insurance. City permitting requirements prevented vendors from serving food in the park this summer as had been originally envisioned. Richard Jones and Bob Cronin offered to help resolve the issue. A new City Council subcommittee is to be created to assist various groups in working together on the waterfront. It was recommended that the NRA appear before this subcommittee to discuss the provision of food in the park by a variety of vendors.

5. Parking Lot and Lighting Improvements

Tom Salemi will discuss the light fixture the City wishes to install in the east lot with Richard Jones. It is not known how the fixture would be funded or the reason the estimate of its cost is so high. The City has received a report ESS prepared on the soil in the proposed location of the fixture.

The City has requested that the NRA grant an easement for a small triangle its property needed for the reconstruction of a drainage culvert. A vote on the easement will take place at the September meeting. The members are concerned about the loss of parking revenue during construction. The bases for light fixtures for the west lot have been fabricated. The installation of the bases should be done in conjunction with the culvert work.

6. Parking Agreement Negotiations

There have been no new developments regarding the extension of the parking agreement with the City. The issue will be discussed after the improvements to the west lot have been completed.

7. Secretary's Report

Leslie Eckholdt has gathered the financial data needed for the annual report to the State, which she will complete by the next meeting. The NRA meetings for the remainder of the year have been posted on the City website.

8. Treasurer's Report

As of July 31 the balance in checking account was \$7,603.54 and the balance in the money market account was \$157,338.95. A check was received for parking revenue from the City in the amount of \$14,476.18. Leslie Eckholdt said \$6,300 of the amount paid for the container that had been planned for the pop-up park is to be returned. A 10% deposit will be retained. Andy Sidford moved to approve payments to Bob Uhlig in the amount of \$359.98 for corn hole games for the pop-up park; the WFT in the amount of \$1,127.12 for monthly park maintenance; National Grid in the amount of \$638.62; ESS in the amount of \$7,042.60 for soil testing in the west lot and Gretchen Joy in the amount of \$150.00 for minute taking for the August 12 meeting. Tom Salemi seconded the motion. The motion was unanimously approved.

9. Property Maintenance Report

Signs for the east lot could be consolidated to help eliminate visual clutter. Carol Powers suggested that a sign be installed in the pop-up park indicating that users do so at their own risk. No information has been obtained at this point about the City's plans to consolidate its bathroom maintenance agreements.

10. Program Analysis

Tom Salemi initiated a discussion about the next steps the NRA should take with regards to plans for the waterfront in addition to a meeting with the City Council. One item that must be explored is the future need for parking on the NRA land after the parking garage has been completed. A balance between revenue and expenses, parking and open space, must be found. The parking rates might need to be increased and hours extended to fund an endowment for the park. Andy Sidford said Chambers of Commerce would be able to provide information on how increases in parking rates have impacted tourism. The need for funds for both maintenance and capital improvements could provide a justification for an increase in rates. The parking contracts between the City and both the NRA and the Waterfront Trust have other been extended and are set to expire on September 30.

Leslie Eckholdt said she would like to explore ways the pop-up park might be used in the winter. A fire pit might be added for the Invitation Nights, trees might be added and decorated with lights or activities or markets might be planned.

11. Adjournment

Bob Uhlig moved to adjourn the meeting at 8:25 p.m. Andy Sidford seconded the motion. The motion was approved.