

A joint work session of the Astoria Common Council and the Astoria Library Board was held at the above place at the hour of 6:00 p.m.

Councilors Present: LaMear, Herzig, Warr, Mellin, Mayor Van Dusen

Library Board Members Present: Chairman David Oser, Iliana Arroyo, Gregory Lumbrá. Susan Brooks arrived at [Unknown]. (Arlene LaMear)

Staff Present: Community Development Director/Assistant City Manager Estes, Library Director Tucker, and Parks and Recreation Director Cosby. The meeting is recorded and will be transcribed by ABC Transcription Services, Inc.

Director Tucker introduced Astor Library Friends Association (ALFA) members: Steve Emmons, President; Pat Staton Thomas, and Nick Benes; as well as Jennifer Holen and Beth LaFleur, who were instrumental during the stakeholder and public meetings.

Mayor Van Dusen noted that the following presentation was the first step of this project. He confirmed the Council had no questions and comments. He added that he believed all options should be considered to avoid being locked into one direction. He introduced Artist Noel Thomas, also present in the audience.

## **PRESENTATIONS**

### **Item 3 (a): Astoria Public Library Renovation Study Report**

The Astoria City Council and Library Board will meet in a joint work session to review and discuss the Astoria Public Library Renovation Study Report. This item will be further discussed under Item 6(a) during the City Council's regular session on January 6, 2014.

Director Tucker introduced Ruth Metz of Ruth Metz Associates, who developed the Needs Assessment and Troy Ainsworth of FFA Architecture, who developed the Cost Estimate. She noted Kathryn Page of Page and Morris developed the Building Program and Lucien Kress of Kress Consulting, provided his expertise as the library internet technology consultant.

Chairman Oser, 254 West Irving, Astoria, thanked the City Council for their support as the project moves forward.

Ruth Metz, Ruth Metz Associates, 17335 NW Lucy Reeder Road, Portland, OR, said that the consultant team appreciated the opportunity to work on this project and enjoyed working with Staff, City Council and the Library Board. She briefly presented the Needs Assessment via PowerPoint and explained how the Needs Assessment was created through extensive public outreach and input. The findings in the Building Program, a detailed description of what the attractive, affordable, sustainable Astoria library would contain, were taken from the Needs Assessment. The Building Program includes mid-range service levels to accommodate reasonable funding and operating costs and attempts to meet the needs of the community into the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Technologies and functionality that would make the library as efficient as possible were incorporated in an effort to meet those needs while keeping operating costs low. The Renovation Study revealed that the new library would need 18,122 square feet.

- In response to community input, the study considered a library expansion that would include the use of the Waldorf Hotel property as an additional option. The consultant team recommended this option because it would allow for more efficient operational costs, more of the aesthetic qualities desired by the community, and a 200-seat community room, which is larger than the community room suggested in the Building Program. Meeting space is a key feature needed for programs.

Troy Ainsworth, 10425 SW 137<sup>th</sup> Place, Beaverton, OR, explained that the Cost Estimate is based on the information developed thus far regarding square footage and general needs. He explained how the Cost

Estimate was developed using a database of past work with more than 40 libraries and feedback from contractors and other consultants. The budget is estimated to be between \$4.6 and \$4.8 million for the project cost, which includes a comprehensive renovation of the existing building, partial rehabilitation of the existing basement, and expansion to the Waldorf site. This Cost Estimate does not include demolition of the Waldorf, site preparation of the Waldorf space, technology, systems and equipment, updates or expansion of the library collections, or public art. Build out of the entire basement is also not included in this Cost Estimate because about half of the basement is not needed to fulfill the Building Program. This area would not necessarily be used as public space.

- He showed details of one option to complete the project in phases, which suggests that a 5,000 square foot expansion be built first on the Waldorf site and the existing library left as is. Estimated direct construction costs for the first phase would be about \$1.3 million with indirect costs of about \$125,000. All new furniture, fixtures and equipment are estimated to cost about \$130,000, for a total project estimate of \$1,755,000. This estimate excludes costs related to the purchase and preparation of the Waldorf site. As time passes and construction costs continue to increase, 4 to 6 percent would be added to the estimate annually.

Ms. Metz discussed feasibility, noting that other library communities have succeeded at completing similar projects. The Astoria Library had a good start with a gift [Logan Memorial Fund/misnamed endowment fund] that is an attractive match for other funding options. Generally, a library foundation is usually created for projects like this; although, not having a foundation can be a good thing because a new foundation could mobilize itself around the capital campaign project. This project may take a while, but with a community leader for the community to mobilize around and support the project, it is achievable. The study notes the importance of thinking through the phasing process so that funding goals and timelines for each phase can be established.

Chairman Oser noted that Ms. Metz and her team really took time to listen to the people of Astoria. The work done by Metz and Associates was outstanding and the team's conclusions really captured the sense of what the people of Astoria really want: a modern, up-to-date library that is an essential part of the City of Astoria. The Library Board, as an advisory board to City Council, unanimously approved the following of recommendations:

- The recommended 18,000 square footage requirement is appropriate for Astoria.
- To accommodate more square footage and operate more efficiently, the lateral option of expanding to the Waldorf space is the best option.
- Implementing the entire plan at once is cost prohibitive at this time, so the Board recommends the work be done in phases.
  - The first phase would be the demolition and reconstruction of the Waldorf space, which would be connected to the existing library building and as work progresses in the older space, the newer space will be used to keep the library in one place and operating continuously.
  - The Board recommends that a new children's center and meeting spaces be included in the first phase, which best meets existing needs to serve the children who are have a very small space now, and to provide additional space for adults and students as well. As the renovation continues, the children's center and meeting spaces may be moved, but these two functions are critical.
  - In response to the community's request, the Board will express to planners and architects that the renovated library be filled with natural light. Ideally, the first phase would include installing glass panels in the north wall to get light all year round.
- By focusing on a lateral option and adding more light, an attractive fundraising plan can be created to raise funds relatively quickly. No fundraising structure currently exists, but the Board will work hard to establish such a structure. The Board's work will not stop with these recommendations.
- The Board expects that the initial phasing will serve as a springboard for the renovation of the entire library. The existing building is obsolescent with systems that no longer function properly. The building is not ADA compliant and does not fully serve the needs of the community in its current state.
- Although the Board recommends a phased approach, it supports and recommends that the entire project be brought to completion.

