

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

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

Councilors Excused: None

Staff Present: City Manager Estes, Parks and Recreation Director Dart-Mclean, Finance Director Brooks, Fire Chief Crutchfield, Public Works Director Harrington, and Library Director Pearson. The meeting was live streamed and recorded, and will be transcribed by ABC Transcription Services, Inc.

PRESENTATIONS

Item 3(a): Fire Department Presentation: Aaron Bielemeier and Jake Rummell Celebrate 15 Year Anniversaries

Mayor Jones shared the career history of Engineer Jake Rummell and Engineer Aaron Bielemeier

Chief Crutchfield noted some of the projects that Engineer Rummell and Engineer Bielemeier were currently working on. He thanked both of them for their service and presented each of them with a 15-year pin.

REPORTS OF COUNCILORS

Item 4(a): Councilor Rocka reported that he attended a National League of Cities (NLC) webinar on strategies to support homelessness and at risk residents in light of Covid-19. Several cities were represented that had great success and all of them had focused on providing housing first coupled with supportive services. All of the cities had established a common goal among the agencies. Houston used Covid-19 funds from the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) to finance what they did and are reporting a 90 percent success rate after two years. An increase of homelessness because of Covid-19 would not be immediately evident and will emerge over time. He also watched the live stream of the reopening ceremony for the waterfront bridges.

Item 4(b): Councilor West reported that she also attended the NLC webinar, which had a lot of great information. She was asked to be on a League of Oregon Cities panel for their annual conference on social media. Social media was her least favorite medium for outreach or communication, but she agreed to be on the panel. She was unable to attend the waterfront bridges ceremony because she was camping. However, she received a text message with a photograph of the plaque, which was beautiful. She looked forward to seeing the plaque in person. She had a phone call with Senator Johnson to discuss funding for arts and culture, which was finally included in the CARES Act. The funds will be distributed by the Oregon Cultural Trust and through the Clatsop County Cultural Coalition. She encouraged arts and culture organizations to visit the coalition's website to find out how to obtain the funding. She offered to help organizations apply. She reported that she would not be running for re-election. She would be providing an explanation later, but noted that her schedule was the reason.

Item 4(c): Councilor Brownson reported that it was great to be down at the water for the bridge opening ceremony. The reopening took a lot of work and the businesses had a difficult time. The project finished on time and the bridges look great. Assistant City Engineer Moore deserved a lot of credit for her work on the project. He congratulated Engineer Rummell and Engineer Bielemeier on their 15th year with the City. Their longevity means a lot. They have institutional memory, knowing where the City has been and where it is going. He said she was sorry to see Councilor West go and he looked forward to her service in the future.

Item 4(d): Councilor Herman reported that she attended the celebration of the completion of the bridges project. Assistant City Engineer Moore's great leadership got this project done. When she congratulated Engineer Moore, Engineer Moore said the project was a team effort. City Historian John Goodenberger ensured that the new bridges' design elements complemented Astoria's historic character. She and Mayor Jones

attended the opening of the Astoria Birth Center, located east of the 14th Street dock. The facility fills an important need in the community and it is close to the hospital. She noted that Bruce Burney had passed away. Mr. Burney served as the City's library director for 30 years. She offered condolences to his wife, Christina Burney.

Item 4(e): Mayor Jones reported that the Fire Department had responded to two home fires. Both fires were put out before the homes were destroyed. The Police Department and a Clatsop Behavior Health staff responded to an incident on the Megler Bridge. The person who had climbed to the top of the bridge came down safely after about five hours. He said Assistant City Engineer Moore, the Public Works Department, City Manager Estes, Oregon Department of Transportation (ODOT), the City's contractors and all those who came together with the business owners affected by the closures brought the Waterfront Bridges project to completion.

CHANGES TO AGENDA

No changes.

CONSENT CALENDAR

The following items were presented on the Consent Calendar:

- 6(a) Parks Advisory Board Meeting Minutes Dec. 2019 – June 2020
- 6(b) Library Advisory Board Meeting Minutes for June 30, 2020
- 6(c) Designation of Certifying Officer for Community Development Block Grant

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

REGULAR AGENDA ITEMS

Item 7(a): Second Reading and Consideration of Ordinance to Revise Astoria Code Index Relating to Repealed References Cleanup

Over the past few months, APD staff reviewed the City Code index to ensure that the index referenced sections were cross referencing text sections correctly. Errors were found in the index and the attached ordinance makes the appropriate corrections. A public hearing and first reading were held at the July 20th Council meeting. It is recommended that Council conduct a second reading and consider adoption of the ordinance.

Director Brooks conducted the second reading of the ordinance.

Mayor Jones called for public comments. There were none.

