

A work session of the Astoria Common Council was held at the above place at the hour of 9:00 am.

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

Councilors Excused: None

Staff Present: City Manager Estes, Finance Director Brooks, Public Works Director Harrington, Library Director Pearson, and City Attorney Henningsgaard. The meeting is recorded and will be transcribed by ABC Transcription Services, Inc.

PRESENTATION ON LIBRARY REMODEL FROM HENNEBERY EDDY ARCHITECTS

City Manager Estes said Hennebery Eddy Architects had been hired earlier in the year to develop concept plans for the library remodel. After review and discussion of the concept plans, Staff asked that City Council provide direction on how to move forward.

Director Pearson thanked the library staff and said they were the heart of the library. He introduced the project team: David Wark, Hennebery Eddy Principal; Ruth Metz, Ruth Metz Associates; Ann Gyde, Consultant. He thanked the Friends of the Library and the Library Foundation for their support. He also recognized Esther Moberg, Oregon Library Association President Elect.

David Wark, Ruth Metz, and Director Pearson gave a PowerPoint presentation on the concept plans that were developed for the library renovation. The presentation included an overview of the guiding principles of their approach, existing conditions and history of the library, and details of the concept plans with explanations about how each element of the plans would satisfy current and future needs of the library. Concept plans included architectural details, equipment, furniture, amenities, activity and programming spaces, meeting spaces, high level cost estimates and a tentative project timeline. Examples of other library projects done by Hennebery were also shown.

Councilor Jones said he believed the concept plans were fabulous. He noted that the Maritime Museum had an education department that offered youth programs and their staff would be happy to assist with the design of the renovated library's youth programming. He asked if the difference in annual operating expenses between the existing and renovated library had been estimated. His only concern was that the stacks would be closed. People need to be able to walk into the library and browse the stacks so they can discover books, walk up to the counter with a stack of books, and check them out. He understood there would be a cost issue associated with having the stacks in the basement remain open because the area would need to be monitored.

Mr. Wark responded that the entire children and teen collections would be accessible.

Councilor Jones noted that the adult collections should be accessible as well.

Director Pearson explained that Staff was moving forward with the idea that operating costs would remain flat through new efficiencies. He was planning for the same sized staff as he currently had. Utility costs would likely decrease or remain the same. The mezzanine would be lost as part of the renovation because it would be cost prohibitive to bring it up to code. A lot of thought went into the closed stack concept. Most of the items kept in the basement would be research and other rarely used materials while the popular items in the collection would be more accessible. Patrons would still be able to browse stacks, but it would be different.

Unidentified Female Speaker 1 stated she used to browse the adult collections as a kid as well. She especially loved the reference books. If the downstairs is developed the way the presentation showed, it would not have to be either/or. The downstairs could have a meeting space so that other people would be on that floor. The most used collections could remain upstairs and Staff could give out browsing passes to the closed stacks. There should also be a trained presence in the basement to help people browse.

City Manager Estes explained that the library was funded by the City's General Fund, where adding capacity was most difficult. Staff is evaluating what could be done with currently available funding in the renovated library. This project would include staffing efficiencies so that Staff could do more with limited time. He would be concerned about building a library that needed more Staff and then the library would not be able to open or function as built.

Councilor Nemlowill said the exterior architecture was great balance of preservation and progress. She agreed with Councilor Jones concerns about closed stacks and asked what Director Pearson thought about the plan.

Director Pearson stated the community input provided in 2013 drove his actions since he was hired. He believed the concept plans answered the question that was asked of the community in 2013. It is a 21st Century library that serves as a destination for the community and the plans generated excitement for the people who would be using the library. He had directed Mr. Wark to create a children's space where literacy skills can be built, and the teens would have their own separate area. Everyone in the community would have to contribute to make the library a destination for Astoria. Studies show that libraries can be economic generators. When the building was built in 1966, just as much thought was put into the library as the community is putting in now. City Council gave Staff a mandate and all of the deadlines have been met. Now, it was time to move forward. He invited everyone to the concert sponsored by the Foundation and the Liberty Theatre. He added that historic items were being preserved and the library was partnering with the Maritime Museum to bring researchers into the community. He shared the history of how the original library building was funded and said this renovation should honor what was given to Astoria.

Councilor Price said she loved the details in the plans and hoped the Foundation would be able to find the money. She asked for a report now and quarterly updates on fundraising so that Councilors would know how to reach out to the community to find money.

Mayor LaMear stated the City currently had a total of \$1.6 million from the Logan Fund and carbon sequestration revenues. Smaller grants have provided about \$150,000. Having the concept plans would make a big difference as Staff requested funding from foundations.

Councilor Price confirmed there was no grant writer, marketing professional, or fundraiser specialist for the project.

Kate Deeks, Astoria Library Advisory Board, noted that marketing was being done through the Foundation's Facebook page.