Councilor LaMear noted many people have asked why photos or visuals are not available and explained that the Renovation Study was meant to determine what the community wants by listening to the community in a variety of ways and then calculating what must be constructed to meet those wants and needs. Pictures will be made available later in the process, as it is too early to hire an architect. She agreed the consultant team has done a remarkable job of reflecting what the community wants.

Councilor Herzig supported the project as it is stressful simply to keep the existing library functional on a day to day basis. He expressed concern that the City might take on the cost of acquiring and demolishing the Waldorf. These expenses are not included in the Cost Estimate and he believed it would be too much for the library foundation to pay for the property and demolition of the hotel. Growing the collections of the library is a community priority, which he understood would be addressed later in the process, but wanted to mention it because it was a top need mentioned in the community survey.

Councilor Mellin believed the Needs Assessment report was delightful; the comments on the sides of the pages gave the impression that the whole community was speaking. She believed the library would have whole-hearted support because the entire community participated in the study and process.

Councilor Warr agreed with Councilor Mellin that the report was done well. He did not want to sound non-supportive, but was concerned that the first phase would cost closer to \$2.5 million, rather than the \$1.3 million suggested in the Cost Estimate. He asked if \$2.5 million is an appropriate estimate after adding the cost of acquiring the Waldorf site, demolishing the building, and preparing the site for construction. Mr. Ainsworth replied he did not estimate the costs associated with the Waldorf site off the cuff, but agreed the Waldorf should be accounted for and a target amount determined for fundraising.

Councilor Warr noted that most reading and research in America is being done electronically through the internet and asked if increasing the library's collection is justified. Ms. Metz explained this issue is being debated nationwide, yet libraries are being built bigger than they were even five years ago. This community has strongly indicated that they want digital content and books for all age groups, but they also desire a richer collection, which does not necessarily need to be a great deal larger. The Astoria Library currently has 4.19 volumes per capita and the Renovation Study recommends 5.5 or 5.75 volumes per capita. It is critical to develop a collection that offers a mix of digital and physical items that meets the needs of the community.

Councilor Warr asked if there was data to show the return on investment of a larger collection. Ms. Metz reiterated that the entire library community was struggling with the e-books issue, as is the publishing industry. The King County Library System is conducting a study to develop a cost benefit analysis of e-books versus physical collections. She was confident that the recommended 18,122 square feet is accurate because the space requirements are flexible enough to accommodate the community's needs, regardless of what happens with the collections. People want to come to the library to learn in a variety of ways and as trends emerge, and this has led to the trend towards building larger libraries that accommodate programs, meetings, and reading.

Gregory Lumbr, 5202 Birch Street, Astoria, added that the library is more than a place with books and magazines; other programs are integral. The library currently does not have space for children's programs. Circulation and library attendance is increasing and the library does not have the facilities to provide needed programs. He passionately believes that everything begins with literacy. If one cannot read, one cannot function in society today. Literacy begins at the library, starting with children and on up. Personality/tone

Mayor Van Dusen believed this project could be accomplished. The location, which he believed was perfect, was not included in the discussion. A renovated library would fit perfectly with the other buildings and projects along the street. He agrees there is more to a library than the books and periodicals. He supports a library with one floor and more lighting. He commented on the history of the Waldorf Hotel, adding he believes there is a better use of that site. Everyone will need to work together to spread the word that the best use of the Waldorf site is the library. With everyone working together, the project will be unstoppable and magnificent.

City Council unanimously agreed with the Library Board's proposed direction for the library renovations.

Mayor Van Dusen called for public comment from the audience.

Virginia Larson, 551 Franklin, Astoria, said she has been using the library to tutor her students and asked if the new facilities would have a place that could be used for tutoring. Her students can get loud, but the library is the only place she can accommodate her students' schedule.

Councilor LaMear said the new facility would definitely have space she could use. The community requested a variety of different sized meeting spaces for various uses. Mayor Van Dusen added the City and the school district pride themselves on having the best relationship of any municipality and school district in the state. The

City and school district share the aquatic center and library facilities, as well as other facilities, such as John Warren Field.

Pat Thomas, 592 Kensington, Astoria, said she was fortunate to be involved so early in the process. She noted one presentation showed pictures of other libraries that had been renovated, which she believed drove the requests for pictures. The library can be the core of the community; the crown jewel of everything that is happening in the community. She was thrilled to be part of the process and believed Astoria should do everything possible to complete this renovation project.

Mayor Van Dusen believed Astoria has the right product and the right process, and with the entire community working together, the money could be raised.

Beth LaFluer, 938 Kensington, Astoria, noted that the library is important to her because she has young children. She read the letter she sent to City Council earlier in the day thanking them for their anticipated support of the library renovation project. Her letter also included the history of the Junto Group, noting the word junto roughly meant that to support the common good is divine. The Junto Group was a philosophical association that started the first public library in the United States. She believes it is truly divine to support the common good by showing support for this library renovation project.


#### **ADJOURNMENT**

There being no further business, the work session was adjourned at 6:55 p.m. to convene the regular meeting of the Astoria City Council.

**ATTEST:**

**APPROVED:**

  
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Finance Director

  
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City Manager