

**Newburyport Redevelopment Authority
City Hall
August 27, 2008
7:00 p.m.**

Present: Nat Norton, Rick Taintor, Patty Dorfman, James Shanley, and Tim Brennan (7:17)

Public Comment:

None

Sign/Façade Applications:

None

Approval of Minutes:

Mr. Norton did not have a chance to read the minutes of the July 23, 2008 meeting.

Mr. Shanley made a motion to continue the approval of the minutes to the next meeting.

Mr. Taintor seconded the motion. All voted in favor.

Treasurer's Report:

Mr. Brennan reported a balance of \$81,531.46 through the end of July.

Mr. Brennan spoke to the Institution for Savings, the 5 Cent Savings Bank, and TD Banknorth. TD Banknorth could not explain the interest the NRA is receiving. It is lower than what the account should be receiving. The bank representative stated that the interest should be around 2% and it looks like the account is only getting around 1.5%. The other banks gave Mr. Norton the name of a commercial banking representative to speak to regarding obtaining a line of credit. Both bank representatives thought that the NRA would be able to get a line of credit with them.

Mr. Brennan wrote a letter to the Newburyport Waterfront Trust to explain how the NRA came up with the payment amount of \$4391.08. Mr. Shanley made a motion to approve the transfer of funds to the Newburyport Waterfront Trust. Mr. Taintor seconded the motion. All voted in favor.

Regarding the Cecil Group invoices, Mr. Norton sent a letter to David O'Connor after reviewing all of the invoices they had submitted. They have billed for 92.3% of the total payment which means they have billed for work that has not been completed. They are really only at 77% of completion. Mr. Taintor deducted \$3,777 out of the total invoices and is recommending to pay them \$8,303 right now. Ms. Dorfman made a motion to approve the payment. Mr. Shanley seconded the motion. All voted in favor.

Maritime Society:

The letter of intent for the lease of land and the memorandum of understanding for use of lawn will be taken up in September.

Correspondence/News:

Mr. Norton has a meeting scheduled with the Mayor tomorrow night. The Mayor has asked for a meeting every 2-3 months with the Waterfront Trust, the NRA, and the Harbor Commission to discuss topics on how the boards are working together.

Mr. Norton reported that during Yankee Homecoming, a tent was assembled for the Beer Fest on a paved portion of the parking lot. There was concern about cars being in the parking lot when the tent was being set up. Flyers were printed up and distributed to warn the public that a tent would be set up in this area of the parking lot. Two cars were towed to make room for the tent. One person picked up their car at Volpone Towing but the other person has not picked up their car and is complaining that there was no sign posted saying not to park in that area. Signs were posted in the east and west lots for the Beer Fest. (Mr. Brennan arrived at 7:17 P.M.)

Parking Lot:

Mr. Norton and Mr. Taintor met with representatives from Standard Parking. Mr. Norton stated that he is fairly satisfied with the review of the charts and data that Standard Parking provided them regarding senior parking. It appears as though tracing of seniors was very lax in 2007. In 2008, seniors have been issued a ticket that is marked to note that the person is a senior. Mr. Norton spoke to Charlie Nichols and he is questioning the number of seniors that is being reported to have used the parking lot. It was noted that a group of seniors meets every day at the waterfront. In 2008, 600 seniors have been recorded as using the parking lot so far. In 2007, parking fees were collected on 48 days by this date. So far, in 2008, parking fees have been collected on 45 days. The average collection has decreased since 2006. The Standard Parking representatives thought that they were still having an issue with letting seniors in. Mr. Norton suggested that a placard instead of a ticket would be a good way to move forward for next year. This way, they would be able to track who is using the parking lot and if it is the same people day in and day out and will also be a good for tracking future parking needs. If the city adopts a paid parking policy than the NRA would just be going along with the city's laws. When we started including the waterfront trust is that when our revenue started going down? Mr. Norton feels comfortable that there is not cheating going on. Standard Parking noted that they have seen a corporate wide decrease of 15-20% less traffic in parking lots in general due to poor weather and a weak economy. Newburyport parking revenues are down \$10,000 or 11% from last year. Gross variance from last year at this time is \$8500. It was noted that there is one less weekend this year where paid parking will be instituted. Discussion of parking prices for different events. Mr. Norton noted that there appears to have been a huge bump in parking revenues in 2006 but decreases in 2007 and 2008.

As far as parking lot maintenance, Mr. Norton has not seen a bill for the mowing yet. Mr. Norton asked what the price was for the resurfacing. Mr. Shanley reported that it was \$1500 or \$1600 to do both lots. Mr. Taintor made a motion to approve the payments for mowing and resurfacing. Mr. Shanley seconded the motion and all were in favor.

Park Planning:

There is a public meeting scheduled for September 17, 2008. A date needs to be set for a run-through to make sure that the technical equipment is working at the Firehouse Center. At the run-through, the format and goals of the meeting will be discussed.

Waterfront Consortium Discussion:

Mr. Norton stated that in an effort to get discussions moving forward, Mr. Shanley has been researching an organization called Project for Public Spaces (PPS) which is currently doing work for Harvard University. Mr. Shanley had a phone conversation with the son of the founder of the organization to explore what would it take to have a representative from PPS come and meet with members of the Waterfront Consortium to start working on developing a common vision. Mr. Shanley will be attending a PPS training in New York. He would like to see how good they really are and if this is an idea worth exploring. Mr. Shanley asked if the other members want to start having discussions with other members of the Consortium. Mr. Taintor stated that he brought this idea to the mayor a couple of years ago. It would be good to look back at the plan that was done for the whole waterfront and see where we are now. Mr. Shanley stated that he looks at PPS as a potential facilitator for discussions. Mr. Norton asked if PPS is a not for profit organization. Mr. Shanley stated that PPS is a not for profit but that their services are expensive. He believes the funding would have to come from more than one source in the city. He would like as many groups as possible to contribute so that it's not seen as just one person's vision. That way people can't say that the vision is slanted toward one person. He would like to see groups such as the Maritime Society, the Chamber of Commerce, city officials, the Waterfront Trust, the NRA, and New England Development involved. Mr. Norton said that it will be important to get the groups together to being working on this change of the landscape. Mr. Norton asked what would be the trigger to begin engaging the various groups in discussion. Would the park expansion being close be the trigger. Mr. Shanley stated that he did not think that would be it but it's close in his opinion. Mr. Shanley stated that there is only \$84,000 available so funding of the park is going to be crucial. This is a point where they can start getting everyone involved. Discussion of what function PPS would provide for city. Mr. Shanley sees PPS helping the various groups agree on, if the park happens, how it is going to work within community and the waterfront and to answer the question of how are people going to use it and actually be supportive of it. Mr. Shanley noted that the conceptual plan of park may not fit with reality and it may need to be reworked. Mr. Taintor suggested researching funding sources such as the Duke Foundation and the Orton Family Foundation. There may be a foundation looking for a small coastal community to fund downtown development. This could be a good option, especially if PPS is really expensive.

Mr. Shanley motioned to adjourn the meeting, Ms. Dorfman seconded, and all voted in favor.

The meeting adjourned at 8:05 P.M.

Sincerely,

Jennifer Stone
Minute Taker