Ms. Metz added that the Foundation would have a pivotal meeting next week to organize a game plan for fundraising.

Mayor LaMear said several people had provided strategic plans in the past and all of those plans would be combined into one. The Foundation board meeting on July 17th would be a two-hour workshop to develop an action plan that would identify who would do what and when tasks needed to be complete. Each board member would receive a handbook that would include all of the work done over the years, including the Needs Assessment, the strategic plans, the by-laws, and the concept plans.

Ms. Metz stated she wanted feedback from City Council and the community about the concept plans and the two-phase approach. The Foundation needed a sense of whether the community was fully behind the plans.

Director Pearson explained that Seaside's foundation took three years from inception to raise the necessary funds. Astoria's Foundation was restarted in February 2017 and they continue to move forward and make progress. People are getting excited and are starting to get involved.

Councilor Price believed the concept plans and a strategic plan would be the building blocks of the project. A good grant writer and marketing professional could lift up the fundraising efforts. The library is a historic building of national significance and people are interested in maintaining and preserving these types of buildings. She believed the fundraising would take off once the right person was in place because the building blocks had already been completed. The timing was good as well because the Foundation had six months to get its ducks in a row before the next granting season started in January.

John Goodenberger stated he agreed with what Ms. Metz and others have said. The existing building contains a lot of investment from the community from 50 years ago. It is a wonderful palate to work from. The design takes into account the existing characteristics and moves the building forward. The plans seem to answer the questions and requests of the community for a 21st Century library.

Mayor LaMear called for public comments.

Unidentified Female Speaker 2 asked if the downstairs expansion would require additional Staff.

Mr. Wark explained that there was a lot of discussion about staffing. Relocating Staff to the south area and installing an internal book drop would be safer and more efficient. Currently, the downstairs is self-serve. Reservation and card key systems could offer security, but Staff might still need to accompany library patrons to the basement to show them around. The ability for Staff to see the entire reading room eliminates the need to go to the mezzanine to see what is going on. Time spent on unproductive activities would be traded for time spent with patrons.

Unidentified Female Speaker 2 stated that trade off should be emphasized anytime fundraising is done because people will think an expansion means more Staff.

David Oser, Library Foundation, thanked City Council and City Manager Estes for offering to help with the fundraising efforts. This project is a public/private partnership by definition and Council's assistance with the Foundation's fundraising will be very important.

Unidentified Female Speaker 3 thanked everyone who had worked on the plan. The secret to the library's success is the tours of the basement led by Director Pearson. His enthusiasm is fabulous in such a dark and dreary place. She loved the aesthetics in the plans, but agreed that the stacks should not be closed. Her favorite thing to do in a library is to browse the shelves and she rarely goes in knowing what she would be checking out. If she had to spend money buying books, she would not have money to give to the library. The co-op held a lawn preparation fundraiser that raised \$1.5 million in six weeks. She had done a lot of fundraisers and the co-op's was beyond fabulous. She suggested the Foundation and Staff consult with Matt Stanley, Ally Evans, and others at the co-op to learn how they raised funds. The library renovation is possible and necessary and it will bring life to town.

Kimberly Chaput, Astoria Library Advisory Board, said she knew \$5 million was a lot of money and the Foundation would be pushing it to get there. She asked how much the project would cost to do both phases at the same time.

Mr. Wark said he had not run those numbers, but he believed it would cost about 10 percent less as general conditions could be consolidated.

Esther Moberg stated the project was very doable and she was excited for Astoria. She appreciated City Council's support because the entire community would have to come together with the Foundation. Making the entire adult collection available is workable. There are spaces along the walls and lower shelving could be installed in the reading area. Some items do not need to be always available, but there are other options. The interlibrary loan system would cost \$8,000 a year and require more Staff time, but would allow the library to offer more to its patrons.

Director Pearson added that Astoria and Seaside used the same computer system and Warrenton would be implementing it soon. Astorians could already get books from Seaside and Warrenton, but the process was difficult and time consuming. He was discussing the possibility of a shared system among the three cities. This would decrease costs and provide access to more materials. He promised to figure out a solution to the closed stacks and said patrons would continue to see the books that are currently available to the public.

City Manager Estes clarified that the design of the main reading room already included shelves along the perimeter.

Mr. Wark noted that furniture could be moved, shelves could be added, and storage could remain in the basement. The space was kept open so that it could be changed over time. Current stacks in the mezzanine

were built from a prefabricated system that is not ADA compliant. Consultants have indicated there is no way to adjust it and rebuilding the area would be a huge expense.

Councilor Nemlowill said an elevator in the entry way exclusively for Staff use would only make sense if Phase 2 were developed. She asked if the elevator could be put at the back of the building if only Phase 1 were developed.

Mr. Wark said yes, but that would result in several challenges for Phase 2. The public would not be able to easily access the elevator and it could compromise other floors of the building. The location of the elevator seemed odd, but it was the best location possible.

