

**Astoria Parks and Recreation Master Plan  
Citizen Advisory Committee  
January 28, 2016**

Director Cosby called meeting to Order at 8:01 am.

**Roll Call**

Committee Members- Craig Hoppes, Jan Nybakke, Jim Holen, Ed Overbay, Patrick Wingard, Michelle Bisek, Brooke Stanley, Kassia Nye, Zetty Nemlowill, Dulcye Taylor, and Scott Tucker

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

Absent- Ken Hageman

**Approval of Minutes**

- A. The minutes of Meeting #3 on December 17, 2016 were approved as submitted.

Mr. Sisson briefly reviewed the project timeline and noted the Committee would discuss the Level of Service Analysis first.

**Level of Service Analysis Update**

A. Parkland and Trails

- i. Mr. Sisson gave a detailed review of park classifications and service areas in Astoria as defined by the Oregon State Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan (SCORP). Most of Astoria is well served according to the recommended standards, with shortfalls on the far east side of the city (Emerald Heights area) and in the category of urban plaza parks. Development of Heritage Square could fulfill the urban plaza standard. He also explained the standards in the SCORP plan as they apply to each park and trail, noting the benchmarks necessary to achieve compliance with each standard.
- ii. Staff listed the regional parklands that would be included in the level of service analysis.

B. Facilities and Amenities

- i. Mr. Sisson briefly reviewed Astoria's park facilities, amenities, and service areas.
- ii. He displayed a list of the regional facilities and amenities that would be included in the level of service analysis.

C. Peer Communities

- i. Mr. Sisson noted that peer communities would be evaluated and compared against Astoria's levels of service. He listed some of the communities that would be used in the level of service analysis, most of which have their own master plans and have characteristics similar to Astoria. The Committee and Staff briefly discussed the similarities and differences between Astoria and the communities on the list.

- D. The Committee and Staff discussed trails in Astoria that were not designated as Parks properties. Some of the trails discussed were on City-owned or County-owned property, but not maintained by the Parks Department. The inventory only included properties under the Parks Department's authority. The master plan could state that the east end of Astoria could be better served by marking connector trails, such as Pipeline Road, that already exist in that area. Many local organizations are interested in developing, maintaining and mapping those trails.

## **Community Engagement Update**

- A. Focus Groups – Mr. Sisson listed the various focus groups that were identified for the project and gave an update on the feedback given at the focus group sessions. He described the concerns, priorities, and preferences of each group, which reflected how each group used parks and facilities.
- B. Online Survey Results - Mr. Sisson reviewed the details of the online survey results, which indicated which parks, facilities, and services were utilized most and considered a high priority by the survey respondents. Survey results also indicated the community was generally pleased with the Parks Department.

The Committee discussed the results of the focus group sessions and online surveys, with the following key comments:

- The historic preservation group had expressed disappointment that the Doughboy Monument was locked, but understood why it had been locked. Vandalism is costly, but the historic significance of the monument makes it important to the community.
- In an attempt to deal with vandalism, some park sites have surveillance. However, cameras are not feasible in all locations.
- Consolidating the Aquatic Center facilities would be significant and has the potential to address multiple issues facing the Department. The master plan could recommend a more detailed study of such a project.

## **Refine Plan Recommendations and Prioritization Criteria**

The Committee and Staff discussed community engagement and the level of service analysis with the following key comments:

- If the Committee agreed, the Master Plan could recommend an evaluation of the possibility of consolidating facilities.
- Partnership opportunities with Clatsop Community College could assist with additional indoor sports and declining athletics, as the college is redeveloping Patriot Hall.
- Transportation for after school programs could increase participation. The Committee and Staff shared ideas for providing transportation. After school care is important to the community, but it became one of the Parks programs without a clear funding plan. Now, Astoria's taxpayers are subsidizing the program, which includes programs in Warrenton. A clear plan should be established before anything is added to the program.
- The Committee discussed current staffing levels in the Parks Department and concerns that public education and partnerships would require additional Staff. The Department would need the funds to hire additional Staff, and then hopefully the partnerships would help recover the additional staffing costs.
- One of the initial recommendations was to promote health and wellness, which could be accomplished through continued partnership with the hospital. The new Rx: 4 Play program will provide people with a punch pass that can be used in various locations throughout the county, including Astoria Parks and Recreation, and a one-year family pass to Lewis and Clark National Historic Park. The program will be marketed with a brochure.
- The Committee and Staff discussed marketing and communications. Currently, marketing targets specific groups because the Department does not have the funds to hire another full time employee. Better marketing and communications could bring in additional revenue. They shared ideas for improving marketing without incurring additional staffing expenses.
- The master plan should consider the tourism industry because many tourists and people living outside Astoria use Astoria's parks and facilities. Tourism as a source of revenue for the department could be increased through better data tracking of how non-residents use parks, the development of a Parks District, additional tourist taxes earmarked for the Parks Department, and Promote Astoria Funds. Staff and the Committee talked about how data tracking could demonstrate the need for additional funds.

- The master plan recommendations and prioritization criteria were refined based on survey results, focus group results, and draft level of service analysis results, as follows:
  - At the next Committee meeting, Staff would provide more information about which park properties could be decommissioned. The Committee agreed to provide Staff with a list of properties that should be researched further.
  - The Committee discussed consolidating services, funding the cemetery, and the need for a cemetery recommendation to be included in the master plan.
  - The Committee agreed the master plan should recommend the following:
    - A feasibility study to evaluate selling the Recreation Center to fund the consolidation of services.
    - Investigate the possibility of a cemetery district.
    - Analyzing visitor use and use the data to potentially establish park districts.
    - Communication and marketing strategy.
- After some discussion about each of the individual initial recommendations, the Committee agreed to consolidate the list into the following five categories: use, income, partnerships, sustainability, and communications.
- The Committee and Staff talked about using data to make a case in support of obtaining more Promote Astoria Funds and how additional funds would be used.
- Mr. Sisson confirmed he would organize the Committee's list of recommendations into the five categories previously discussed. He encouraged Committee members to email him with ideas and thoughts before the next meeting.

### **Other Business**

Brooke Stanley said the Northcoast Watershed Association is working with Chip-In to clean up the Alderbrook Lagoon area. The association previously received a grant to remove the Scotch broom. On March 11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup>, the Association would plant small patches of wildflowers and shrubs to attract native pollinators. The Association has consulted with plant experts and the Nature Conservancy to choose appropriate native plants. The Fire Department has done practice burns in the area, which cleared the area for planting.

### **Next Steps**

- A. Process and document community feedback.
- B. Draft the Level of Service Analysis Report.
- C. Draft the Initial Recommendations Report.
- D. Begin compiling information into full draft report.
- E. Citizens Advisory Committee Meeting # 5
  - i. 8:00 am to 9:30 am Thursday, February 25, 2016 at the Astoria Recreation Center

### **Adjournment**

The meeting was adjourned at approximately 9:31 am.

**Next meeting will be held Thursday, February 25, 2016 at 8:00 am at the Astoria Recreation Center.**