

Newburyport Redevelopment Authority

City Hall Auditorium

May 14, 2019

Minutes

1. Call to Order

Acting Chair Andy Sidford called a meeting of the Newburyport Redevelopment Authority to order at 7:00 p.m.

2. Roll Call

In attendance were members Leslie Eckholdt, Andy Sidford, David St. Cyr and Rich Person.

3. Board Elections

Leslie Eckholdt nominated Andy Sidford for the position of chair and David St. Cyr for the position of vice chair. Rich Person seconded the motion. The motion was unanimously approved.

4. Dumpster and Recycling Enclosure

David St. Cyr reported the environmental impact study has been completed. The pad for the dumpsters is to be installed by the end of the month. If soil from a depth greater than one foot were to be disturbed, it would be required that it be removed from the site and disposed of properly. This would not be necessary, however, because soil would be added to the area before the pad would be installed. Soil would be removed from holes dug for the posts for the enclosure and would be deposited in drums for disposal. The dumpsters and their enclosure should be in place by the end of June. The neighbors have requested that the dumpsters be located eight feet closer to the water than had been proposed. This would be acceptable provided it would not impact the area for which the future location of the bike path is planned. A quote will be obtained for the cost to plant trees to screen the enclosure. The plant materials selected should be low enough that they would not block views of the river.

5. Central Waterfront Parcel Disposition

Legislation for the dissolution of the NRA has been filed. The NRA shall carry on with its business until the legislation has been passed and signed by the Governor. The Land Court has not yet taken action on Parcel C, which is still in the name of the prior owner. Leslie Eckholdt said the survey should be recorded, as it has been completed and describes the existing conditions. She also said she would like the ownership of Somerby's Way to be conveyed to the Waterfront Trust. She believes the parcel should be unified under a single ownership. Currently the NRA owns 75% of the way and the WFT owns the remaining 25%. Kathleen O'Donnell responded that the way is not a defined parcel and some it is registered land. Planning Board approval would be needed and the process would be an expensive one. It would be preferable to grant an easement or license to the Waterfront Trust for the maintenance of the way. This process would be less costly and would not require Planning Board approval. Andy Sidford added he would not like to take any action at this time because the situation is in flux. The number of parking spaces that would be removed from the west lot and the design of the park is not yet known. The Waterfront Trust currently has a MOU

with the NRA for the maintenance of the way, which would likely terminate with the dissolution of the Authority, as opposed to being transferred to the City.

Leslie Eckholdt moved to convey the submerged tidelands jointly to the City and the Waterfront Trust. Andy Sidford seconded the motion. Joint ownership was not included in the text of Order 24. The text indicates that all of the NRA property would be transferred exclusively to the City. A lengthy discussion on the issue took place. Mayor Holaday requested that the action be delayed until the June 11 meeting of the NRA. She said that while joint ownership is the intention of the City, the purpose behind the language of the order is that the City would be able to obtain grants for the construction of the park that would not be available to the Waterfront Trust. She requested that action not be taken on the conveyance until after the City Council meeting on May 28. Rich Person said he would not be comfortable with conveying the property without City Council first being made aware of the NRA's intention to take this action. He said the City has been good about maintaining its obligations. Grace Connolly spoke in favor of a vote being taken immediately to convey the tidelands. She said it was contemplated in the 1992 revision of the Trust document that the Waterfront Trust would receive income from the docks to order to support the waterfront park. Andy Sidford said the interest of the NRA has been in the construction of an expanded park and he is concerned some City Council members might have other priorities, such as parking revenue. He wants the vote to be taken before the NRA is dissolved. Some concern was expressed that the Governor might sign the legislation before the next NRA meeting. Several suggestions were made, such as amending Order 24 to include joint ownership or voting on the conveyance but not recording it until City Council has been notified. It was also suggested that a special NRA meeting might take place immediately after the next City Council meeting. It is unlikely the legislation would pass within this timeframe. Leslie Eckholdt withdrew her motion.

Andy Sidford moved to authorize Kathleen O'Donnell to draft a letter indicating the intention of the NRA to convey the submerged tidelands jointly to the City and the Waterfront Trust and to schedule a special meeting of the NRA for Wednesday, May 29. Leslie Eckholdt seconded the motion. David St. Cyr said he would reluctantly vote in favor of the motion. He said it would only serve to delay to the expected outcome. The motion was unanimously approved.

6. Park Use Applications

The Merrohawke Nature School will be hosting a touch-a-boat event on Saturday, June 1 from 10:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. Boats from many organizations would be on display during the family-oriented event. Food trucks would be parked in the west lot and vendors would be set up in the east lot. Insurance information has been submitted. Andy Sidford moved to approve the application. Leslie Eckholdt seconded the motion. The motion was unanimously approved.

7. Treasurer's Report

Leslie Eckholdt reported that on April 30 the balance in the money market account was \$428,800.41 and the balance in the checking account was \$8,272.73. Andy Sidford moved to approve the payment of invoices from MA Department of Environmental Protection in the amount of \$2,455; Cicoria Tree Service in the amount of \$1,800; the

Newburyport Redevelopment Authority
May 14, 2019

Waterfront Trust for the NRA's share of the park manager's salary for January through March in the amount of \$2,579.62; Gretchen Joy for minute taking for the May 14 meeting in the amount of \$150; for Leslie Eckholdt in the amount of \$17.25 for copying and Tom and Gretchen Joy for PUP maintenance and supplies in the amount \$600 for March 1 to April 7, \$765.89 for April 9 to May 11, \$1,326 for May 19 to August 15 and \$120 for the sanding and staining of the picnic tables. David St. Cyr seconded the motion. The motion was unanimously approved.

8. Minutes

David St. Cyr moved to approve the minutes of the March 12, 2019, meeting as submitted. Andy Sidford seconded the motion. The motion was unanimously approved.

9. Adjournment

Andy Sidford moved to adjourn the meeting at 8:40 p.m. David St. Cyr seconded the motion. The motion was unanimously approved. A special meeting of the NRA will be scheduled for Wednesday, May 29, 2019.