Ms. Metz added that when the downstairs was complete, the public would need to use the downstairs outside of the library's operating hours.

Mr. Wark noted that Staff would need the elevator to move materials if there were closed stacks. He confirmed that regardless of Phase 1 or Phase 2, the location was preferable because of the building's mechanics. He displayed the floor plan and explained how locating the elevator in other locations would compromise the use of spaces in the building.

Councilor Nemlowill asked if Director Pearson wanted to implement the project in phases or do it all at once.

Director Pearson said Council directed Staff to develop a plan for \$5 million, which was included in the concept plan. He was excited about both options because they would both transform the library and make it more efficient. Both options would meet the projected needs, but he would prefer the phased approach because it would give the library the best opportunity to provide more and grow. He was confident that a renovated library would bring more people.

Kegan Rascoe stated the Foundation was dedicated to more than just the four walls of the library, but also to the idea that the library is an institution that needs to grow to its full potential.

Councilor Price believed City Council's goal was to break ground in 2020 and not be tied to a specific dollar amount. She did not see how Staff could commit to a phased project at this point. After a year of fundraising, the library would hopefully have a consultant with experience on board. Then, the consultant could say what the difference would be between fundraising for the first phase of the project and fundraising for the entire project. She would be willing to give Staff another year to break ground in 2021 if a consultant said money was available and both phases could be done at the same time.

Councilor Jones said he preferred that the Foundation pursue raising \$5 million for the entire project. Phase 1 could be the back-up plan if raising that much money were not possible.

Councilor Brownson agreed with Councilor Jones. The City should aim for the full expansion and a smaller expansion should be the back-up plan. Costs would increase as time goes on, so the time to do this is now. He asked if there would be more opportunities to discuss the general design and get more elaboration on the details.

Ms. Metz explained that the Needs Assessment, Building Program and library industry best practices indicated a tremendous need for zones in the library. Some of the small meeting rooms could be expanded and used in a variety of ways. That flexibility allows the library to meet service needs.

Karen Baltier-Long, Library Foundation Board, said she worked at Job Corps and she had worked with Director Pearson on library access for the students. She came to Astoria from a small town in the Bay Area of 25,000 people. They built a brand new library, but did not account for a lot of what had been included in the concept plans for Astoria's library. They ended up with a nice children's area, but not much else. It never became a community center, so that library really depends on their friends group and foundation for money to keep going. Astoria needs to move forward with the renovation because it would breathe a lot of life into the library and would get people excited about coming to the library. The meeting rooms could possibly generate income.

Director Pearson listed potential uses for meeting rooms that the library could not currently accommodate. He believed the rooms would be used a lot.

Mr. Wark explained that the largest programming request is individual study space. He listed other uses for the smaller meeting rooms and said they become a lynchpin of connecting volunteers with opportunities to help others. As soon as Hillsboro opened their new library, the meeting spaces were booked for months out, one by a statewide organization. He recommended Staff speak with the Hillsboro library about how they manage their meeting spaces.

City Manager Estes said these concept plans were the final product of the contract with the architects. He confirmed that once funding was in place for whichever option the City decided to move forward with, the architecture team would be engaged again to develop construction documents. Staff would fully vet more detailed designs with City Council.

Councilor Brownson said the difficult to browse room should be easily accessible and easy to control by Staff.

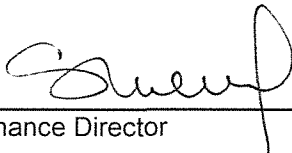
Anne Odom stated she was one of the Staff who ordered books. The library has gone from books on tape, to CDs, and now to Play-Aways, which take up minimal space. With the security system, Staff is not afraid the DVDs would be taken. Technology makes things smaller and gives Staff more space for books. She enjoyed browsing and believed people did not want that taken away from them. Even though it sounds like a lot of books would go in the basement, most of what fills the shelves now are medical and legal books. By law, the library must replace those books when they are out of date. They are also looking for ways to replace 10 books with one book that contains all the same information. Staff is not trying to take anything away from anyone. Popular collections will still be seen.

Director Pearson concluded by highlighting the work Staff was currently doing to provide amenities and services to the community. He wanted to make continuous changes so that the City would not be in the position again where they would have to spend \$900,000 to maintain a building. People make decisions about where to live based on the infrastructure in place, which includes good schools, a great community, and a great library.

ADJOURNMENT

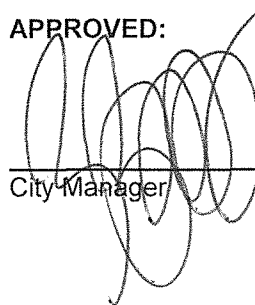
There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 11:10 am.

ATTEST:



Finance Director

APPROVED:



City Manager

