

A regular meeting of the Astoria Common Council was held at the above place at the hour of 7:00 pm.

Councilors Present: Nemlowill, Jones, Price, Brownson, and Mayor LaMear.

Councilors Excused: None

Staff Present: City Manager Estes, Interim Parks and Recreation Director Dart-McLean, Finance Director Brooks, Interim Fire Chief Curtis, Police Chief Spalding, Public Works Director Harrington, City Engineer Moore, Library Director Pearson, and City Attorney Henningsgaard. The meeting is recorded and will be transcribed by ABC Transcription Services, Inc.

PROCLAMATIONS

Item 3(a): Bells of Peace Day

Mayor LaMear read the proclamation declaring November 11, 2018 as Bells of Peace Day.

Rosemary Johnson, 672 15th Street, Astoria, said November 11th was the 100th anniversary of the end of World War I. Astoria's World War I monument, the Doughboy Monument, is being restored. A wreath will be hung on the monument at 11:00 am on Sunday, November 11, 2018. After that, at 1:00 pm at the Astor Library's Flag Room, there will be a ceremony to honor the end of the war and celebrate the restoration of the Doughboy Monument. There will be two speakers who will talk about the United States' history in the war and the restoration of the monument. Light refreshments, a video, and a flag ceremony will also be part of the event.

REPORTS OF COUNCILORS

Item 4(a): Councilor Nemlowill said this election had been easy for her because all she had to do was vote. She thanked everyone who ran for City Council and Mayor. The job is a big sacrifice and there was a lot of good competition, which was probably causing the candidates a lot of anxiety. But competition makes people stronger and she believed it made democracy stronger. She attended the Helping Hands Homeless Shelter Open House and toured the facility, which is very needed in the community. Helping Hands is trying to help individuals who do not have homes solve their problems and get them into long term housing.

Item 4(b): Councilor Brownson said the Doughboy Monument was looking good and he looked forward to the event. He attended a presentation of Clatsop County's Comprehensive Housing Study, which was still being refined. The study would be presented again at an open house in Seaside at the city hall on November 13th. The Uniontown Reborn open house would be on November 6th at the Red Building at 5:30 pm.

Item 4(c): Councilor Price reported that she had been hearing from residents about two Public Works projects, the widening of Bond Street and the Waterfront Bridges Project.

Director Harrington said the Bond Street project was on schedule and should be complete by December 3rd. The wall was completed without incident and the contractor is currently working on the ADA ramps at the intersection of Hume. Paving would be done as soon as weather allows. He displayed a diagram of Bond Street and said it would be wider than 11th Street. No sidewalks would be on the south side of the street.

Councilor Price said Pier 29 was 20-feet wide, which was plenty of room to pass another vehicle even though it looked to narrow. She asked if signage would be installed on Bond Street to let people know there was room for two-way traffic.

Director Harrington stated the striping would indicate the traffic pattern. The intersection of Hume and Bond Street is a four-way stop, so drivers can see the striping ahead of them.

Item 4(d): Councilor Jones said the housing study was easy to find online by searching "Clatsop County Housing Study." He attended the second annual Jazz Fest, which offered concerts at several different locations. Some

concerts were free, but they were all high quality. He attended the joint meeting of the Lower Columbia Diversity Coalition (LCDC) and the Q Center on bullying. People shared how bullying had negatively impacted their lives.

Item 4(e): Mayor LaMear reported that she participated in the ribbon cutting and open house at Helping Hands. The work in four different counties in Oregon and have 11 other facilities. They do good work and she was excited to have them in Astoria. She attended the forestry tour, which was helpful to those who did not grow up in those fields. It is an important part of the economic community. The Clatsop County Housing Study shows promise and hopefully would help Astoria figure out what would be the best housing to build and where. She attended the celebration of life for Jake Jacob, who gave so much of his energy and talent to the community. She asked for an update on the homeless:

Chief Spalding said he attended Helping Hands Open House and he looked forward to having the resource in the community. Last week, nine notices were served at four homeless camps on City property and the HOST subcommittee was notified. The subcommittee confirmed that the notices were placed in accordance with their wishes. The camps served were located at:

- Taylor Street/Smith Point
- Franklin Avenue and 40th Street (dead end)
- Leif Erickson and 41st Street (approximately)
- Behind Columbia Memorial Hospital
- There are additional camps, but the logistics of accessing each camp are a challenge. Michael Martin [16:45] and Burt Hall [16:49] assisted the Police Department and encouraged people to begin cleaning up camps in advance of receiving a notice. Recology offered to provide dumpsters at the four locations and the Public Works Department provided trash bags. The notices stated the City would return after four days, which will be November 6th, and included contact information and a copy of the resource guidebook. This morning, the City received notices from two individuals that asked for reasonable accommodations and included a form from the Fair Housing Act. The Fair Housing Act is not applicable to forest lands, so it is not legally binding. However, it is possible these individuals have a disability, so they were given an additional three days. The Police Department's Homeless Liaison, Kenny Hanson, notified both individuals, who were happy to be given additional time. Both said they would likely vacate the premises sooner than the time given. Since those accommodations were being given to two individuals, the City would offer the same to all. On Tuesday, the City would visit the sites that have been vacated to clean up the property. Any personal property would be held for 30 days and returned to the individual if claimed. On Friday, Councilor Price will call the individuals the City has phone numbers for to ask if there is anything else they would like the City to provide. A representative from Clatsop Community Action and transportation will be available. Clatsop Community Action (CCA) is keeping an informal poll of people who have come to them seeking assistance. About ten people from the camps have come to CCA so far. Burt Hall has found housing and Michael Martin will find a boat in Florida. He thanked Director Harrington and the Public Works Department because this is messy work and a lot of extra work on a tough problem.