City Council Action: Motion made by Councilor Rocka, seconded by Councilor West, to adopt the ordinance revising the Astoria Code Index relating to repealed references cleanup. Motion carried unanimously. Ayes: Councilors Brownson, Herman, Rocka, West, and Mayor Jones; Nays: None.

Item 7(b): License to Occupy a Portion of the 1st Street Right-of-Way Adjacent to 33 W. Bond Street

The City has received a request from Elaine Saunders, resident of 33 W Bond Street, to occupy a portion of the 1st Street right-of-way in order to construct a garden shed. City staff has reviewed the application and can support issuance of a License to Occupy with conditions. It is recommended that City Council approve a license to occupy, subject to the noted conditions for a portion of the 1st Street right-of-way adjacent to 33 W Bond Street for the purpose of constructing a garden shed.

Mayor Jones called for public comments. There were none.

City Council Action: Motion made by Councilor Brownson, seconded by Councilor Rocka, to approve the license to occupy a portion of the 1st Street right-of-way adjacent to 33 W. Bond Street. Motion carried unanimously. Ayes: Councilors Brownson, Herman, Rocka, West, and Mayor Jones; Nays: None.

Item 7(c): Consider Update to Parks Maintenance Job Descriptions

The Parks Maintenance Division has experienced many personnel changes over the past decade and it has become apparent that job descriptions and required certifications for the Parks Maintenance Supervisor and Grounds Coordinator need to be updated to better reflect the essential functions and purview of both roles. The HR Manager has worked closely with Parks Department staff to refine the descriptions and has also coordinated with the Parks and General Employees' union representative, since the Grounds Coordinator is a represented position, to ensure that all parties are satisfied with the proposed changes and updates. It is recommended that Council approve the updated position descriptions for the Parks Maintenance Supervisor, Grounds Coordinator, and Novice Grounds Coordinator.

Councilor West said she appreciated the information about what was changed. She learned a lot about the numerous certifications required for the positions and she believed Director Dart-McLean's recommended changes made more sense.

Councilor Herman agreed and said she believed job descriptions should be reviewed regularly to keep them relevant.

City Council Action: Motion made by Councilor Brownson, seconded by Councilor Herman to approve the updated position descriptions for the Parks Maintenance Supervisor, Grounds Coordinator, and Novice Grounds Coordinator. Motion carried unanimously. Ayes: Councilors Brownson, Herman, Rocka, West, and Mayor Jones; Nays: None.

Item 7(d): City Council Goals Discussion

Mayor Jones has added this agenda item so that Council could review the goals which will apply for the upcoming fiscal year. The Mayor has suggested that Council should review the goals to determine if there are any changes necessary in light of the COVID-19 pandemic emergency. A copy of the current City Council goals is attached.

Mayor Jones said he requested this item be added to the agenda because it had been a year and a half since the goals were established and he wanted to review the goals in light of Covid-19's impact on the City and the community. He asked if Staff wanted any of the goals changed, withdrawn, or postponed. Since the pandemic started five months ago, the Council has focused on public health, the impact on the local economy, and the sustainability of the City's ability to provide public services. He recommended that at a future meeting, the Council consider adopting the following additional goal: "Respond to the Covid-19 pandemic balancing public health, the local economy, and the long-term sustainability of the provision of public services." He also noted that the Library Foundation had received a grant which requires a three to one match. The grant funds would focus on the basement and would be contingent on raising the additional \$3 million for the rest of the library. Given the economic impact of the pandemic, he recommended the Council discuss pushing that goal back a year.

Councilor Rocka stated the Mayor's additional suggested goal was good. He did not believe any of the other goals should be eliminated, but the Council might need to decide where the focus will be, considering the limited resources due to Covid-19. He wanted to prioritize the goal on the housing supply, but needed to know how Covid-19 was affecting the City's housing supply. There is a lot of vacant housing in the city and he hoped Staff could reach out to the owners to find out what the issues were. He also wanted the City to work on a public/private partnership to find a facility for providing housing. One of the goals was revenue generation and that is probably most important right now. The goal to focus decisions on Astoria's unique character is not affected by Covid-19 and is always a goal.

Councilor Brownson said the Council will have to reconsider the goals through the lens of the current emergency situation. The City has just gone through several years of Development Code changes and Staff has been working hard on a lot of projects. He was interested in Staff continuing to work on the projects that have already been started. He did not want to impose any new projects on Staff right now because the City has limited

resources. He wanted to focus on City services, infrastructure, and the water supply. The City also needs to work on moving the Fire Department out of the tsunami zone and working on emergency preparedness. The City is not currently collected Park fees or transient lodging taxes, so Staff should focus on the management issues. The Council should discuss the library and making some hard decisions. The library building will get worse over time and he did not know how much longer that work could be postponed. The City should make the improvements it can when money is available.

