

A work session of the Astoria Common Council was held at the above place at the hour of 5:30 pm.

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

Councilors Excused: None

Staff Present: City Manager Estes, Assistant City Manager/Police Chief Johnston, Community Development Director Cronin, 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.

PRESENTATION – RELOCATION OF COXCOMB HILL COMMUNICATIONS FACILITIES

City Manager Estes noted two items on the agenda for the regular session City Council meeting were related to the relocation of the Coxcomb Hill communications facilities and he encouraged Council to ask questions during the presentation.

Assistant City Manager/Police Chief Johnston said Staff is working to support a 2013 City Council Goal to complete emergency communication systems, which included the removal of the tower on Coxcomb Hill in Astor Park. He gave a PowerPoint presentation that reviewed the history of the tower at Astor Park and the City Council goal to remove the tower. Key comments from his presentation were as follows:

- The site made sense when the tower was built in 1989 because not much attention was given to the park at that time. The tower improved communications by combining several pieces of ad hoc equipment on to one facility.
 - A few years later, GTE Mobile, now Verizon Wireless, added 20 feet to the height of the tower, installed their equipment and a building, then turned ownership of the tower back over to the City, which retains ownership of the tower.
 - In years following, communication systems needs changed as the City's equipment had to be relocated from a water tower, upgraded after the 2007 storm, and because Verizon added equipment to the tower that significantly impacted the structural integrity of the tower.
 - In 2008, Verizon wanted to replace Omni antennae with 4G panel antennas. Structural analysis and intermodulation studies indicated the City had some conflicts with the public safety radio systems and the tower could not be upgraded to handle the excessive weight of the new equipment. Therefore, a new tower would be necessary.
 - The County communications committee significantly upgraded communications infrastructure with grant funds. Sites were diversified and all of the sites except one were connected.
 - Federal funding allowed Astoria to build a radio site at Skyline to diversify the equipment on Coxcomb Hill.
- Currently, Coxcomb Hill is the only site that has not been upgraded. The tower is over capacity, cannot be updated, and cannot house all of the City's equipment. The generator was not built to handle network communication systems.
 - In 2013, City Council rejected Staff's proposal to allow Verizon to build a large monopole just north of the existing tower and directed Staff to get Verizon to move their equipment.
 - The Friends of the Astoria Column hired Converge Communications to develop a solution that would satisfy both the City and Verizon.

Marsha Spellman, Converge Communications, introduced herself and the team of people who worked for and with Converge on this project. She gave a brief history of Converge and explained how the company helps public entities build telecommunications networks.

Adam Haas, Converge Communications, noted that as an independent consultant, Converge is unaffiliated with wireless telecommunications providers and hardware providers. He described how Converge worked with the Friends, the City, and Verizon to negotiate a solution that would accommodate each party's needs, noting the

considerations and steps taken that led Converge to make the proposed recommendations. Converge has recommended the Reservoir Ridge site because:

- The location is secure because it is away from people.
- It provides excellent coverage for public safety radio.
- Power is only half a mile away.
- The site is easy to develop.
- However, because this site does not provide Verizon with adequate coverage, Converge also recommended towers be installed at the Astor Hotel and Shively Park. Communication facilities at all three sites are necessary to make this plan work. Benefits to the City and community include improved public safety communications and improved 3G and 4G mobile broadband coverage for Verizon customers.
- The City will also have a brand new and secure tower with future expansion capabilities. Benefits to the City include obtaining revenue to the City from each site and [35:06] all of the following will be done at no cost to the City:
 - All equipment will be moved from Coxcomb Hill to the Reservoir Ridge tower.
 - A new radio shelter with a generator will be installed.
 - Existing tenants on the tower will be moved to new tower at no cost to tenants or the City.
 - The site at Coxcomb Hill will be restored.
- At the end of the lease, ownership of the Reservoir Ridge tower reverts back to the City at the City's option. Astoria will have critical public safety radio equipment on the tower and the City can retain its capabilities if Verizon decides to move their equipment or not to renew the lease.

Councilor Price asked if the negotiations included a discussion about Verizon providing citywide Wi-Fi, whether the City contracts with Verizon for services, and whether the City is contractually obligated to use Verizon for a specified amount of time in exchange for this arrangement. Director Johnston did not believe Verizon provided Wi-Fi. Several years ago, the City informally considered Wi-Fi as a public utility. He confirmed that the City uses Verizon as a provider of cell phones and data services on police vehicles, but the City is not obligated to purchase services from them for any amount of time. The City piggybacks on the State's contract for services through the Oregon Cooperative Purchasing Program.

Councilor Nemlowill thanked Converge for putting so much work into negotiating with Verizon. She found it interesting that City Council directed Staff to find a location other than Coxcomb Hill, but it was the Friends that hired Converge. She questioned whether the goals and outcome would have been different if the City had hired Converge directly, noting that the Friends goal was to move the tower from Coxcomb Hill. She found it difficult to move the tower from one City park to another and asked Converge to respond.

Ms. Spellman explained that Converge was only hired by the Friends and therefore did not have any input into what the Friends decided. She believed public safety was the most important consideration. Verizon would have been happy to keep their equipment on Coxcomb Hill and have a bigger tower. When it comes to public safety for the City, there is no comparison to Coxcomb Hill because the tower is so much higher and provides much better coverage for public safety. Once Verizon realized how serious Astoria was about moving communications off Coxcomb Hill, they agreed to help develop another plan.