CHANGES TO AGENDA

Councilor Price requested the addition of Regular Agenda Item 7(a)(1): Waterfront Bridges Project. The agenda was approved with changes. [21:52]

CONSENT CALENDAR

The following items were presented on the Consent Calendar:

- 6(a) City Council Work Session Minutes of 9/12/18
- 6(b) City Council Minutes of 10/1/18
- 6(c) City Council Work Session Minutes of 10/10/18
- 6(d) City Council Minutes of 10/15/18
- 6(e) Boards and Commission Minutes
 - (1) Library Board Minutes of 9/25/18
 - (2) Park Board Minutes of 9/26/18

City Council Action: Motion made by Councilor Nemlowill, seconded by Councilor Brownson, to approve the Consent Calendar. Motion carried unanimously. Ayes: Councilors Price, Jones, Nemlowill, Brownson, and Mayor LaMear; Nays: None.

REGULAR AGENDA ITEMS

Item 7(a)(1): Waterfront Bridges Project

This item was added to the agenda during Item 5: Changes to the Agenda.

Councilor Price said she had heard from several of the businesses on 11th Street. Many of the business owners were in attendance and she believed they wanted to speak to City Council about access to their businesses during construction. City Engineer Cindy Moore sent updates via email earlier that afternoon.

Engineer Moore said that since the contractor had been on site, they had been working through a lot of paperwork, behind the scenes work, and construction of containment areas underneath each bridge. That work has been out of sight. A large crane is expected to arrive on 11th Street sometime this week and in-water work will begin next week with pilon removal. The permitted in-water work period is from November 1st through February 28th. All areas must be reopened by the end May, the Friday before Memorial Day. Once the deadlines have been set, the City does not dictate the contractor's schedule. Crews are currently working four 10-hour days, Monday through Thursday.

Mayor LaMear called for public comments and questions.

Phil Spencer [25:48], 107 11th Street, Astoria, Smoked Bones BBQ, said he was a board member of CASA and he volunteered for the United Way's Iron Chef and the Armory. He has been affected by the construction project. His business is only a year old, so he did not have the numbers to show the fiscal impacts, but he has had to take a part time job and was actively looking for another one to survive. The discourse he had seen during the first 51 days of this project spoke volumes as to how the City felt and cared about small businesses, which are the backbone of the economy. He has been cut off by Astoria with little to no regard for the impacts on small business. The company chosen for the project is a nonlocal company that does not understand the true impact they are having on the community and does not care. He sees the lack of expediency and efficiency every because he lives above the project site. They work few hours and few days. Today, the crew worked on Pier 11 from 7:30 am to 11:30 am. He asked if Astoria wanted to be portrayed as treating small businesses this way and if the City would dismiss this as not important and let potential revenue go to other cities that are more welcoming and willing to make things work.

Director Harrington said the City did things every day to care for and promote businesses. This project was developed over the last eight to ten years. If Astoria had not received funding, the structures would have been closed down permanently because the City would not have been able to maintain them. That would have resulted in no access to the businesses. The City worked very hard to overcome that problem by getting qualified to apply to funding and competed very hard to get the funding. Everyone would prefer to have a local contractor, but this an Oregon Department of Transportation (ODOT) project so the City had no choice of contractor.

Mayor LaMear said it sounded like the City was trying to make life difficult for business owners, but that is not what this project is about.

Mr. Spencer said he understood why the bridge work had to be done, but he wanted to know why the City was not providing compensation, signage, or directing traffic to the businesses. Traffic is being directed two blocks away. There is a road closed sign on the trolley tracks, which have never been a road. On cruise ship days, at least 300 people turn around when they see the construction because it does not look inviting. The businesses cannot put signs up.

Director Harrington said Engineer Moore had been spending all of her time on this project, and lately had been busy working on access to the businesses. This is an ODOT project so the road closed signs are out of the City's control.

Engineer Moore said all along she had been trying to keep people informed about the project. She agreed the project was disruptive, but the City had done its best to inform the businesses that it was coming, work with them as construction began, and make resources available including meetings with the Astoria Downtown Historic District Association (ADHDA), the Chamber of Commerce, and the small business group. Recently, the City posted additional signage, at the City's expense, directing pedestrians to Pier 11. The detour routes are dictated by ODOT and goes around the construction site.

Councilor Price asked if Mr. Spencer could put up a happy sign with smoke coming out of it that says "we're open" directing people to come in a certain way. It could be put on the fence and would be more inviting than the standard "businesses are open" sign.

