

A work session meeting of the Astoria Common Council was held at the above place at the hour of 6:00 pm.

Councilors Present: Nemlowill, Herzig, Warr, Price, Mayor LaMear

Councilors Excused: None

Staff Present: City Manager Estes, Police Chief Johnston, Community Development Director Cronin, Planner Ferber, Parks and Recreation Director Cosby, Finance Director Brooks, Fire Chief Ames, Library Director Tucker, Public Works Director Cook, and City Attorney Henningsgaard. The meeting is recorded and will be transcribed by ABC Transcription Services, Inc.

### **PARKS MASTER PLAN UPDATE**

Draft findings from the Parks and Recreation Comprehensive Master Plan will be presented including key takeaways from the Plan's community profile, level of service analysis, needs assessment, and recommendations. City Council will have an opportunity to provide feedback on these findings. The draft Plan will continue to be refined through input from the project's Citizen Advisory Committee, Parks Advisory Board, and the public in advance of a May 16 City Council Work Session. Project staff will also discuss the upcoming public input opportunities and next steps toward completion of the Plan.

Ian Sisson, 1263 Commercial Street, Astoria, stated upcoming community input sessions were scheduled as follows:

- Wednesday, April 6, 2016 at Fort George Lovell Showroom from 5:00 pm to 7:00 pm
- Thursday, April 7, 2016 at Street 14 from 7:00 am to 10:00 am
- Saturday, April 9, 2016 at Old Town Framing from 5:00 pm to 8:00 pm

He presented the Parks Master Plan Update via Power Point and confirmed that altogether over 1200 people had provided input to the master planning process through various means.

Councilor Price said she wanted to know the income disparity between park users and Astorians, adding she was impressed with the work that had been done so far. Mr. Sisson stated that 70 percent of the survey respondents had a household income of over \$50,000 and the median income for Astorians is \$45,000.

City Manager Estes noted that City Council's review of the Parks Master Plan was only tentatively scheduled for May 16th because Council would also discuss the findings of the library study at that same work session. It is possible that a separate meeting would be scheduled to discuss the Parks Master Plan.

Councilor Nemlowill thanked Mayor LaMear for appointing the members of the Citizen Advisory Committee (CAC), which includes herself, a mother, the superintendent of Lewis and Clark National Park, a Department of Land Conservation and Development (DLCD) representative, and a former member of the Parks Advisory Board. The process has been exemplary and Staff has set the bar high for planning processes in Astoria.

Councilor Herzig said the City has already benefited from the new point of sale system. He was concerned about duplicating services and asked if the City has discussed the future of Patriot Hall with Clatsop Community College (CCC). Because Patriot Hall was funded through a bond measure, he was not sure how much Astorians would be able to use the facility. Director Cosby confirmed that Staff began communicating with the CCC before they went out for the bond and the City and college do not want to duplicate services. The college kept this in mind as they purchased exercise equipment. Councilor Nemlowill added the Master Plan recommends that duplication of services should be avoided.

Mr. Sisson passed out flyers advertising the open houses.

Mayor LaMear said Staff had done a magnificent job and the Master Plan would make the Parks Department better than it already is.

## **WATERFRONT BRIDGES PROJECT – UPDATE AND FUNDING DISCUSSION**

The Waterfront Bridges Replacement Project is currently in the preliminary design phase and the project team has been gathering data, coordinating with stakeholders and developing construction strategies. During this process, it has become apparent that there is a need to request additional funding from the Oregon Department of Transportation (ODOT) Local Bridge Group for a number of different reasons including deep bedrock and accommodating rail loads. Staff will present several issues for discussion during the Council work session. Please refer to the memo for the associated regular agenda item for more information.

City Manager Estes noted that this discussion correlated to a Regular Agenda Item of the regular session City Council meeting, which would require a motion.

City Engineer Cindy Moore and City Attorney Henningsgaard presented an update on the Waterfront Bridges Project via Power Point.

Councilor Warr asked how many areas between Astoria and Wauna would not support the level of rail traffic being discussed. Engineer Moore said a lot of work would need to be done along most of the route. The City would be using modern materials like steel piles with concrete decks. Much of the trestle going east is wooden, which could be retrofitted or modified easier than stone and concrete. Councilor Warr believed it would cost about \$100 million to upgrade the rails from one hour west of Clatskanie to Astoria to a standard that could accommodate freight.

