

**Astoria Parks and Recreation Master Plan
Citizen Advisory Committee
April 21 2016**

Ian Sisson called Meeting #7 to Order at 8:04 am.

Roll Call

Committee Members- Jan Nybakke, Jim Holen, Michelle Bisek, Brooke Stanley, Kassia Nye, and Zetty Nemlowill

Staff- Angela Cosby and Ian Sisson

Absent- Scott Tucker, Craig Hoppas, Patrick Wingard, Dulcye Taylor, Ed Overbay, and Ken Hageman

Approval of Minutes

- A. The minutes of Meeting #6, held on March 31, 2016, could not be approved due to lack of a quorum.

Community Input

- A. Staff presented Committee members with a draft of the Master Plan, which included a compilation of community input. The Committee briefly reviewed the methods used to collect feedback, the survey responses, and the comments submitted to Staff about the Plan. Staff and the Committee discussed the community's priorities, as indicated by comments and survey responses, with the following key comments:
- While the public highly favors increased staffing and revenue, they also want the City to keep and maintain unused park properties instead of selling them. They are concerned that once parkland is sold, it can never be reclaimed. Selling under-used park properties was suggested as a way to increase revenues to the Capital Improvement Fund and relieve Staff of maintaining those properties. If the City does decide to sell some of its parkland, it may be possible that the City could place deed restrictions on properties, requiring buyers to retain some public open space or recreation amenities.
 - Only 120 people out of a city of 10,000 provided input on the draft recommendations. So, some of the responses and comments may not be reflective of the general population. The City has seen a lot of support for a dog park in the past, yet it ranked as the second lowest priority by the community members who provided input during this feedback period.
 - Planning initiatives to study visitor and non-resident uses, the feasibility of a combined recreation facility, and an Ocean View Cemetery Master Plan all ranked low by the community, but Staff ranks these as high priorities. Completing these planning initiatives would determine how to increase resources for the Parks Department and allow Staff to fulfill the community's priorities. If the public were more educated about this, they might be more supportive of the planning initiatives. Perhaps an explanation should be added to the narrative of the Master Plan.

Updates to Draft Recommendations and Capital Projects

Prioritize Draft Recommendations and Capital Projects

- A. As Staff gave a brief summary of the draft recommendations and capital projects, Committee members suggested updates and revisions, as follows:
- Maintenance – The Plan should recommend park designs that are easy to maintain. The Committee and Staff discussed how labor-intensive and expensive it is to maintain some

parks simply because of the way the features and amenities are situated on the property, such as at the Garden of Surging Waves. They shared ideas for how some parks amenities and landscaping could be reconfigured in ways that would reduce maintenance. These recommendations would be included in the scope of the maintenance plan and site-specific master plans.

- Increase Stewardship – The Committee discussed ways to increase the community’s stewardship of park properties. Staff and Committee members noted the pros and cons of working with community groups to maintain parks.
 - The CHIP-In program should be a high priority because it provides volunteers with immediate gratification of their work and a park gets cleaned up in one day.
 - Contracts between the City and friends groups benefit both parties and clearly state what each party is responsible for.
- Revenue and Cost Recovery – Staff briefly reviewed past and current financial data for the Parks Department and explained how changes in the finances led to changes in priorities.
- Planning Initiatives - The Master Plan should explain why each planning initiative was being recommended.
 - The visitor and non-resident use study should be used to leverage Promote Astoria funds. The Committee and Staff discussed current efforts to use Promote Astoria Funds to maintain tourist-related parks like the Riverwalk and promote parks that are lesser known to tourists. The study could also fall under the marketing plan because it would help the Department figure out its target audience. Adding data about tourist and non-resident uses to the marketing plan would provide more transparency of revenues and expenses.
 - The Committee agreed Staff should prioritize capital projects and planning initiatives.
 - The combined recreation center feasibility study should include data about complementary facilities and amenities in the community that the Parks Department should not duplicate.
- Communications and Marketing – Staff confirmed the visitor and non-resident use study would be moved and recommended in this section of the Plan. The plan should be referred to as a marketing plan instead of a strategic plan because the City is working on its own strategic plan. Schools, community service centers, and healthcare facilities should be added to the list of places to distribute materials.
- Operations – The recommendation to increase staffing levels should instead be referred to as building staff capacity, because the City has the option to contract out some of its work. The Plan should consider the minimum wage increases and whether incremental user and program-fee increases would be enough to offset rising costs.
- Capital Improvement Projects – The recommendation to create a dog park or off-leash area should be made plural to allow for the possibility of more than one of each. The recommendation to extend the hours of operation at the Aquatic Center should be moved to the Operations section of the Plan because it is not a capital improvement project. In addition to Fred Lindstrom Park, the Plan should include the Riverwalk as a location for permanent, vandal-resistant restroom facilities.

Draft Parks and Recreation Comprehensive Master Plan

- A. Committee members gave general feedback about the current draft of the Master Plan, which indicated they fully supported the draft and believed Staff should move forward with next steps. Staff reviewed upcoming meetings and next steps. The Committee and Staff discussed the planning process and the potential benefits of extending the timeline by one month. The Committee was divided on extending the timeline, but after some discussion, they agreed Staff should evaluate as they go and be sure to take the time it needs to finalize the Plan.

Other Business

- A. There was none

Next Steps

- A. Planning Commission
 - i. Work Session: Tuesday April 26, 2016 6:30 PM – 8:00 PM
 - ii. First public hearing: Tuesday May 24, 2016 6:30 PM – 8:00 PM
 - iii. Continuance: Tuesday June 28, 2016 6:30 PM – 8:00 PM
- B. Park Advisory Board
 - i. Work Session: Wednesday April 27, 2016 6:45 AM – 8:00 AM
- C. City Council
 - i. Work Session: Monday May 16, 2016 6:00 PM – 7:00 PM
- D. Upcoming Citizen Advisory Committee meetings:
 - i. May 19, 2016: 8:00 AM – 9:30 AM at the Astoria Recreation Center.
 - 1. Review feedback from Parks Advisory Board, Planning Commission, and City Council work sessions. Discuss updates as needed. Possible recommendation of plan to those groups.
 - ii. June 16, 2016: 8:00 AM – 9:30 AM at the Astoria Recreation Center.
 - 1. If needed. Review final draft of Plan, recommendation of Plan.

Adjournment

- A. The meeting was adjourned at 9:46 pm.

The next meeting will be held May 19, 2016 at 8:00 am at the Astoria Recreation Center.