Engineer Moore explained that the City used signage without specific business names because they could not promote businesses with public money. The City has met with businesses to discuss creative alternatives for their signage. The Chamber of Commerce is creating a sign with logos on it.

Councilor Price said the businesses could make the signs themselves and work with the Chamber to find money to help make the signs. She believed the City should support the businesses being affected by the project.

City Manager Estes added that he could contact the Chamber to get more information about the signage they were working on and see if the signage could be expedited.

Councilor Price said perhaps the ADHDA could assist as well.

Councilor Brownson said one of the other things Mr. Spencer implied was that these contractors are not working very hard.

Director Harrington reminded that the crews were working on three locations at one time. There is no requirement that they be working on all three locations simultaneously. The City cannot dictate their workload or schedule. The contractors simply have to complete the work by a certain date and within a certain dollar amount per State requirements.

Mr. Spencer asked why the 11th Street bridge was not fixed first since it was in the worst condition.

Director Harrington said the 11th Street structure has always been a priority because of the businesses. Last year, the City spent \$185,000 and the majority of that went into 11th Street. The plan is to work on every other bridge so that three bridges would be repaired this year and three would be repaired next year. This allowed every block to have access from at least one direction. The City chose to work on the odd numbered streets first because 11th Street was a priority. The contractor is working on all three at once to achieve economies of scale. If he worked on 11th first, the in-water work period would be over before he could start on the other two bridges. If the City repaired one bridge each year, construction would be ongoing for six years. Six years is unacceptable to the businesses who indicated their priority was to get this done as quick as possible. It's a complicated project and the City has explained as much as possible along the way.

Councilor Brownson stated it was important to understand that there is no way to avoid the work. If the bridges are not repaired, Astoria will not have a trolley or have traffic on the bridges. This work is mandated by ODOT and the City is doing what it can. Mr. Spencer needs to forward his concerns to ODOT.

Mr. Spencer asked why there was only one crew for three different bridges instead of having three crews, one for each bridge.

Councilor Brownson explained that there are only so many contractors who do this kind of work. The City ended up with a cost overrun on bidding because it so difficult to get these contractors.

Director Harrington added that the contractors are required to build the three bridges within a certain timeframe and for a certain amount of money. If the contractor had to hire three crews, the local contractor would not have as many employees and would not be able to bid on the job. The City must do this in an open manner and in a way that allows as much competition as possible so the City can get the right people and for the price they want. In this case, ODOT chose the lowest bidder.

Mr. Spencer understood this was a staffing issue.

City Manager Estes clarified that when ODOT bid the project, it was bid as a set of projects, three bridges one year and three bridges the next year. Rather than hire six different contractors, ODOT chose one to do them all so that economies of scale could result in a lower price.

Mr. Spencer explained he was not talking about six different contractors, just one contractor with enough staff to work three different projects at the same time.

City manager Estes said in this case, the contractor is required by ODOT to complete the project within the timeframe that Engineer Moore outlined earlier. The way that deadline is met is between the contractor and ODOT.

Councilor Price said these issues generally come down to money. If a larger pool of money had been available, the City could have said it wanted the work done by January 1st. If three times as much money was available, ODOT could have found a company that had that much more staff and could do the job faster. This is an extraordinarily expensive project.

Michael Martin, no address stated said he believed Mr. Spencer's problem was all of the chain link fencing. People get trapped while walking around in the area because there is no way out of the ends of the streets. There's only one way in and one way out, which is wrong. Pedestrians cannot get to the businesses to spend money because they cannot navigate the fences. There are no signs saying which way to go and he did not believe the fences should be surrounding the area.

Director Harrington explained that the existing bridges have to be removed in order to build new ones. When the bridges are removed, everyone will understand why the fences were located the way they were. There will be a hole into the river and the City does not want people falling. The fences also give the contractor room to work.

Mr. Spencer said he had seen people climbing the fence at night.

Karen Allen, 90850 Kennedy Road, Warrenton, said she and her husband Steve owned Astoria Brewing Company, The Pub on 11th Street, the Pier 11 building, and the fish market. She understood the bridge project because the businesses were informed. However, the big issue was parking. The personal parking that she purchased had been taken away along with the Pier 11 dock that she controls, and seven more parking places on 11th Street. Astoria Brewing Company depends on walk-in customers, as does Inferno Lounge, The Good Bowl, Smoked Bones BBQ, The Naked Lemon, Treasure Alley, and Creepy Beautiful. She bought Pier 11 for more parking, but she is now down to five parking spaces at the beginning of 11th Street, which is shared by H&R Block, Hyde Air Company, Columbia Theatre, and JP Plumbing. There is no access to her business on the back street, which was the trolley line. Her business depends on the Riverwalk. Business has been down and the minimum loss would be \$100,000 to \$200,000 by the time the project is over. Her numbers are bigger because her business is bigger and has a much larger volume, but the loss is huge and would come out of her pocket. She did not have grants or shareholders and she has risked everything to help develop the waterfront. She understood the project must continue but wanted help. She encouraged everyone to have dinner at the restaurants in the area.

