

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, Hilton, and Mayor Jones.

Councilors Excused: None

Staff Present: City Manager Estes, Parks and Recreation Director Dart-McLean, Community Development Director Leatherman, 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, LLC.

REGULAR AGENDA ITEMS

Item 3(a): Review of City Council Goals 2021-2023

The City Council and Staff reviewed each goal, discussing the progress made on each goal, work necessary to achieve the goals, and the amendments needed in order to continue making progress on the goals. They also shared details about State Statutes and other external factors that impact Staff's ability to work on the goals. A copy of the Astoria City Council Vision and Goals for Fiscal Year 2021-2023 was included in the Agenda packet. For each goal, key comments from Councilors and Staff were as follows:

Goal – Work with community partners to implement the five-year economic development strategy. Coordinate with Clatsop Economic Development Resources (CEDR), Astoria Warrenton Chamber of Commerce, State of Oregon Regional Solutions Team, and other economic development entities on post COVID-19 pandemic recovery.

- Mayor Jones noted that the Fort George & Buoy Beer expansions were the heart of the Advance Astoria 5-year economic development plan. He confirmed for Councilor Brownson that the City's economic development strategy identified the distillery hub as a major part of the strategy. The City was also working on housing and the Port of Astoria Waterfront Master Plan as part of the strategy. He added that he believed the formulaic business code amendments should take a back seat to the work already in progress.
- Councilor Brownson asked if the plan should be revisited since 2022 was the fifth year of the 5-year strategy. Mayor Jones said he believed that updating the plan should be discussed with the community partners involved.
- Councilor Herman believed that considering updates to the plan was not called for right now. The City had been responsive to the needs of businesses, so she suggested the goal be amended to state, "Continue to be responsive to the needs of the business community, particularly during the pandemic."
- Councilor Rocka agreed but said that the City could not have economic development unless people had a place to live, so housing should be prioritized over economic development.
- Mayor Jones confirmed the Council agreed that Advance Astoria had value and the goal should be kept on the list.

Goal - Support efforts to increase the housing supply using the County Housing Study as a guide. The City will focus on workforce and affordable housing overall and will specifically pursue a public-private partnership for the redevelopment of Heritage Square to include workforce housing.

- Mayor Jones asked who the City could help facilitate middle income workforce housing, noting that there were no grant funds to help build this type of housing. City Manager Estes explained that the challenge with middle income housing development was that all of the easy-to-develop properties in Astoria were already developed. Some City owned parcels could be sold, but Staff did not have the capacity to work on Heritage Square and developing other parcels at the same time.
- Councilor Brownson stated the City should focus on areas that were currently being developed, which were in Warrenton because that is where the capacity is. He also noted that the development by Tongue Point would add housing.
- Councilor Herman asked for update on two development projects.
 - Staff said the property between the Safeway store and Public Works shops was being developed. Construction and the inspection process had started and despite supply issues, the project was moving forward.
 - Director Leatherman stated the developer of the property by Tongue Point had completed a plat, but had been speaking with Staff over the last year about increasing the density and number of units in the development. Staff was still working with the developer to come to an agreement about grade and emergency response issues. A permit extension request for the development was on the agenda for the next the Planning Commission meeting. However, Staff did not believe the developer would move forward with that permit.
- City Manager Estes explained that the Buildable Lands Inventory says Astoria is deficient in 20-year land supply for low density residential development. The only way to address that is to consider areas below the Column that are within city limits but outside urban growth boundary. There is a federal land reserve property on the east side of Astoria that artificially lowers the inventory but counts as eligible developable property because it is zoned residential. The inventory suggests doing an urban growth boundary swap, but this would be an expensive, time consuming and difficult process.

Goal - Ensure long-term infrastructure sustainability through future infrastructure funding on needed water, sanitary sewer, storm sewer, road and bridge upgrades, as well as continuing high quality watershed management.

- Mayor Jones said even though infrastructure sustainability was already a priority for the Public Works Department, listing it as a goal makes a statement to the community about how the Council keeps the City running.

Goal – Increase disaster resilience and awareness among the community, City staff, and facilities.

- Councilor Hilton understood that citizens were notified online and by phone call. He asked how to improve notifying citizens who do not have or use the internet. City Manager Estes responded that the County Emergency Management Department was reviewing the recent tsunami advisory to find ways to utilize Clatsop Alerts and get messages out.
- Councilor Hilton asked for an update on the fire boat. Chief Crutchfield said the City did not own or poses a fire boat, but the Port purchased several fire boats through Dept of Homeland Security Port Security grant several years ago in partnership with the City of Vancouver. The Fire Department has a memorandum of understanding (MOU) with the Port that requires the Fire Department to staff the boat when staffing is available, and the Port provides the boat, fuel, and maintenance. The Port had been dealing with some challenges updating and replacing some of the equipment on the boat, but the Fire Department continued to train more staff to operate and work on the boat. Astoria did not have a dedicated fire boat team. Therefore, response protocols are limited to daytime calls in good weather and in good conditions.

