

**Astoria Parks and Recreation Master Plan
Citizen Advisory Committee
February 25, 2016**

Ian Sisson called meeting to Order at 8:03 am.

Roll Call

Committee Members- Ken Haagman, Jan Nybakke, Patrick Wingard, Michelle Bisek, Brooke Stanley, and Dulcye Taylor. Jim Holen, Scott Tucker, and Zetty Nemlowill.

Staff- Angela Cosby, Ian Sisson, and Rosemary Johnson

Absent- Craig Hoppes, Kassia Nye, Ed Overbay

Review and Approve Meeting #4 Minutes

- a. The minutes of Meeting #4 were approved as presented.

Deed Research

- a. Presentation and Q & A with Rosemary Johnson on deed research for:
 - i. Ocean View Cemetery – Astoria acquired a number of properties that now make up the cemetery. The legal documents, many of which were hand written in the 1800s, indicated several deed restrictions, including a reversionary clause on property acquired from the county, limits to Astoria’s use of the property, and infrastructure requirements. Her research on these deeds continued.
 - ii. Astoria Recreation Center – Astoria does not own the driveway from the highway, but there are easements for public access, water, and sewer. There are no deed restrictions with regard to selling the property, but State and local laws could lead to problems concerning public access to the waterfront. Also, the City has a written agreement with the Astoria Yacht Club and she was unsure if the City was currently in compliance with the agreement.
 - iii. Birch Field – Astoria owns this property and there are no issues with the deed.

Deeds will be reviewed for every park, but these three were prioritized because there had been the most discussion about these properties. Information about each park will help Staff and the Committee decide which properties can be considered surplus. Staff answered the Committee’s questions as follows:

- Ms. Johnson was unsure if the cemetery parcel acquired from the county was in Warrenton or Astoria, but she was working on mapping the property. Of the 50 remaining acres at the cemetery, only about 30 look like they can be developed. Some of the properties were acquired to protect the views around the cemetery.
 - The City only owns seven of the 100 crypts in the mausoleum; the rest are owned by the families of the interned. However, the City has been maintaining the mausoleum for the last few years and has had difficulties communicating with the families about their responsibilities. The families and historic preservation students at the college have urged the City to continue maintaining the mausoleum, so Staff and the students will replace windows in the spring.
- b. Next Steps – Recommend a master plan for the cemetery.

Draft Master Plan

- a. Review – The master plan will be presented to City Council at their last meeting in June. Ian Sisson briefly described the process of getting the plan to City Council and asked Committee

members to review the plan for errors and missing information over the next two weeks. He reviewed the following sections of the draft master plan:

- i. Introduction – Table of contents, purpose statement, goals, and planning process methods.
- ii. Community Profile - Demographic information, population and employment projections.
- iii. Inventory and existing conditions – Catalogue of City facilities, parks and trails, and a full inventory.
- iv. Level of service analysis – Maps, tables, and peer analysis information.
- v. Needs assessment – A summary of community outreach, State trends, and conclusions.
- vi. Recommendations
- vii. Implementation and funding strategy – This section might include a capital improvement plan.
- viii. Appendices – A full summary of focus group themes, an inventory, and the survey report.

The Committee and Staff discussed the categories of funding sources and public feedback about funding included in the plan.

- More specific details about income streams and potential new revenue sources, like hotel tax revenue, could be beneficial. However, data about how parks are used and who uses the parks will help the Department justify requests for more funding from a variety of sources. A formal visitor use study could provide the data necessary to gauge funding needs. This data can be obtained easily and inexpensively through a variety of sources and methods.
 - It would be difficult to identify Promote Astoria funds as a potential source of revenue because there are restrictions on how those funds can be used. So, the data would have to make a strong case for the Parks Department's impact on tourism and requests for Promote Astoria funds would need to be worded appropriately.
 - Other potential sources of revenue that could be leveraged by good data include fundraising campaigns by foundations and system development fees.