Steve Allen, 90850 Kennedy Road, Warrenton, said it had been frustrating to see the crews work for three hours. He wanted a large crew, but he understood.

Engineer Moore agreed the project is disruptive and Ms. Allen has lost parking. She was open to ideas for a solution.

Kris Haefeker no address stated, Astoria, said he was just at the Astoria Brewing Company and it was dead. He was very concerned about the businesses. All you can see at the end of Marine is chain link fence and if a person does not know what is in the area they will just go somewhere else. He had to park on Marine and walk. Even if he had parked on 11th, there would be no place to turn around. He understood the bridges needed to be repaired, but he also believed the City should work diligently with the business owners to make signs to let people know the businesses are open. The fences are not necessary right now. They could have been put up the day before the bridges were removed and taken down the next day so that people could walk around. The City really needs to help the businesses.

Director Harrington said the fences have prevented a tripping hazard as the contractors have been bringing in deck bolts and lumber.

Dorothy Olson 127 Washington Street, Astoria, said agreed with the comments about parking downtown. She knew a lot of people who hung out downtown and they were not the cleanest people. Drunk people leave trash in the area and something needs to be done because it makes Astoria look trashy. If \$1 million can be spent to remove all of the grass and trees from a park to turn it into a Scandinavian Heritage Monument at People's Park, maybe the Astoria Scandinavian Heritage Association can be convinced to spend less money on all that paving and put up some flags and spend \$900,000 to build parking and dedicate that to the Scandinavian heritage. Signs and rope lights at night would attract people to come to the area.

Alisha Ned 1432 Franklin Avenue, Astoria, owner of the Naked Lemon bakery, said the loss of business has been about 33 percent and was getting close to 50 percent in profit loss. That has been really hard to work around. She understood the work had to be done and thanked Staff for keeping in touch with the businesses as much they could. She appreciated the open lines of communication. However, she had a problem with the way the City did certain things. The Chamber of Commerce and ADHDA have offered to help businesses with advertising, but businesses have to be a member of one of those groups. The Chamber is helping nonmembers, but she did not believe the Chamber had approached the Pier 11

building with a game plan, and neither has the ADHDA. The City's stance is not to advertise local businesses or showing favoritism towards promoting specific small businesses. That is a problem when the community has an issue like this one where the City and ODOT has caused businesses problems. Businesses have to reach out to the Chamber or pay out more money to join the ADHDA to get help with advertising. That is not fair. The City owes at least a sit down to discuss solutions.

City Manager Estes said Staff would brainstorm and see what could be done. Staff would also meet with the Chamber and the ADHDA.

Mayor LaMear said if everyone in the room had dinner at the Wet Dog and bought bakery goods from the Naked Lemon and bought barbeque from the Smoked Bones, and if everyone spread the word and asked the newspaper to do a story about how the businesses are suffering, the town can support the businesses.

Ms. Ned stated that while that was a great outlook to have, the businesses rely on tourism. It is great for locals to be allegiant to small businesses, but realistically the signage could be improved with extra money. She loved the partnership between the Chamber and the ADHDA, but not everyone in the building is an active paying member. Dues are required for both groups.

Councilor Price noted that the banners on the fence around Safeway are made by a local company and cost about \$300. She did not understand why the City could not provide one of those banners on each end and the front that advertise all of the businesses and directs people where to enter with some lighting. She was glad to hear Staff say they would work on this. The businesses should not be expected to be members of any organization because they are members of Astoria and they have contributed a lot to the City. Unless there is a specific legal reason the City cannot put up good signage and lighting that directs people to the area, the City should do it. The cost would be minimal compared to the losses that the businesses are suffering.

Councilor Brownson agreed. He added that when the City receives an offer from the Chamber or the ADHDA to help out, that they would not be discriminating between members and non-members because that would not really help. Helping downtown means helping everyone.

City Manager Estes stated that was not the case at all.

Engineer Moore confirmed businesses did not have to be a paying member of either the Chamber or the ADHDA to receive advertising assistance. The City has received permission from ODOT and the contractor to put banners on their construction fencing in certain locations. The Chamber will have to facilitate that. She is not in marketing and would not know what to put on the signs. The City has put paid advertising which included a map in the *Daily Astorian*. The City also paid for the custom signs at Pier 11 to get pedestrians through the area. Staff would take Council direction to invest more money and help coordinate the installation of banners. The City informed businesses about options for putting up their own signage as well. However, someone would need to take the lead on additional efforts.

City Manager Estes stated he would take the lead.

Councilor Nemlowill believed this was an exceptional situation and the City needed to support the businesses right now however possible. She saw the large advertisement in the *Daily Astorian* about the businesses being open. That is helpful for locals who read the newspaper, but the cruise ship passengers look down the street and do not realize they can go down there. She would support anything the City can do to help.

Councilor Jones added that the Chamber and the ADHDA, not Staff, should be taking the lead on working with businesses.

City Manager Estes clarified he would be taking the lead to make sure something happens. A Staff member in the City Manager's Office has a design eye and has a marketing background, so she could assist.

