

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

Councilors Present: Nemlowill, Herzig, Warr, Mayor LaMear

Councilors Excused: Price

Staff Present: City Manager Estes, Police Chief Johnston, Community Development Director Cronin, Planner Ferber, Parks and Recreation Director Cosby, Finance Director Brooks, Fire Chief Ames, Library Director Tucker, and Public Works Director Cook. The meeting is recorded and will be transcribed by ABC Transcription Services, Inc.

REPORTS OF COUNCILORS

Item 3(a): Councilor Nemlowill had no report.

Item 3(b): Councilor Herzig reported that he, Director Cronin, and Planner Ferber attended the quarterly Columbia River Estuary Study Taskforce (CREST) meeting, where annual dues were discussed. Astoria's member dues are currently \$5,000 per year. On Wednesday, May 4th and Wednesday, May 11th, he would participate in diversity training at the Seaside and Cannon Beach Police Departments. Speed bumps have been installed on Alameda near West Klaskanine, which took several years. He reported that the owners of a rental house on his block have decided to sell the house. Unfortunately, the tenant might have to move out of Astoria due to lack of housing.

Item 3(c): Councilor Warr said in the Letters to the Editor section of the May 2nd edition of the *Daily Astorian*, the City's appraiser, Steven Weed, who appraised the property on Alameda, responded to the accusations Shel Cantor had made at the last City Council meeting. He encouraged everyone to read the letter. He believed it was bad to accuse someone of wrongdoing without having any indication that something wrong was done.

Item 3(d): Mayor LaMear reported the Budget Committee meetings lasted three nights. She also attended the last meeting of the Clatsop Community College presidential candidates and a good person has been selected. The staff and faculty gave a lot of input into who was hired and they are all happy about the person who was chosen. She also attended the Clatsop Community College Foundation dinner, which raised \$30,000 thanks to Senator Betsy Johnson.

CHANGES TO AGENDA

There were none.

PROCLAMATIONS

Item 5(a): Emergency Medical Services Week

Mayor LaMear read the proclamation declaring May 15 – 21, 2016 as Emergency Medical Services Week.

Bob Johnson, Paramedic Supervisor, Medics Ambulance Services, accepted the certificate, briefly reviewed the history of Medics, and noted the services offered.

Item 5(b): Police Week

Mayor LaMear read the proclamation declaring May 15 – 21, 2016 as Police Week.

Item 5(c): National Historic Preservation Month

Mayor LaMear read the proclamation declaring May 2016 as National Historic Preservation Month.

LJ Gunderson, Historic Landmarks Commission (HLC) Chair, thanked City Council, the City of Astoria, and Staff. The HLC was flying blind for a little while without a Community Development Director and Planner. The Commission is back on track now getting great information that allows them to make good decisions for the city. The HLC tries to protect neighborhoods and has been able to do a better job of policing people who do work on their own without following the rules. Buildings downtown are being repainted and repaired and a new grant will benefit Uniontown.

PRESENTATIONS

Item 6(a): Friends of the Astoria Column Annual Report

Jordan Schnitzer, Friends of the Column President, said the memorandum of understanding between the City and the Friends requires the Friends to give City Council an annual report. He displayed the report on the screen and made copies available for the Councilors and the audience. His report included a brief history of the Friends, restoration work done on the Column, efforts to document and store archived materials, an update on the cell tower, a summary of the finances and capital improvement projects, an update on staffing, marketing, and community events, and efforts to complete the master plan.

Councilor Warr said he was amazed at the 30 years of dedication that Mr. Schnitzer has shown to the City of Astoria. Mr. Schnitzer said of all the boards he has served on, the Friends of the Column remains the most inspirational. A lot of non-profits would love to have a solid balance sheet. The little bit of time spent by the Friends helps hundreds of thousands of people each year. It takes people coming together and working toward a good cause. Every time he goes to the Column, he feels lucky that he has been able to stay involved.

CONSENT CALENDAR

The following items were presented on the Consent Calendar:

- 7 (a) City Council Minutes of 4/4/16
- 7 (b) City Council Work Session Minutes of 4/4/16
- 7 (c) City Council Work Session Minutes of 4/5/16
- 7 (d) Boards and Commission Minutes
 - (1) Library Board Meeting of 3/22/16
- 7 (e) Authorization to Execute a Contract for Interim Building Code Services (Community Development)
- 7 (f) Historic Preservation Program – Preserving Oregon Grant (Community Development)
- 7 (g) Authorization for Grant Application to Support Site-Specific Park Plans (Parks)
- 7 (h) Amended Management Agreement between the Friends of the Astoria Column and the City of Astoria (Parks)**
- 7 (i) Heritage Square EPA Grant – AMEC Contract Amendment #3 (Public Works)

Councilor Herzig requested Item 7(h) be removed for further discussion.