Master Plan Recommendations

Staff listed the specific recommendations for operations and maintenance, revenue, stewardship and volunteerism, and communications and marketing. Committee members and Staff discussed these recommendations with the following key comments:

- The recommended database of projects for which the Department needs volunteers can be published on the website and sent to the high school so students can participate. High school seniors might be interested in volunteering as part of their senior projects.
- Google Translate does not always do a good job of translating websites into other languages, so Staff could hire someone to write accurate website and printed content in Spanish, as well as ensure the translations are interpreted correctly.
- The last line of Section 1(e) (2) should include the need for sufficient funds to maintain new development. A cost benefit analysis would allow the City to determine ongoing maintenance costs.
- The master plan should also include recommendations for Staff's work environment, safety, training, and recruiting.
- Staff noted an inventory of invasive plant species along the waterfront was available from the Columbia River Estuary Task Force (CREST).
- Incremental fee increases should be recommended.
- The recommendations should include coordinating with the Lower Columbia Tourism Commission (LCTC) because the LCTC is the source of room taxes.
- An annual marketing and communications plan should be recommended.

- The riverfront park near the Maritime Museum proposed in the Riverfront Vision Plan should be addressed in this master plan. This could be added to the section in the introduction that discusses the master plan's relationship to other plans.
- There are no recommendations specific to restrooms, but a lot of public feedback indicated the need for a public restroom at Fred Lindstrom Park. The City also needs restrooms that cannot be vandalized. This could be addressed under the maintenance and operations category.
- Traffic circles and rights-of-ways are lands that are not useable by the community as parks, but people see these spaces as they drive through Astoria. The Parks Department might justify maintaining these spaces if beautification of Astoria is identified as a priority.
- Tide Rock Park is not currently being maintained and is a huge blight on Downtown. The park is in an urban renewal district, so it could be possible to put urban renewal funds toward improvements. Generally, establishing standards for level of care of each park site and facility based on department and community priorities is something that needs to be done.
- Some Committee members believed tax revenues, like a restaurant or recreational marijuana tax, might penalize small businesses. Staff included the recommendation to consider other tax revenues after learning that peer communities receive funding from some similar sources. Other Committee members believed the recommendation should remain in the master plan because entities affected by any tax City Council decides to consider will have the opportunity to speak about it at Council meetings. The master plan is a good place to lay out all the options.
- In addition to selling the recreation center, the plan should also recommend that the City consider renting the facility if the City moves recreation center services to the Aquatic Center. Committee members discussed the pros and cons of selling versus leasing the recreation center.
- The plan should state that the Department is obligated and plans to maintain public access to the river.
- The plan should recommend that the City leverage revenue from public and private investors for specific projects, as was done to develop the River Trail and maintain a portion of the Maritime Memorial.
- Public feedback has indicated the community would like an off-leash dog park, a natural playground at McClure Park, better playgrounds, and expanded hours of operation at the Aquatic Center. Staff was pleased with the amount of feedback the City was able to get from the community in such a short amount of time.
- Staff asked the Committee if they believed the recommendations should address the homeless camps on park properties. The plan could reference the homelessness task force in the section that discusses the plan's relationship to other plans. Staff must prioritize staffing levels, so they need to know if the citizens want Staff to spend time keeping the camps cleaned up. This could be addressed as part of a safety recommendation. Committee members agreed the camps created issues that needed to be addressed. Trail watch signs could encourage people to call law enforcement when they see illegal or dangerous situations occur at the camps.

Other Business

- a. Melissa Gardner, a student at Clatsop Community College, is helping Staff with some of the maintenance planning information that will be added to the Geographical Information System (GIS).
- b. The next CHIP-In event is at Alderbrook Lagoon on March 11th and 12th from 1:00 pm to 4:00 pm. Volunteers will plant native plants for pollinators, seeds, shrubs, and small trees.
- c. Several parks are commonly referred to by multiple names. The deeds also refer to certain parks by a variety of names, which makes research difficult. Staff has considered establishing official names and placing signs at each park so the community knows the property is a City park.
- d. The Alderbrook Lagoon could be a good site for a boat launch. This was recently discussed as part of the Riverfront Vision Plan implementation for that area.

Next Steps

- a. Homework
 - i. Report back with comments and revisions on the draft Master Plan by March 10.
- b. Community input sessions (Proposed dates to be confirmed)
 - i. Thursday, April 14 from 5:00 pm to 8:00 pm
 - ii. Saturday, April 16 from 12:00 pm to 3:00 pm
- c. Citizen Advisory Committee Meeting #6
 - i. 8:00 am to 9:30 am Thursday, March 31 at the Astoria Recreation Center

Mr. Sisson stated he would update the draft master plan based on the feedback given at this meeting and send Committee members a revised copy.

Adjournment

- A. The meeting was adjourned at 9:35 am.

Next meeting will be held Thursday, March 31 at 8:00 am at the Astoria Recreation Center.