Councilor West said she did not want the library grant funding to go away because things are on hold right now.

David Oser, Library Foundation, stated the deadline is December 2023 to achieve the matching funds. The Foundation could request an extension, given the circumstances. There is no danger of losing the grant in the near future.

Councilor West noted that the budget was passed with the understanding that adjustments might be necessary because revenues are so uncertain. She wanted to be careful about being too ambitious about things that cost a lot of money. Astoria and Clatsop County lacks transitional housing and she wanted to prioritize homelessness and affordable housing. She also recommended adding a goal regarding equity, similar to the one adopted by Columbia County. Astoria has an inclusivity resolution, and she wanted that to be updated as well.

Councilor Herman said it was hard to know how much the City would have to spend to hire a part-time grant writer, but she wanted to find out. There was no way of knowing how the revenues would turn out in the next fiscal year, but it was safe to say they would be impacted negatively. She wanted to include funding for a grant writer in the next budget because she did not want to see the grant for the library go away. The library has serious deferred maintenance and construction costs will only rise. She was concerned about the challenges with homelessness and she hoped the Homelessness Solutions Taskforce (HOST) could begin meeting by Zoom in the near future. She liked the idea of having a homelessness liaison who would work one on one with homeless individuals and link them with available services, and sharing that expense with the County and Warrenton. She was also concerned about lack of affordable housing. Housing is coming online but she was not sure how affordable it would be. Most Astorians earn well below the median income in the county.

Mayor Jones stated the large development plan for Tongue Point had been held up by several factors, including the federal road.

City Manager Estes added that additional housing units were being constructed. The Merwyn Hotel was being renovated and residential developments have received land use entitlements. Infill homes are also being built on lots throughout Astoria. The amount of development going through the Community Development and Public Works Departments is tremendous and Staff has stayed very busy through Covid-19.

Director Pearson noted that the deferred maintenance on the library would be fine for the moment. Taking the emphasis off of the library for a year would not put the Department in a situation it could not recover from. There is currently \$860,000 in deferred maintenance. The most pressing issue is the roof. A temporary patch has been installed this year due to the work being done on the Merwyn and Public Works is following up on further repairs. The roof has been holding solid and he hoped the roof would last another couple of years. He and City Manager Estes were in the process of identifying grant writer costs before the pandemic hit. The scope of work will determine the cost and he believed a grant writer would cost \$10,000 or \$20,000. He was not looking for a grant writer right now. If the Council wanted to move forward with a bond measure, the City would need to hire a bond professional instead of a grant writer. Astoria is not competitive for grants because other communities have fewer resources. He believed the grant the library currently has is all that it will get.

City Manager Estes clarified that hiring a consultant to work on a bond measure would cost \$10,000 to \$20,000. The Council had discussed hiring a grant writer, which would cost hundreds of thousands of dollars.

Director Pearson added that Astoria's median income is higher than other communities. Additionally, there are not a lot of grants available for building renovations.

Councilor Herman asked if the library could contact well-heeled out of town donors who have invested significant money in the community for other projects.

City Manager Estes explained that would require the City to hire a fundraiser. During Covid-19, non-profits are looking for ways to survive. Hiring a fundraiser in the middle of a pandemic might not be right when looking for large contributions for a library.

Mayor Jones said the current situation could linger or get worse over the winter. The economy could take a downward spiral from its current position. Hiring a fundraiser or bond measure consultant would be money poorly spent. A lot could change in the next several months and there is no way to tell what impact the election will have on the economy and on the pandemic. The Council might make different strategic choices in 2021. He suggested the cemetery master plan goal be revised because the master plan is complete and investing in implementation will be difficult.

City Manager Estes stated the Parks Department is operating under a new reality, running as a fraction of itself. Staff is looking at ways to make strategic decisions moving forward and most of the work being done currently is on the aquatic and recreation side of the department. All recreation activities will be held at the Aquatic Center when facilities are allowed to reopen. The budget was modified to track cemetery finances more clearly and transparently.

Director Dart-McLean said the Master Plan recommended that the City capture at no cost a better way of managing the cemetery finances separate from the Parks Department. The City has a reliable temporary worker taking care of the cemetery grounds and Staff will be looking at the large revenue drivers. With the baseline pieces stabilized, he was confident that the City will be able to implement the Master Plan in the future.

City Manager Estes reminded that the goals were two-year goals. The Cemetery Master Plan has been completed, but the rest of the goals were still very relevant and provided direction to Staff.