Councilor Price added that the people who make the banners are designers as well, and design work is included in the \$300 cost. Banners should be up in a couple of weeks.

Director Harrington noted that the pedestrian detour map has been published on Facebook. Staff could repost it periodically.

Councilor Price said every time something is done in Astoria, projects go on forever and they are in the newspaper. She posts about them on her Facebook page and website all the time, just as many others do. The City hosts town hall meetings as well. There are many people who do not listen to the radio, read the newspaper, or look at the internet, so signage on site is necessary. There is no way to get the message out otherwise.

Director Harrington explained that the road closed sign is at the entrance to the business complex.

Mr. Spencer said ODOT's detour signs direct people to turn around.

Director Harrington stated Staff would look at that and see if there was a better way to display the detour signage.

Mr. Spencer suggested the pedestrian access be added to the trolley map.

Councilor Brownson said this was not the time to brainstorm.

Item 7(a)(2): Second Reading: Ordinance Modifying City Code 1.010 Relating to Penalties and the Addition of City Code 6.380 Relating to Enhanced Fine Zones

The first reading of this ordinance was held at the October 15, 2018 City Council meeting. The City of Astoria continues to experience complaints of illegal parking in the area of 38th St and Duane St. This area draws a significant amount of traffic due to a well-known attraction in the area. The City has posted signage in certain locations in this area indicating "No Stopping" and "No Parking" with only a moderate level of compliance. Experience has shown from other jurisdictions that increasing the fine in certain areas has a better deterrent effect. It is proposed that Council consider raising fines in this area for which will minimize illegally parked cars, improve traffic flow and minimize potential traffic collisions.

Current signage for No Parking/No Stopping in the area appears to be adequate and there is no proposal to extend the No Parking/No Stopping signage beyond the existing locations. The only impact would be the increased fines in designated and posted existing areas. Additional signage would be added to existing No Parking/No Stopping signs that would indicate "Enhanced Fine Zone - \$100 Fine." This proposal is not intended to restrict visitors in this area, only to discourage parking in certain areas that present the greatest hazard.

Attached is a draft ordinance for consideration. Additional language is proposed to define an "Enhanced Fine Zone" in Astoria City Code § 6.380 to include identifying the specific location. Astoria City Code § 1.010 would be modified to specify an enhanced fine of \$100.00 for violations in this zone. The ordinance has been approved as to form by City Attorney Henningsgaard.

Additionally, a correction is proposed for a scrivener's error in City Code 1.010(4)(e) to delete an errant quotation mark.

It is recommended that Council consider conducting a second reading and adopting the ordinance amending City Code 1.010 and adding City Code 6.380.

Director Brooks conducted the second reading of the ordinance.

City Council Action: Motion made by Councilor Nemlowill, seconded by Councilor Price, to adopt the ordinance amending City Code 1.010 and adding City Code 6.380. Motion carried unanimously. Ayes: Councilors Price, Jones, Nemlowill, Brownson, and Mayor LaMear; Nays: None.

Item 7(b): Authorization to Close RV Dump Station

The City operates and maintains one recreational vehicle (RV) dump station within the City limits. This is located on Taylor Avenue near the Highway 101 roundabout.

During the City Council Work Session on September 12, 2018, Staff presented information about the RV dump station and issues associated with its continued operation. Following the presentation, Council asked that closure of the dump station be added to a future meeting for consideration and that staff provide of the meeting.

The wastewater from RVs is often very high-strength due to water conservation that is typically observed by these users. In addition, special products are often used to cover up odors which frequently kill bacteria used to treat the waste. Without security or monitors at the RV dump station site, there is no information about other types of waste that may be discharged at this location.

The RV dump station has been brought to the forefront as a vulnerability to the wastewater system. There is currently no control over what is being discharged and no charge to offset the cost of concentrated discharge. An alternative free RV dump site exists at Fort Stevens State Park as well as multiple "pay for service" RV dump sites within the area. Therefore, staff is proposing closing the RV dump station. If approved, it is recommended that the closure take effect on December 31, 2018 so the site can be posted notifying users of the closure date.

A public notice of the November 5th meeting was posted at the RV dump site on October 1, 2018 that requested public comment on this issue. To date the City has received three public comments via email and one via phone call (see attached).

It is recommended that City Council consider closure of the existing RV Dump Station beginning December 31, 2018.

Director Harrington presented Councilors with a piece of correspondence that Staff received at 3:41 pm that day.