Councilor Nemlowill asked what other potential uses, besides freight, would need a higher standard than the current uses. Engineer Moore explained that Staff was planning for 100 years into the future. The City was not aware of any other users at that time and it would be difficult to anticipate who might want to use Astoria's facilities in the future. She was not referring to any specific use.

Councilor Herzig confirmed that a passenger train was considered a use between freight and Astoria's current use. He believed a passenger train from inland out to the coast would be good for the economy. He wanted to know how much of the annual \$100,000 Surface Transportation Program (STP) funds were being spent each year. Engineer Moore said the City used STP funds as a match for the Franklin and Irving Bridges and over the last nine years, all of the available funds have been used.

Councilor Herzig said STP funds are not used for annual maintenance and confirmed that this project would be the fund's primary use. He also understood that the bedrock was deeper than anticipated.

Councilor Price asked if Staff anticipated needing STP funds for other future projects. Engineer Moore said no, she understood Staff planned to use STP funds for bridge matches. However, the match for the Irving Bridge project resulted in a funding gap that would provide additional funds for the Highway 202 sidewalk project before the Waterfront Bridges project begins.

Councilor Price asked how the design could be modified. Engineer Moore explained that the design team could design the details of the project so that it could be upgraded. This would require more piles and ensuring the location of each pile is cleared of utilities or anything else that might be in the way. The design team would also have to consider the depth of the piles. Currently, design and construction costs are estimated to be nominal and modifying the design could be a great option.

Councilor Price asked if a lot of the wood planking needed to be replaced with concrete. She also wanted to know what business owners along the waterfront thought about the aesthetics of concrete because the wood adds character to the area. Engineer Moore confirmed Staff is considering ways to minimize the difference between wood and concrete. Concrete requires the least maintenance and lasts the longest, so Staff does not plan to use wood. Councilor Price said she spoke to a number of business owners at the public meeting who were happy that the wood planks would be removed. Business owners, tourists, and residents like the wood because they make up the original character of the rail bed, but it is very difficult to maintain and is dangerous. She asked if Staff had spoken with the Port. It did not appear as if freight was currently planned for the Port or for Astoria and passenger rail has always stopped east of the project area. City Manager Estes said he and Engineer Moore had spoken to the Port's Director Jim Knight, who indicated the Port's focus on freight had been in the Tongue Point area. Mr. Knight had said he could not see freight rail returning to Piers 1, 2, and 3 because

the dead end spurs do not provide a way for trains to turn around, and nor is there enough room to build a turn-around.

Councilor Price asked if City Attorney Henningsgaard was confident that the advice he received about easement issues from an attorney in Seattle was good, if the attorney had precedence in this case, and if Astoria had a good relationship with Rails to Trails. City Attorney Henningsgaard said there are almost 200 Rail-to-Trail projects in the United States and only two of those have ever reverted to rail. Therefore, there is not a lot of precedent to find out how those agreements will be interpreted or what the Service Transportation Board would do. He was confident that this project would not be in violation of the Rails-to-Trails agreement and the attorney in Seattle was confident that the Service Transportation Board would not reject this type of improvement. He did not believe the bridges were sufficient to sustain rail traffic at this time. Therefore, replacing the bridges with something less would not be a violation of the easement. He confirmed that Astoria would not need to get permission from the board; however, because the board is a federal agency, they could interject to protect the national rail system. City Manager Estes added that Mr. Montange had represented Astoria in the past when the City approved leases with breweries that placed grain tanks on railways.

Councilor Herzig suggested the lumber could be salvaged if it were not too toxic. He confirmed the pile driving had to be done in the winter to avoid disturbing marine life. City Engineer Moore added that Staff would update City Council in May on the timeline and feedback received at the public meeting.

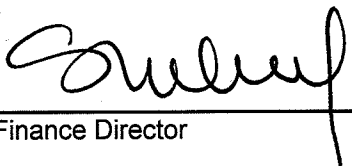
Mayor LaMear said it was difficult to predict what would happen in 75 or 100 years. She liked the option of asking Oregon Department of Transportation (ODOT) to look at both funding strategies. If ODOT is willing to fund a heavier weight load, it might be worthwhile. It would be nice to get passenger trains back in Astoria.

City Manager Estes reminded that City Council would need to provide direction to Staff in a motion during discussion of the corresponding Regular Agenda Item in the regular session meeting.


#### **ADJOURNMENT**

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 7:01 pm to convene the regular session Astoria City Council meeting.

**ATTEST:**

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Finance Director

**APPROVED:**

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
City Manager