The next two goals were reviewed and discussed simultaneously.

Goal - Enhance public safety, through quality of life, community outreach, community involvement, and community policing.

Goal - Support work and recommendations of the Homelessness Solutions Taskforce (HOST) as well as other community efforts to address homelessness. Explore partnerships for housing first programs and a County-wide drop-in center.

- Chief Spalding confirmed for Councilors that Clatsop Behavioral Health (CBH) hired a new crisis response person to focus solely on Astoria, and one to focus on other areas of the county.
- Councilor Herman asked for an update on the exclusion zone. Chief Spalding explained the rules that applied in exclusion zones, how the rules are enforced, and said implementing the zone had been deprioritized due to COVID-19.
- Mayor Jones and Councilor Herman indicated they wanted Staff to pursue an exclusion zone.
- Councilor Rocka stated he was not opposed to exclusion zones, but due to court rulings, the City could not tell someone not to camp in a park unless the City had a place for people to camp. The City needed to focus on designating a place where it is okay to camp and provide services. Chief Spalding responded that law enforcement struggles with this situation because their hands were tied but they want to respond in compassionate ways.

Mayor Jones called for a recess at 2:38 pm. The meeting reconvened at 2:43 pm.

Goal - Begin Phase 1 of the Astoria Public Library remodel while continuing to pursue additional funds for subsequent remodel phases and / or scope which could be added to Phase 1.

- Mayor Jones believed it was important for this Council to move forward on Phase 1 of the Library project because the City had opportunities with carbon credits, State stimulus funding and the Logan Memorial Fund, which provided a total of about \$2.2 million for Phase 1. He also supported a bond measure to take advantage of the \$500,000 from the National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH) and additional funds required to do the originally envisioned full project. However, it would be important to know how community felt. Getting data from a polling agency would indicate the level of support for project and what a bond measure would cost.
- Councilor Herman said it made sense to hire a polling consultant.
- Councilor Hilton asked for details on a polling agency's scope of work. City Manager Estes explained that people participating in the election would be polled.
 - Councilor Hilton responded that he wanted to prevent backlash responses from people who wanted to know why the City was pursuing a bond measure for the Library, where the idea for a bond measure came from or who believed that the City had already done enough on the project.
 - Mayor Jones said preventing backlash was one advantages of doing a poll.
- Councilor Brownson said he supported polling, but also outreach before a bond measure is added to the ballot. Mayor Jones noted that the Council could make a decision about how to move forward with the project when the polling results came back and if the Council supported a bond measure, the City would do outreach until the election.
- Councilor Rocka stated he agreed with polling.
- City Manager Estes confirmed Staff would start pursuing polling keep the Council updated. Additionally, Staff would hold off on Phase 1 of the project until receiving the results of the polls and direction from the Council.

The City Council and Staff discussed prioritizing the goals. City Manager Estes asked the Council to consider the Code amendment work necessary to achieve several of the goals as they discuss priorities. He recommended Code amendments for the Port Waterfront Master Plan be postponed until after the plan was adopted. All the Councilors indicated they supported working to complete the Port Master Plan.

City Manager Estes explained that some of the housing Code amendments were State mandated, and some were recommended in the housing study. Staff would have to do some housing analyses and hire consultants for this work. He asked how the Council wanted to prioritize housing Code amendments and formulaic business Code amendments. All of the Councilors said the housing Code amendments should be prioritized.

City Manager Estes noted that Staff would discuss with the Council moving forward on the geohazard slide ordinances after the residential Code amendments were complete.

Mayor Jones called for public comments. There were none.

Mayor Jones said he was pleased with the goals and believed that if this Council could make significant progress on Heritage Square, the Library and Port Waterfront Master Plan, it would be a good year.

City Manager Estes added that these goals were well-refined and targeted. Despite the pandemic, Staff had made good progress towards achieving the goals.

Councilor Rocka stated Staff should be proud of their accomplishments. He suggested the list of goals, what has been accomplished so far, and what has been funded by grants be distributed to the public.

Mayor Jones advised against asking Staff to take on more work.

City Manager Estes explained that Staff did not have the capacity to create a written report but would create one as timely as possible if it was a Council priority.

Councilor Herman said she was appreciative and grateful for all the work Staff does for the community.

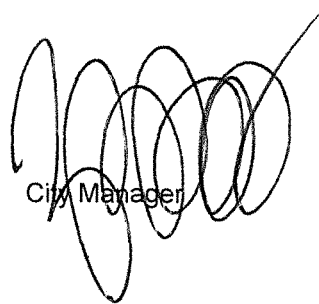
ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 3:10 pm.

ATTEST:

APPROVED:


Finance Director


City Manager