

Newburyport Redevelopment Authority
Minutes of meeting held September 28, 2005

In Attendance: Jan Marcus, Mary Lou Supple, Erford Fowler, Nathaniel Norton, Carol Powers, Rick Taintor, and Recorder Diana Lord.

The meeting was called to order at 6:05 p.m. by chairperson Jan Marcus, who presented the agenda for the meeting. Diana distributed the minutes from the August 24, 2005 meeting.

Jan asked that the group move the sign application of Dr. James Kloglin to the beginning of the Agenda, and all agreed. The sign, as proposed, is a 21" by 36" door sign affixed to the sole entrance to an orthodontist's office on the second floor of 26 Inn Street. After much discussion, the group agreed that the sign is too large for a door sign, which has a one square foot limit; the sign will be affixed to the façade over the door and is considered a wall sign.

Motion made and seconded: To approve this application as a single wall sign affixed over the double doorway of the entrance to the business, with the street number not a part of the sign, but beside the doorway. This motion passed unanimously.

A discussion of the sandwich board rules pointed out that the sign book appears to conflict with the NRA's authorizations under City Ordinances. Enforcement was discussed and Erford suggested that the City Marshall and Gary Calderwood, City Building Inspector, should be enforcing the sign rules. Jan pointed out that sidewalks are not part of the NRA regulations, but sandwich boards effect the tenor of the downtown business district and should not conflict with the NRA's mission of sign integrity. Jan and Erford suggested that the NRA wait until after the first of the year to approach the City Council with suggestions as to how the sandwich board regulations and enforcement be approached.

The Minutes of the previous meeting were reviewed and edits presented. Diana will correct the report and re-distribute it via e-mail to the group. **Motion made and seconded: To accept minutes as amended.** This motion was passed unanimously.

Nat presented the Treasurer's Report. Mary Lou asked Nat to prepare an Annual Financial Report, as of the end of the fiscal year. Jan made a suggestion that the group consider making an additional principal payment on its loan – a principal payment is scheduled for 9/30, but funds appear to be available for an additional payment before the end of the year. Jan feels that prepayment puts the NRA in good financial position to borrow money or apply for grants. Mary Lou expressed concern that since Marie will not be working for the NRA next year, the new parking attendants may not be as reliable and therefore parking receipts could be reduced. Jan suggested that the group should start earlier in the year to prepare the Parking RFP and ask Marie to act as a consultant/trainer to the new attendants. It was agreed that the group would review the possibility of making an additional principal payment at its December 2005 meeting. Nat reported that the interest rate on the loan is in the 6%+ area and agreed that he would present the adjustable rate with his monthly Treasurer's Report in the future.

Rick presented his review of the Sign Book, City Ordinances and the NRA Design Review Application. He noted that the DRA allows more signage than the Sign Book truly allows. Mary Lou noted that the Sign Book was created from the Urban Renewal Plan which is no longer in effect, and Rick noted that Zoning never refers to the Urban Renewal Plan. Rick presented a chart indicating that the DRA allows 2-3 times the amount of signage allowed

within the regulations of the Sign Book. Nat asked if the NRA had the authority to update the regulations, and Rick noted that the NRA can propose changes to the City. Nat said he was in favor of updating the sign regulations. Another brief discussion of enforcement challenges ensued and Mary Lou and Jan pointed out that most people don't intend to violate the regulations, but regulators need to make it "easy" enough for people to do the right thing. Erford suggested that the regulations should be tightened up to better reflect and come closer to the City Ordinances. Rick suggested that he and Mary Lou work on redesigning the DRA and then ask to meeting with Planning and Development Committee of the City Council in order to obtain greater conformity within the downtown business district. When asked, Rick reported that there are no other conflicts between the DRA and the Sign Book. It was agreed that the Sign Book is not necessary if the DRA properly reflects the regulations under City Ordinances and NRA regulations.

Mary Lou distributed a parking lot usage report and it was agreed that she and Marie would continue to count over the next few weeks at 10:00 a.m. and 2:00 p.m., as the intention is to determine the demand for parking in the NRA lots.

Carol Powers stated that the group should hold on further discussion of the proposed Deed Restrictions until the Survey is complete and all agreed.

Regarding the Survey, Jan noted that the group should begin to layout its thinking on parking lot usage and asked who is going to write the survey questions in time to be reviewed at the December NRA meeting. Mary Lou reported that the Mayor had contacted UNH and asked them to do the research and draft the Survey. Dorr & Whittier is preparing a drawing of the parking structure and a description of the costs and funding. Mary Lou noted that once the group has the drawings, it could lay out the accompanying parking usage numbers and provide that information to UNH. It was agreed that in a separate meeting, the NRA will meet with the Planning Department. Mary Lou stated that the NRA needs all of the information pulled together for the October meeting and then will schedule an interim meeting for information review.

The group reviewed the schedule of upcoming meetings and the potential conflicts with the holidays. It was agreed to meeting on October 26, November 30 and December 21.

Motion made and seconded: To adjourn the meeting at 8:15 p.m. This motion was passed unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,

Diana J. Lord, Recorder