Engineer Moore explained that Staff recommended closing the dump station to preserve the health of the waste water treatment plant, which is a lagoon facility that uses microorganisms to treat the waste. The City chlorinates the water and then dechlorinates the water before it flows out into the river. This is an extremely sensitive system. A recent study indicated that concentrations have increased. Increases in the summer are expected because the CSO project has removed streams and inlets out of the City's system, directing that clean water directly to the river. However, the annual loads have increased. Since Astoria's population has not increase, the additional loads are coming from somewhere else. This situation inspired the Public Works Department to look at the entire system over a couple of years to holistically review the service area to try to determine where the additional loads could be coming from. Staff has done a number of different things to protect the system, including sending fliers to all customers to educate the community on what should be flushed and what should not be flushed. The City has also been working with breweries to confirm that they are operating under best management practices. Staff has also developed a plan for sampling and testing to better characterize the waste getting into the system. The City's goal is to extend the useful life of the waste water treatment plant. Staff was working on a scope of work for headworks improvements that will extend the life of the system, which will be a real investment from the City and the ratepayers. The RV dump station was identified as a vulnerable area. The dump station is unmonitored, open 24/7, and there is no cost to use it. Clean up and maintenance is an expense to the City. Staff has no idea what type of waste is being disposed of at that dump station. Most RV users conserve water, so typical RV waste is more concentrated than average domestic sewage. RV users also add chemicals to reduce odors, which kills the bacteria that breaks down the waste. The site is not monitored to illicit dumping like grease vats. Staff cannot confirm that is a problem, but it is definitely a vulnerability at the site. There is an alternative dump site at Fort Stevens, which is not too far away and is free. Discussion of Staff's proposal to close the dump station at this meeting was posted at the site and online on October 1, 2018. Closing the dump station will eliminate the source of concentrated waste into the waste water treatment plant and eliminates risk and liability. This will protect the facilities that the City's customers have invested in.

Councilor Price asked if the email that Director Harrington handed out was the only feedback that Staff received.

Engineer Moore stated other correspondence, four emails and one phone call, was included in the Staff report.

Mayor LaMear called for public comments.

Mark Lyndon 91113 Youngs River Road, Astoria, said he used the facility quite a bit. He and his wife travel in an RV. He understood that RV sewage is more concentrated, but anyone who has tried getting into Fort Stevens, especially during the summer, knows that it is a nightmare, especially on Sundays and Mondays. You end up sitting there for at least two hours. He understood what Engineer Moore said about the sewer system, but the dump station is a nice amenity for everyone who uses it. He knew a lot of people who used it and believed it should remain open, even if there was a fee.

Mayor LaMear asked how much a new sewer treatment plant would cost.

Engineer Moore said when the facilities plan was done about eight years ago, it was estimated that brand new mechanical treatment plant would cost around \$50 million.

Director Harrington added that the City is constantly trying to figure out how to keep rates under control. That is why one of the department's strategic goals is to get as much life as possible out of the existing plant.

Dan Seely 303 West Niagara, Astoria, stated he opposed the closure of the RV dump station. He is an RV owner and uses the station at least once or twice a month, sometimes more. He just used the station earlier that day at 4:00 pm. It is very convenient and he knew a lot of RVers who would be present if they knew of Staff's proposal. The signs were posted after the busy season, so he was fortunate to have seen them and a lot of people who only RV occasionally are not aware. He had spoken to Engineer Moore and was very pleased with the responses she gave. She was very candid and transparent, which he appreciated. While the dump station is an open portal, it is one small portal. Public restrooms are also open portals to the waste water system and people could flush things down those as well. The dump station is one small facility used by a small group of people, but it has almost no maintenance costs. More water is evaporated out of the reservoir than is used in the hose at the dump station. Engineer Moore had confirmed Staff did not know of any existing problem, that no study had been done to determine if a problem existed, and that there was no data to support the notion of an existing problem. So, the City is building a straw man. He appreciated Staff's concern about keeping the system in good shape. He did not want to see the City spend \$50 million, but he could not imagine that one little RV station would cause the City to have to build a new system. All of the commercially available chemicals are 100 percent biodegradable and are safe for use in septic systems and do not hurt the bacteria in the system. It is not a good idea to completely limit the water in their tanks, so the concentration is probably not quite as bad as Staff thinks it is. Without water, the tanks plug up and cannot be flushed out. At Fort Stevens, it takes 15 minutes to empty tanks on a good day. That means waiting an hour when there are four other people in front of you.

William Olson 92538 State Camp Road, Astoria, said he just found out about this the other day when he happened to use the dump station. He uses the dump station a dozen times a year while traveling up and down the coast in their RV. It is almost impossible to use Fort Stevens because they close the dump station when the ranger station closes and RVers have to go by their guidelines. The next closest dump station is Rainer and he did not know of any to the south. It is at least 60 miles each way to the next public dump station. The dump station is unavailable for the most part for the average user because it is meant for the people who are using the park. Additionally, there are a lot of homeless people living in RVs in Astoria. If the dump station is not available to them, they will dump their waste right where they are parked. The dump station is busy during the summer and a lot of people do not know the City is trying to close it. Staff waited until the slowest part of the year to post any notification, but expects public comments. The three people who showed up just happen to be using it right now, but everyone pays for the dump station in their taxes. All of the chemicals that RVers use are biodegradable and the little bit of dumping done at the dump station has a great effect on the whole system. The increased use of public restrooms in the summer has 100 times more impact than the RV dumping at one little station.

Unidentified Speaker, no address stated said the dump station was very nice compared to most. Sometimes she drives out of her way just to use the dump station in Astoria because the angle is right and it is clean. It would be very disappointing if it closed.

