

Newburyport Redevelopment Authority
City Hall Auditorium
August 13, 2019
Minutes

1. Call to Order

Chair Andy Sidford called a meeting of the Newburyport Redevelopment Authority to order at 7:07 p.m.

2. Roll Call

In attendance were members Leslie Eckholdt, Andy Sidford, David Tibbetts and Rich Person. Patty Moore was absent. Attorney Kathleen O'Donnell participated by telephone.

3. Dumpster and Recycling Enclosure

Rich Person said that the trash left outside the dumpster has been the subject of many complaints and does not reflect well on the city. He contacted the Firehouse about the matter and asked that the restaurant employees be directed to put the trash in the dumpster. The enclosure has been completed except for the door, which will be installed shortly. The soils were transported off site. The planting of shrubs to screen the enclosure remains to be done.

4. Central Waterfront Parcel Disposition

The deed for a parcel of registered land behind the Custom House had been under the name of the previous owner. The title has been corrected and the parcel can now be transferred to the City as intended. Andy Sidford moved to approve the transfer of the ownership of Lot C to the City of Newburyport and to authorize the chair to sign the deed. Rich Person seconded the motion. The motion was unanimously approved.

5. Plan to Limit Parking on the Central Waterfront

Planning Director Andy Port said an objective of the City has been to remove parking from the central waterfront upon the completion of the parking garage. Approximately 30 spaces would be removed from the NRA's west lot and 90 from its east lot in the area that would be the future location of the expanded park. He said it would be necessary to remove the spaces at this time in order to provide an accurate reflection of the conditions for a parking study that is to take place in September. The action would also indicate to residents that an expansion of the park is being taking place and to ready them for a new parking pattern. Mr. Port said the City Council is working on an order that would allow permit holders to park in the garage. Mayor Holiday said the Parks Commission has been asked to design "pop up parks" for the areas from which the parking is to be removed.

Andy Sidford commented that the removal of parking from the waterfront has been a goal of the NRA. The NRA intended to continue receiving parking revenue in order to provide funding for the expansion of the park. He said he could accept the removal of parking from the west lot but thinks the spaces in the east lot should only be closed off for the duration of the study. Leslie Eckholdt said she does not buy the argument that the public must begin to get used to new traffic pattern at this time. She said the NRA would not lose a great deal of revenue from the west lot because it is

mostly used by permit holders, but not all who park there would wish to be forced into the garage before the park has been constructed. David Tibbetts and Rich Person said they support the plan to remove the parking spaces.

The meeting was opened to comments from the public. Bill Harris, 56 Lime Street, said the Public Settlers expect the park design to include six ways to the waterfront. Peter Fitzsimmons, 7 Arlington Street, said he does not see a benefit to the proposal. The area could be roped off for the duration of the parking study. He said the parking revenue could be used to fund the new park and the parking should not be removed until the contracts for its construction have been signed. Jane Snow, 9 Coffin Street, said business employees are concerned about the spaces being removed and the changes are frustrating to residents. The spaces that would be removed include those near the boardwalk, which are important to seniors and others with mobility issues. She said the use of the spaces should only be eliminated for the duration of the parking study. Mary Fitzsimmons, 7 Arlington Street, said the removal of parking is premature and the spaces should be retained until the time the new park is to be constructed. Jim McCauley, 27 Storeybrooke Road, said parking should be reduced in phases. The NRA should be receiving parking revenue until the time the home rule petition passes.

David Tibbetts moved to agree to eliminate parking spaces from the east and west lots according to the plan proposed by the City. Leslie Eckholdt seconded the motion. The motion was unanimously approved.

6. Open Meeting Complaint

No new information has been received about the complaint filed by the City that the NRA violated the open meeting law.

7. Treasurer's Report

Leslie Eckholdt reported that on July 31 the balance in the money market account was \$417,400.09 and the balance in the checking account was \$11,619.64. The balances do not reflect checks totaling approximately \$49,000 that have been received but have not yet deposited.

Andy Sidford moved to approve payments to the Waterfront Trust in the amount of \$1,043.82 for the monthly park maintenance agreement; Gretchen Joy in the amount of \$165 for minute taking for the August 13 meeting; Atlantic Fence in the amount of \$200 and Tom and Gretchen Joy for Pop Up Park maintenance between Labor Day and Columbus Day in the amount of \$495. Rich Person seconded the motion. The motion was unanimously approved.

8. Park Use Applications

None

9. Minutes

Rich Person moved to approve the minutes of the July 15, 2019 meeting. Andy Sidford seconded the motion. The motion was unanimously approved.

10. Public Comment

Bill Harris said the Custom House is preparing an exhibit on the NRA for November and is seeking photographs from 2015 to the present.

11. Adjournment

Andy Sidford moved to adjourn the meeting at 8:25 p.m. Leslie Eckholdt seconded the motion. The motion was unanimously approved.