

**Astoria Parks and Recreation Master Plan
Citizen Advisory Committee
October 29, 2015**

Director Cosby called the meeting to order at 8:00 am. She thanked the members of the committee for their service and introduced Ian Sisson, who briefly described his professional background and RARE, an AmeriCorps program administered by the University of Oregon.

Roll Call

Committee Members Present- Craig Hoppas, Ken Hageman, Jan Nybakke, Jim Holen, Scott Tucker, Ed Overbay, Patrick Wingard, Michelle Bisek, Brooke Stanley, Kassia Nye, and Zetty Nemlowill

Staff Present- Angela Cosby, Jonah Dart-McLean, and Ian Sisson

Excused/Absent- Jorge Gutierrez and Dulcye Taylor

Welcome and Introductions

- a. Ian Sisson gave a brief overview of the park system and the history of the Parks Master Plan.
- b. Mr. Sisson briefly noted the framework of the planning process and goals of updating the Plan.
- c. Mr. Sisson explained the role of Citizen Advisory Committee (CAC) is to advise Staff and recommend projects to include in the Master Plan.
- d. Committee members introduced themselves, noting which user or stakeholder group they represented and what they would like to accomplish as a committee member.
- e. To accommodate upcoming holidays, the next two CAC meetings were scheduled for November 12, 2015 and December 10, 2015. Beginning January 2016, the CAC agreed to meet on the last Thursday of each month at 8:00 am through July 2016 at the Astoria Recreation Center.

Project Overview

- a. Mr. Sisson noted the materials in the meeting packet, and reviewed the scope of the master planning project, which would include historical information about the Parks Department and previous local and regional plans, especially the Trails Master Plan; an discussion of the planning process, as well as the established mission, vision, and goals.
 - i. Significant community engagement will be achieved through CAC meetings, stakeholder interviews, focus groups, Staff interviews, public meetings and workshops, online surveys, and promotions.
 - ii. The inventory of existing conditions and analysis will include an updated and comprehensive map of parks, trails, and facilities. Existing conditions of every facet of the parks system will be evaluated, including the parks, trails, facilities, operations, administration, sustainability, maintenance, accessibility, and access.
 - iii. The needs assessment will be developed by using State benchmarks to compare Astoria's park system with other municipalities.
 - iv. The plan will also include a prioritized list of recommendations with associated costs and an implementation strategy.
 1. The recommendations will cover the list of parks, trails, open space, facilities, program offerings, maintenance, and department or system sustainability.
 2. The implementation strategy will have both short and long-term goals and will be included in a Capital Improvement Plan so funding strategies can be evaluated.
- b. The timeline for the Master Plan project is 10 months. Mr. Sisson reviewed the schedule included in the packet, noting which tasks had already been completed or started and describing the existing conditions and level of service analyses as noted in Next Steps below.
(Page 3) In February, the initial recommendations would be presented first to the CAC and

then the public. The Draft Master Plan would be presented in public meetings Spring 2016 where final input would be received from the public before the Master Plan went to Council Summer 2016.

Community Outreach

- a. Upcoming Events
 - i. Surveys will be handed out and the Input Sessions promoted at Monster Bash on October 31, 2015.
 - ii. Community Input Sessions in the Lovell Showroom at Fort George Brewery
 1. November 7, 2015 from 10:00 am to 12:00 pm
 2. November 10, 2015 from 6:00 pm to 8:00 pm
- b. Promotion and Publicity – Flyers describing the project and promoting the Community Input Sessions were provided for Committee members to distribute. Digital copies were also available.

Input, Comments, Ideas

- Staff is looking for a consultant to evaluate the sustainability of the Ocean View Cemetery over the next 100 years and make development recommendations; any related action by City Council would be an amendment to the Master Plan. Patrick Wingard, stated if Warrenton received its grant, he would ensure the cemetery was part of the focus of Warrenton's Buildable Land Inventory and that Astoria's Parks and Recreation Department is represented on the stakeholder committee. He would provide the CAC with more information in about a month.
- Doing a public transportation overlay on the Parks and Recreation Map was suggested to identify how residents and visitors could access parks and other recreational opportunities, especially without a car. Director Cosby noted more regional areas, like the Lewis & Clark National Park, would be included on the map as well to avoid duplicating amenities and Staff would work with other partners to include similar services in the area.

The group offered to forward any relevant messages to the stakeholder committee for the Sunset Empire Transit District master planning process.
- Staff confirmed best practices, amenities, and other master plans were being researched from cities similar to Astoria, which could reveal amenities that Astoria's citizens are not aware of and help fill in gaps that may exist after gathering community input and data about the existing inventory.
- The CAC must consider and find creative ideas for addressing safety in parks and on trails. Improper maintenance, vagrant camps, and park users who violate park regulations can compromise safety.
 - Cleanliness and increased use of public parks would help address vagrancy issues.
- The public often associates master plans with new resources and/or increased taxes. In 2016, the Master Plan may leverage the City's resources to maintain existing responsibilities. Knowing the current budget and cost of the maintenance backlog would help the CAC better inform citizens during the master planning process.
 - Staff briefly reviewed the department's annual operating budget. No fiscal value had been determined for the maintenance backlog, which was massive; however, Staff has been making good progress catching up on the backlog over the last two years.
 - The Master Plan will enable Staff to provide better updates and forecasts to the Budget Committee and be more efficient at keeping up with maintenance projects.
- The public may have many perceptions and expectations as the master plan is being developed, but the Master Plan should include more citizen responsibilities.
- The master planning process should identify what recreational features/amenities/properties do and do not contribute to the mission.

- The group shared ideas for educating the public about park facilities, services, and amenities, and ways to engage the public in the master planning process.
 - A public tour would be a good way to educate the public about the number of amenities available and all the property being maintained. A tour would also generate PR about the master planning process and interest in the community.
- The history of Ocean View Cemetery, its budget, and its impact on the Parks Department was briefly discussed and why it seemed inappropriate for the cemetery to be the Parks Department's responsibility. Ideas were shared for resolving the issues with the cemetery.
- City-owned properties that were not buildable or classified as parks should be considered as the master plan is developed because some of these properties may be currently underutilized.
- The group discussed ways the master plan could help encourage public participation in the maintenance of park facilities. Despite programs like Chip-In and Adopt a Park, the public seems to believe the City is responsible for everything that is planned. The correlation between transients and maintenance issues in certain areas was discussed as well as ideas for resolving these issues.
- The master plan could increase the efficiency of the Parks Department through long-term goals, which is important given increased services and labor costs without additional revenue.
- The challenges of educating the public about the benefits of the services and amenities offered by the Parks Department were discussed. The public needs to understand how the Department adds to their quality of life.
- Staff would begin planning the public tour for a weekend in early November.

Next Steps

- a. Community input sessions have been scheduled for November 7 & 12.
- b. The inventory and existing conditions analysis has already begun. Mr. Sisson would coordinate with maintenance Staff and compile the inventory data into an easy to read format.
- c. Over the winter, the level of service analysis will be completed by using regional benchmarks and mapping exercises to consider the distribution of parks and how people are accessing them.
- d. Stakeholder and focus group interviews will be conducted over the winter.
- e. Results of the surveys and the public tour of park facilities will be discussed at the next CAC meeting on Thursday, November 12, 2015 at 8:00 am.

Committee members were asked to complete the survey before leaving the meeting room and to contact Mr. Sisson with any comments or questions via email.

Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at approximately 9:15 am.

Next meeting will be held Thursday, November 12, 2015 at 8:00 am at the Astoria Recreation Center.