Mayor Jones said the Heritage Square project was put off with the thinking that when a Community Development Director was hired, the City could move forward on it. A public/private partnership might have involved State funds, which are now gone due to Covid-19. He asked how the economic crisis in regard to State funding impacted the feasibility of moving forward on a request for qualifications (RFQ) for Heritage Square in the next calendar year.

City Manager Este responded that there are still questions about the specific impacts to the various State departments. The Council should consider whether the project will have an affordable housing component. Prior Councils have specifically stated they did not want affordable housing on that property. He reminded that the Council has also directed the Community Development Department to make several Code amendments, which are in process and will be presented to the Council in the fall. After that, the Community Development Department will work on the formulaic business ordinances and the 5G technology ordinance, one of which involves a lot of community interest. However, work will continue on the Heritage Square project.

Mayor Jones stated he believed Heritage Square should stay on the radar because it is an opportunity to turn a lot into something that generates some revenue, creates jobs, and provides housing.

City Manager Estes noted there was a lot of uncertainty in construction, but the housing market in Astoria is remaining strong.

Mayor Jones said the vision statement was still relevant and he did not want to change any part of it.

Councilor Herman asked why earlier Councils did not support affordable housing at Heritage Square.

City Manager Estes explained that the Council felt the development needed people with the resources to strengthen the downtown retail environment.

Councilor Herman said she supported a mix of affordable and market rate housing, but mostly affordable.

Councilor West noted that affordable housing was one of the goals and many people who need housing right now work downtown. She asked if the City received a quote on the membrane roof that was recommended for the library.

City Manager Estes explained that if a brand new roof were installed on the library now and remodeled the building several years from now, the new roof would have to be redone. The City received a bid to redo the entire roof with a membrane material four or five years ago for around \$200,000. The Council had wanted to budget for a new roof several years ago, but changed their mind when they learned that remodeling the building would require a new set of rooftop equipment and drains.

Councilor Brownson said it made sense to roll that expense in with the remodel as long as the building is doing okay. At one time, the Council had a lot of questions about how to get anything built on Heritage Square. Adding affordable housing to the mix would require finding a developer to take on that space and figure out a way to make their project pencil out.

Councilor Rocka added that he supported affordable housing at Heritage Square. There is a huge shortage of housing that people who work in the community can afford. He did not want to take that goal off the table because there may be a blend of things that works well for everyone. He wanted to see more housing that baristas could afford.

Councilor West stated that the City would need to partner with an agency whose goal is providing affordable housing and has access to State and federal funding that a developer would not have access to.

Mayor Jones said one of the key points of the disaster resilience goal was looking at possible sites for relocation of a combined public safety building. He asked Staff for an update on that.

City Manager Estes said Chiefs Spalding and Crutchfield had done that work and were to report to the Council. However, with Covid-19, the protests, and other activities, that progress has slowed down.

Chief Spalding added that he knew it would not be the time anytime soon to consider a bond measure, so he put the work on that goal in a holding pattern.

Mayor Jones asked what Staff needed from Council in order to prioritize.

City Manager Estes responded that Staff did not need anything specific. Before Covid-19, the Council and Staff were having work sessions on the goals. He hoped those would continue again starting in the fall.

Mayor Jones said the vision remains solid and the goals are all worthwhile.

City Manager Estes noted that the work session in August would include a discussion on the wastewater treatment plant, as recommended by the economic development strategy.

Councilor West asked if City Manager Estes felt okay about Staff's current workload.

City Manager Estes responded that the work is about prioritizing what Staff can do. The City has not hired temporary Public Works employees who would be mowing rights-of-way and Staff is starting to hear comments from citizens about that. Staff is working through a backlog. City Council has directed the Parks Department to prioritize child care and the ability to bring on child care employees has been a challenge. The Community Development Department will be hiring a full-time building official/code enforcement officer.

Mayor Jones asked if the expiration of the \$600 per week federal relief would make it easier to hire child care staff.

Director Dart-McLean said that was difficult to answer. It has always been a challenge to find reliable staff to do the very difficult job of caring for different children with different needs. He has tried to emphasize to the community that the City is in desperate need of more part-time staff.

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

Councilor Herman thanked Councilor West for setting a high bar for the next Councilor.

City Manager Estes said a special City Council meeting was scheduled for Thursday, August 6, 2020 at 6:00 pm to consider the appeal of the permit extension request for the Hollander hotel.

ADJOURNMENT

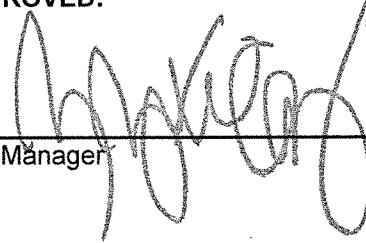
There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 8:26 pm to convene the Astoria Development Commission meeting.

ATTEST:



Finance Director

APPROVED:



City Manager