

A work session of the Astoria Common Council was held at the above place at the hour of 1:00 pm.

Councilors Present: Brownson, Herman, Rocka, West, and Mayor Jones.

Councilors Excused: None

Staff Present: City Manager Estes, Parks and Recreation Maintenance Supervisor Dart McLean, Finance Director Brooks, Fire Chief Crutchfield, Police Chief Spalding, Public Works Director Harrington, Library Director Pearson. The meeting is recorded and will be transcribed by ABC Transcription Services, Inc.

REGULAR AGENDA ITEMS

Item 3(a): City Council Goals Update

City Manager Estes handed out copies of the January work session discussion on Staff's work towards implementing the goals. Staff provided updates and discussed each goal with Council as follows:

- **Support work and recommendations of the Homelessness Solutions Taskforce (HOST) as well as other community efforts to address homelessness.**
 - Staff is actively moving forward to create a homeless liaison position. Councilors were encouraged to share this with their counterparts at the County because the liaison is intended to serve all jurisdictions in the county.
 - Mayor Jones suggested an AmeriCorps RARE intern serve as a liaison while the position was in its pilot phase. Staff and Councilors briefly discussed the pros and cons of using an intern to develop a program.
- **Support efforts to increase housing supply using the County Housing Study as a guide.**
 - Staff and Council discussed specific housing projects, which were all progressing slowly. However, once the projects have been proven successful, it will be easier for future projects to get funding.
 - The need for transitional housing was discussed. The Harbor and Clatsop Community Action have been unable to place people. Councilor Rocka believed it would be beneficial to have a work session with developers to find out if the City could do anything to reduce building costs, but it was noted that transitional housing typically does not produce a profit. Additionally, the materials are usually the biggest expense and removing requirements will not save money. Councilor Herman recommended that local hotel owners provide rooms, especially during the winter.
 - Councilors agreed the City has little to offer. Astoria does not have system development charges, excise taxes, funding, and very little land. However, the City could partner with an agency capable of getting funding, and the State is mandating some incentives through policy changes.
 - Mayor Jones noted that one unintended consequence of more tenant-friendly laws is that landlords become reluctant to rent to high risk households.
 - Staff provided a brief update on the landslide ordinance and explained that Astoria is more prone to landslides than a tsunami or flooding.
 - Four years ago, Staff began working on updating the accessory dwelling unit (ADU) ordinance. However, when the community pushed back, Council had directed Staff to stop the work. Now, the State is mandating changes, which will lead to increased density. Mayor Jones noted that it might be necessary for the Council to have the political will to change Codes in ways that people will be unhappy about.
 - Most of the housing being developed in Astoria now will be affordable. And while the housing being built in Warrenton is not affordable, it is still housing being added to the market, which opens up housing elsewhere when people move.
- **Explore options to enhance long-term financial sustainability of the Parks department.**

- The new marketing plan would allow the Parks department to do a better job of making people aware of their services. Mayor Jones suggested marketing Port of Play to tourists.
- The Council and Staff discussed day care services. Two area daycare centers are closing, so Staff was looking for ways to expand the City's daycare services. The School Board Superintendent has expressed a desire to help in any way. However, the City's daycare services do not bring in a profit and Grey School will be going through a renovation. Staff is looking for creative ways to use the space they already have at Grey School. They have also raised the cap on the number of kids allowed in the afterschool program at the Recreation Center and are looking for creative ways to use more space there as well.
 - The Council and Staff briefly discussed potential classrooms at churches and other facilities in the city. Staff noted that offering services at multiple locations adds complex logistics and the need for more oversight.
- **Pursue a public-private partnership for the redevelopment of Heritage Square to include housing.**
 - Mayor Jones said Staff did not have the capacity to pursue this goal right now without a Community Development Director and the upcoming Code amendments.
- **Increase disaster resilience among the community, City Staff, and facilities.**
 - Staff is always looking for outreach opportunities to engage with and educate the public. City Manager Estes listed recent outreach events and activities. Councilor Rocka suggested the events and activities be added to KMUN's free community calendar. The events would be read on the air several times throughout the day.
- **Explore options for revenue generation, expense reduction, and streamlining processes to allow staff to focus on priorities.**
 - Mayor Jones said Staff does a great job of accomplishing this goal anyway. They are very talented and efficient.
 - Councilor Brownson expressed concern about burnout. City Manager Estes explained that while there has been a lot of investment in technologies to assist Staff, those technologies take time to get on board and they must be managed.
- **Maintain Astoria's unique character in Council decisions, including those involving zoning, growth, and economic development.**
 - Mayor Jones said he believed this goal was being accomplished at every meeting.
- **Vigorously support renovation of the Astor Library and the Foundation's fundraising for it.**
 - A consultant would be hired to help plan for a bond measure and a master fundraiser would also be hired.
 - Staff provided details of grant funding requirements. The master fundraiser would help raise the matching funds, which were required by April 2025. City funds will not count towards the match.
- **Work with community partners to implement the five-year economic development strategy.**
 - The economic development strategy was completed two years ago. The Council and Staff discussed the projects that had been completed since then, and City Manager Estes provided a brief overview of the plan.

Item 3(b): Astoria Police Department and Astoria Fire Department Building Update

City Manager Estes said Staff had been working to identify a site that addresses the needs of the Fire and Police Departments while also lowering insurance rates.

Chief Crutchfield and Chief Spalding gave a PowerPoint presentation on the possibility of moving into a new public safety facility for police, fire, and the dispatch center. Staff's work has included a needs assessment, identification of one or more appropriate sites, and an analysis of long-term needs. The presentation included an overview of the current conditions of existing facilities, deficiencies of those facilities, current and anticipated needs, the impact of facilities on insurance rates, a detailed analysis of potential sites, and next steps.

Mayor Jones called for a recess at 2:33 pm. The meeting reconvened at 2:41 pm.

The Council and Staff discussed the potential for a new facility with the following key comments:

- The space needs study would be complete in about six months, and possibly the site selection study as well. Funding was available to complete both of those studies.
- Staff was not aware of any state or federal funding but would continue to pursue opportunities. Mayor Jones believed a bond might be necessary.
- Staff provided details of their current disaster response measures and explained how their response could be improved with better facilities.
- Councilors briefly discussed city properties that might be appropriate. Staff had explored a few city-owned sties that seemed to the fit their needs just so they could get response time and travel distance data. However, more exploring is necessary to determine the best available site.
- Staff and the Council discussed the possibility of consolidating dispatch with other services. While this would require significant technological upgrades, the City could benefit from economies of scale. The City could sublease a portion of a facility if it could not accommodate City services. Additionally, space could be offered to the County, currently looking to move their public works to a more centralized location and out of the tsunami inundation zone.

City Manager Estes noted that the agenda for the March work session would include discussions on system development charges, parklets, and lights crossing roadways. The Astoria Downtown Historic District Association (ADHDA) would be invited to participate.

Councilor West asked for an update on the chronic nuisance ordinance and the exclusion zone. Chief Spalding said his goal was to present them to the Council in April or May.

ADJOURNMENT

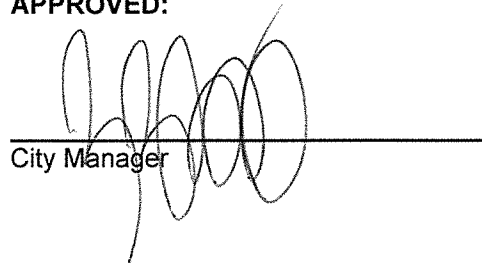
There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 2:29 pm.

ATTEST:



Finance Director

APPROVED:



City Manager