Councilor Brownson stated he lives right by the dump station and watches everything that comes and goes. The majority of the people are using the dump station responsibly, but not everyone. Some people miss and cannot get the hose in the hole, so stuff gets all over the place. And then they just drive away and leave the mess. He cleans it up when he becomes aware of it, but this time of year, the high school athletes run right through there. The high school students are being exposed to something they are not even aware of. He asked if it would be reasonable to delay a decision since it is winter and allow the City to look at the problem closer. Staff could come up with a solution to mitigate use by bad users and possibly charge a fee. There are businesses who want to use the dump station as well, which has its own set of issues. Part of the problem is the location of this dump station relative to the sewage plant. The sewage does not have much time to dilute before reaching the sewage plant.

Director Harrington said he spoke with various agencies that accept RV waste and industrial pretreated waste. A while ago, there was a series of RV dump station closures along the I-5 corridor. Part of the reason Astoria's dump station is so popular with people from out of state is because they have very limited places to discard of their waste, especially for free. He agreed that the amounts of sewage were small, but it is uncontrolled. In order to control and monitor the use of the dump station, most cities have moved the dump station to their waste water plant. That is not a good option for Astoria because RVers would have to drive through Alderbrook, down a very narrow road, and through a locked gate. The dump station is pretty far from the plant so the sewage has time to dilute. A lot of cities have mechanical plants that can screen out the industrial waste that clumps up. In Astoria, the waste goes through the plant and out to the river if it does not settle in the lagoons. When the water goes out to the river, it must meet State standards. Astoria is exceeding the State's limits

every once in a while and must fight really hard to bring the numbers down. The City spends \$12,000 a year on microorganisms that help the levels readjust. Getting samples and figuring out the exact impacts would be a very expensive study. But Staff knows the RV dump station is probably not helping the situation and the City is looking for a variety of different ways to help the system. Staff's recommendation is based on information gathered from the scientific community, other agencies they have talked to and best practices.

Councilor Brownson wanted to give Staff more time to study the situation. Astoria is experiencing increased tourism, which means more toilets being flushed.

Director Harrington said Astoria was not required to be in an industrial pretreatment program and the City is trying to avoid that.

Councilor Nemlowill supported the closure of the dump station. People in Astoria would like to affordably flush their toilet. Closing the dump station will be a terrible inconvenience to some people who attended the meeting, but for the greater good of Astoria, the Council needed to do what Public Works Staff recommended to extend the life of the sewage treatment plant. Bringing clean water into homes is one of the most important things the City does, but it is taken for granted. The City should not continue to have an unchecked, free RV dump station so that tourists can dump their crap, making rate payers in Astoria pay more money.

Councilor Brownson clarified that he was suggesting looking at the possibility of minimizing the impact and making sure the City has a good strong argument about the impact the dump station actually has. Astoria is providing its system for free to anyone who comes through, which is great for those who live in Astoria. But Astoria is also services people from all over for nothing. If this is a small issue that does not have the impact that will make or break the system, he wanted to be sure before taking a service away. Astoria has a strong tourist economy and wants to support that economy. As long as the dump station is not hurting the City, then there is a good argument for leaving it open. If the dump station is doing harm, he would not have any problem closing it.

Councilor Nemlowill said every time the Council talks about doing anything proactive in the City, we talk about resources. If Staff is going to continue to study the RV dump station it will take resources, time and money. She did not want to spend any time and money studying the dump station. Even if Staff came to some conclusion, it would still be an unchecked site. She respected Public Works Staff enough to value their recommendations. She did not see any reason why Council would not approve their recommendation tonight.

Councilor Price said she was ready to support closing the dump station. She did realize there was commercial or residential use of the dump station. She just thought it was a convenience for tourists. The dump station is getting a lot more use that she thought. She had a lot of faith in the Public Works Department because they are transparent, honest, and they look at things very carefully before going forward.

Councilor Jones stated he did not like the idea of taking away a convenience from Astoria residence, but he believed the majority of users in the summer months were not residents. He did not believe the City should have a strain on its system provided by people passing through town. If the Council was not in favor of closing the dump station he believed a chain link fence should be installed around the site and charge a fee to anyone from out of town. However, putting a system like that in place would cost money and require a monitor. He was in favor of closing the dump station.

City Council Action: Motion made by Councilor Nemlowill, seconded by Councilor Price, to approve the closure of the RV Dump Station beginning December 31, 2018. Motion carried 4 to 1. Ayes: Councilors Price, Jones, Nemlowill, and Mayor LaMear; Nays: Councilor Brownson.

Item 7(c): Request to Trim Trees on City Property - Stull

Paul Stull, owner of the property at 211 W Kensington Ave, has submitted an application for permission to trim trees on City property. The City owned property is to the west of the Stull property and includes Tax Lot 4300; Map 80918BA. Mr. Stull has obtained all signatures of adjoining property owners. The trees to be trimmed are Big Leaf Maple and appear to have been trimmed in the past. The applicant has hired Young's River Tree Service LLC to do the trimming. The trees are located partially within an Oregon Department of Geology and Mineral Industries rock slide translational area. Since the trees are only being topped and no trees are proposed to be removed, a geologic report has not been required. Should City Council agree to approve this request, staff recommends the following conditions:

1. Applicant shall employ any erosion control measures required to stabilize all disturbed areas and assure that new growth is fully established.
2. Tree height reduction shall be no more than 25 percent.