City Manager Estes added that when City Council directed Staff to remove the tower at Coxcomb Hill, the City and the Friends had the same goal. Throughout the entire process, City Staff worked with Converge in an attempt to complete the task assigned to them by Council. Therefore, he believed the outcome would have been the same if the City had contracted with Converge. Director Johnson said geography was the number one factor in site considerations. The terrain dictated where the equipment would need to be installed. While Converge was under contract with the Friends, they consulted with City Staff throughout the process because Staff had the local knowledge they needed to draw from. The City, the Friends, and Converge were all headed in the same direction. Staff was sure that Verizon was not ready to move their equipment, but Converge provided a more open-minded approach and a wider spectrum of possibilities.

David Olson, former Cable and Franchise Director, City of Portland, said he worked with the City and the Friends from April 2013 until Converge was hired in July. On his advice, the Friends decided to seek out a technical solution that would help Verizon clearly understand that the City, the Friends, and the community needed and wanted the tower removed from Coxcomb Hill. City Staff participated in the interviews of respondents to the RFP. He agreed with Staff that selecting Converge was the right choice.

Councilor Herzig believed City Council had issues with this process because it was initiated by a former Council. This Council has only received small reports from Staff, but no regular updates on the process.

Ms. Spellman noted that telecommunications issues are very complicated. Issues are based on engineering and technology, but people are more concerned about the hill. She could talk for a long time about the benefits to the City of 4G. However, Converge is simply trying to find a solution. She appreciated that this issue was new to City Council. While Converge was engaged by the Friends, they have worked hand in hand with City Staff. Converge's work with the Friends just consisted of sending them monthly reports, but Converge worked with City Staff on a day-to-day basis.

Councilor Herzig said the Friends did not forward those monthly reports to City Council. He also found it hard to believe that the site on the south slope was the only adequate location for the tower.

Mr. Haas responded that physically, a tower could be placed in many locations, like a residential neighborhood or a public right-of-way. Putting a tower in a park is not an ideal situation. However, fortunately or unfortunately, there is tremendous demand for wireless services. He understood there were sensitivities to using Shively Park, but the location is ideal because it is so unobtrusive. Verizon originally wanted the tower at the top because it provided the best coverage. However, this would have been terribly disruptive. The tower will be a monopole with very little equipment on it, compared to what would be necessary if a new tower were built at Coxcomb Hill. He understood the perception was that a problem was simply being moved from one park to another. However, putting a monopole at Shively Park is the lesser of two evils. While cell sites are getting smaller, more sites are necessary. This type of telecommunication infrastructure, just like roads, water, and power, is needed in this community because it facilitates commerce, education, and all kinds of things that rely on wireless connections. This solution is a trade-off. After considering other sites and working with Verizon, Converge believes Shively Park is the best alternative for the third site.

Mayor LaMear asked if the 6-foot dish would remain on the Verizon tower at the caretaker's home. Mr. Haas said the dish would be moved on the new tower at the Reservoir Ridge because the tower will be able to handle the weight, as well as public safety equipment. This will address both current and future needs. Director Johnston added the tower at Shively Park would be at the back corner near the edge of the urban forest, not at the entrance like at Astor Park.

Councilor Nemlowill said Director Johnston mentioned but did not go into detail about the significant impact this would have on public safety. She asked how this plan would impact public safety communications in an event like the storm of 2007. Director Johnston explained that in 2007, Staff could not get to the tower to find out why it failed and they were worried fallen trees had caused the problems. This situation will not occur at the Reservoir Ridge because trees will not be planted near the tower. The City will have the ability to connect anywhere because the Reservoir Ridge has a remarkable line of sight to all of Astoria's communications sites, with the possible exception of Cathlamet due to distance. The site will provide pristine radio frequency coverage without interference and good vertical separation between antennas, eliminating the need for so much filtering. The Police Department will be able to link directly to the site, instead of connecting to Coxcomb through the fiber installed on telephone poles, which could be disabled by an automobile accident. The new communications shed is necessary because the existing building cannot be retrofitted to accommodate current needs.

Councilor Price said her constituents are concerned about the need for a pole in Shively Park and the City's reimbursement to the Friends for Converge's services. She wanted to know how the City went from not having the funds for this to reimbursing tens of thousands of dollars. City Manager Estes explained that initially, the Friends agreed to hire a consultant through the RFP process with the assistance of City Staff. At the last City Council meeting of 2014, former Mayor Van Dusen stated he hoped the City of Astoria would reimburse the Friends for the work completed by Converge. The reimbursement was proposed and approved by Council in the spring of 2015. Director Johnston said there was never any intent to get around public contracting laws. The Friends hired Converge and by the end of the project, it became apparent that the work done by Converge largely benefited the City much more so than the Friends. The expense also prevented the Friends from doing other work.

Councilor Herzig said people are troubled that the City never had a formal agreement with the Friends. While the former Mayor asked Council to consider the reimbursement, nothing was formalized until Council was asked to approve the \$50,000 or \$60,000 payment to the Friends. The issue is water under the bridge now. However, in

the future, the City needs to make sure that the party responsible for the bill is understood when partnering with an entity that will hire a third party.

Councilor Warr and Mayor LaMear thanked Converge for their help.

RECESS TO EXECUTIVE SESSION

Item 4(a): ORS 192.660(2)(e) – Real Property Transactions

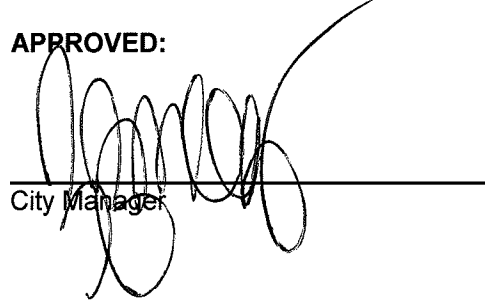
The work session was recessed at 6:30 pm to convene the Executive Session of the Astoria City Council.

ATTEST:

APPROVED:



Finance Director



City Manager