

Newburyport Redevelopment Authority
City Council Chambers
August 9, 2017
Minutes

1. Call to Order

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

2. Roll Call

In attendance were NRA members Leslie Eckholdt, Bob Uhlig, Marian Levy, Andy Sidford and David St. Cyr and Trustees Wilbur Shenk, Steve Hines, Dan Mello and Sean Bradley. Carol Powers was also in attendance.

3. Combined NRA and Waterfront Trust Business

A. Soils Testing in West Lot

Bill Chapman of ESS said the testing in the east lot concluded with an AUL being placed on the property. Soil borings and ground water monitoring detected the presence of petroleum compounds in the southwest corner of the west lot. The fieldwork has been completed and the extent of the contaminants has been determined. The risk assessment phase can be closed and no remediation would be necessary. In the central portion of the west lot arsenic has been found. It would be necessary to perform a more detailed risk determination because the arsenic would pose a risk for unrestricted use. It might be feasible to remove the contaminated soil. If the cost of this proves to be prohibitive, an AUL could be placed on the site. Mr. Chapman said the risk characterizations should be completed and then a decision about reporting the results to DEP would be made. He said it is likely he would recommend reporting the findings. The use of the land for a park would be near the highest level of risk. It might be possible to excavate an area two to three feet deep by 20 feet across. This area could be lined with geotextile fabric and filled to permit its use as a park.

B. Submerged Tidelands

Jamy Madeja will attend the September 13 meeting to discuss her findings on the rights and responsibilities of the NRA as owner of the submerged tidelands. She will also report on the tidelands as a potential source of revenue and any constraints that might be placed on the conveyance of the tidelands.

C. Central Waterfront Review

Bob Uhlig distributed a diagram showing the land that would potentially be conveyed to the Waterfront Trust. The areas related to the Custom House would go to the Maritime Society. The access road behind the buildings on Merrimac Street would be conveyed to the City. The City would manage the reduced parking areas and would share the revenue. The Waterfront Trust would own the submerged tidelands. The City would manage them and share the revenue. He said any park maintenance buildings would be

best built and managed by the City. Steve Hines said he would prefer the land to be conveyed first and then a long-term lease be considered for a restroom or visitor center.

The timing of the conveyance was discussed. Bob Uhlig said the NRA is the steward of the land and has the role and responsibility for moving its vision forward. Wilbur Shenk said he believes the land should be conveyed and the NRA dissolved and then two of its former members could be a part of the new board if they are interested in seeing the process through the design stage. Andy Sidford said the main objective of the NRA is to implement the park and guarantee there is an adequate revenue source to maintain it in perpetuity. He does not wish to convey the land or combine boards before the park has been implemented. Bob Uhlig said the two groups could work in parallel and mutually move forward with the design process. The conveyance could take place when design has been completed. He suggested a letter of intent could be developed as long as there is an agreement about the manner in which the land is to be conveyed. Carol Powers said authorities have no explicit power to gift their property. The issue of below market value gifts is addressed in Article 46 of the Massachusetts Constitution, the Anti-Aid Amendment, which she distributed.

A meeting with Mayor Holaday has been scheduled for August 22. Jamy Madeja will report on the submerged tidelands at the September 13 meeting. Carol Powers will prepare a letter of intent. Bob Uhlig is working to prepare an RFP for design services for a landscape architect.

4. NRA Business.

Property Improvements

A proposal to locate a wayside kiosk on NRA property as a part of the Essex County Coastal Scenic Byway is in the research phase.

Parking Advisory Committee

The next meeting of the Parking Advisory Committee has not yet been scheduled.

5. Reports

A. Clerk's Report

Marian Levy said the annual report is nearly complete. The NRA meetings for the next six months have been scheduled.

B. Treasurer's Report

Leslie Eckholdt reported the balance in the money market account on July 31 was \$290,387.03. Andy Sidford moved to approve payments to the Waterfront Trust for the NRA's portion of the berm project in the amount of \$14,796.50; to ESS in the amount of \$817.65; to Gretchen Joy for minute taking for the August 9 meeting in the amount of \$150 and to Tom and Gretchen Joy for four weeks of PUP maintenance, three weeks of watering, weeding, hoses, an irrigation system controller and bean bags in the amount of \$932.16. Marian Levy seconded the motion. The motion was unanimously approved.

C. Counsel's Report

No report.

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6. Public Comment

Lon Hachmeister, High Road, Newbury, said a contractual document stating the NRA and Waterfront Trust will work together is needed. Jeanette Isabella, 1 Lime Street, spoke in support of the PUP. She said the public is not in favor of buildings being placed on the waterfront. Bob Uhlig clarified that any buildings being discussed would be related to the support of the park.

7. Upcoming Meetings

The next meeting of the NRA is scheduled for Wednesday, September 13.

8. Adjournment

Andy Sidford moved to adjourn the meeting at 9:00 p.m. Marian Levy seconded the motion. The motion was unanimously approved.