Based on the information presented above and a site visit by City staff, it is recommended that the request to trim trees on City property be approved.

City Council Action: Motion made by Councilor Jones, seconded by Councilor Brownson to approve the request by Paul Stull to remove trees, with conditions, on City property. Motion carried unanimously. Ayes: Councilors Price, Jones, Nemlowill, Brownson, and Mayor LaMear; Nays: None.

Item 7(d): Protecting America's Public Lands Heritage

Mayor Arline LaMear has requested discussion regarding an elected official sign-on letter in support of public lands conservation. The letter (attached in the packet) has been provided by the Mayor to determine if the full Council would like to sign.

Councilor Brownson was concerned that the author of the letter was unknown.

Councilor Jones added that if this was a letter from a political action committee or other political group, he would like to know which one.

Mayor LaMear said she looked through her emails and could not determine where the letter originated. She agreed to drop the discussion.

NEW BUSINESS & MISCELLANEOUS, PUBLIC COMMENTS (NON-AGENDA)

Rick Bowers 357 Commercial, Astoria, said Chief Spalding and Officer Hansen were doing a fantastic job on the issues with the homeless camps. CCA and Helping Hands did a fantastic job as well. He was concerned about people who fall through the cracks. On the last day of the encampment on the other side of the American Legion, he encountered a woman who was frantic because she had no place to go. The group had agreed to be out by 10:00 pm that night, so he walked her over to CCA. She collapsed and was unable to say she had no place to go. The stumbling block is her comfort dog. She had a letter from a doctor stated he had a comfort dog, so Helping Hands and the rescue mission could not take her. The kennel was closed that day, but the woman had refused to put her dog in a kennel anyway. This was like asking a blind person to give up their seeing eye dog. He left the woman, who said she would find some hole to sleep in for the night. There are gaps in spite of the wonderful services in Astoria.

Michael Martin, no address stated said he had been working on a homeless project for about seven years trying to get the federal government to craft a bill addressing the bulk of the entire problem. Homelessness is not a city, county or state problem. Homeless people are in harms way because they are abused, assaulted, and stabbed. Asking someone to leave a tent when they do not have anywhere else to go makes them very vulnerable. It is wonderful to have a City Council that listens and he was thankful to see what has happened. Chief Spalding came to one of the camps and took pictures of a big mountain of stuff that has been there for going on ten years. The pile is finally being removed because someone brought in a dumpster. This is not just about the homeless people in the city. It is about everything that goes with it. This is a very complex situation. If City Council can find a way to take the authority away from the private sector organizations and create a halfway house program using the rescue mission building, that would allow people to get on their feet. It is impossible to get a job when people have to shower at a certain time, eat at a certain time, and be required to take all of their stuff with them when they get up in the morning. The Department of Transportation allows people to stay on their property for 90 days after they give a warning. The City's camping ban is another vicious cycle where he managed to get sustainable employment, save money, and almost get on his feet only to be forced to move. With no place to move to, you lose your job and you have to spend all your money. When the City takes the authority away from the private sector and takes care of people, then the problem will be solved.

Dorothy Olson 127 Washington Street, Astoria, said she instigated the protest. She wrote a letter in response to an article titled "Boiling Point", but she was not sure it would ever be printed. The plan outlined to pass the camping ban at the last City Hall meeting might have been a misunderstanding to anyone who did not attend the meeting. City Council passed the ordinance because they had been promised other options to people who fall through the cracks with their animals.

Uniontown seemed like a legitimate option. CCA would provide tax receipts to local motels and the KOA Campground for unused spots. Because there was a misunderstanding, she proposed that the City designate a few pieces of wooded land near a bus line as well as a parking lot for people living in their vehicles. The designated areas should have sanitation so that people do not use the restroom in alcoves. If the City designates camp sites, people should sign leases so that they have rental history. This would be a temporary solution until suitable housing was built. The camps could be used for tourism after the homeless find housing. In every social circle, there are people who flick cigarette butts, steal, and act like jerks. However, she has witnessed this behavior more from locals than from homeless people. The bans on parking and camping make homelessness harder than it already has to be. When the housing is built, the camp will be a tourist attraction where people can camp in the woods of Astoria.

The City Council recessed to Executive Session at 8:50 pm.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

Item 9(a): ORS192.660(2)(i) – Performance Evaluations of Public Officers and Employees

The City Council will meet in executive session to discuss a performance evaluation.


The regular session reconvened at 10:29 pm.

ADJOURNMENT

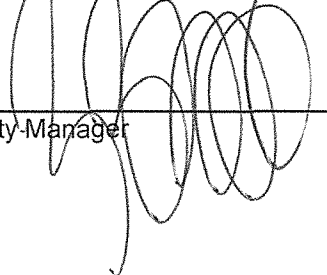
There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 10:30 pm.

ATTEST:

APPROVED:



Finance Director



City Manager