City Council Action: Motion made by Councilor Herzig, seconded by Councilor Warr, to approve Items 7(a), (b), (c), (d), (e), (f), (g), and (i) of the Consent Calendar. Motion carried unanimously. Ayes: Councilors Warr, Herzig, Nemlowill, and Mayor LaMear; Nays: None.

Item 7(h): Amended Management Agreement between the Friends of the Astoria Column and the City of Astoria (Parks)

Councilor Herzig asked for clarification on the second and third “whereas” statements on Page 43 of the agenda packet. He understood if the Mayor were appointing members of non-profit boards, the boards would be considered City commissions. City Manager Estes explained that the non-profit is an entity separate from the City, but it was structured in such a way that the Mayor is tasked with nominating board members to better facilitate its relationship with the City.

Councilor Herzig believed their meetings should be public. Even though the non-profit is independent of the City, it becomes a City agency when the Mayor nominates board members. He suggested City Attorney Henningsgaard examine the wording and possibly revise the language. City Manager Estes said the “whereas” statements do not establish any changes, but simply state that the Friends is a non-profit and the Mayor has been delegated to make board appointments.

Councilor Herzig wanted clarification on whether the Friends is a City board. He suggested the “whereas” statement say, “the Mayor recommends appointments to the board.” He was also concerned about the language used in the second sentence on Page 44 of the agenda packet, which states, “The Friends will choose the dates that parking staff and guides would be available.” Additionally, he assumed the master plan for the Column was being developed independently of the Comprehensive Parks and Recreation Master Plan, but he hoped there was some communication between the Friends and Parks Staff about this. Director Cosby responded that last year was the first year that the Column had parking guides, which resulted in increased revenue. The guides also gave visitors information about the Column. When Staff worked with the Friends on the agreement, both parties agreed it would be best for the Friends to schedule their staff because they are the hiring agency. The parking guides financially benefit the City especially now that \$1.00 of the \$5.00 parking fee goes to the City. Also, the Comprehensive Parks and Recreation Master Plan includes a recommendation to create a site plan for the Column. If the Plan is adopted by City Council in July, Staff will coordinate with the Friends as they move forward with a site plan.

Councilor Herzig believed the agreement should state “the Friends will choose the hiring dates” or “employment dates” to add clarity. He did not want to approve the agreement until he had confirmation that the Friends was an independent non-profit and not a City board. He also wanted City Attorney Henningsgaard to recommend language that clarified the relationship between the Friends and the City.

Councilor Warr said the City has had such a wonderful relationship with the Friends. A few clumsy words in the agreement will not materially change the agreement. He did not believe Council should nitpick the wording and suggested any changes be made for the following year.

City Council Action: Motion made by Councilor Warr, seconded by Councilor Nemlowill, to approve Item 7(h) of the Consent Calendar. Motion carried 3 to 1. Ayes: Councilors Warr, Nemlowill, and Mayor LaMear; Nays: Councilor Herzig.

REGULAR AGENDA ITEMS

Item 8(a): Public Hearing – Request to Purchase City-owned Property Adjacent to 323 Alameda Avenue (Public Works)

The City has received a request from Bruce Conner to purchase City-owned property directly southeast of his property located at 323 Alameda Avenue. The City property is approximately 1.0 acre (Lots 25 to 41, Block 17 Map number 80907CD, Tax Lot 06400). At their April 18, 2016 meeting, Council acted to set a public hearing on May 2, 2016. A summary appraisal report has been prepared and the estimated real land value is \$ 47,000. Mr. Conner has indicated a willingness to proceed with the sale. As the cost of the appraisal was \$800, staff is recommending that the additional cost above the \$450 fee set in the City Fee Schedule be added to the sale price for a total of \$47,350. It is recommended the City Council conduct the scheduled public hearing, and if deemed appropriate, approve the sale of City-owned property southeast of 323 Alameda Avenue to Bruce Conner.

Mayor LaMear opened the public hearing at 7:45 pm and called for public comment regarding the sale of the City-owned property adjacent to 323 Alameda.

George McCartin, 490 Franklin Avenue, Astoria, said there were two considerations with respect to the sale of this property. First, on the basis of Council’s past discussions and representations, it seemed as if Council was very concerned about providing affordable housing and bringing in developers of affordable housing. This is a proposal to sell a third of a rather large property. If Council is serious about development, this site would be ideal and it does not make sense to sell some of it. Mr. Conner’s current property is 0.19 acre and the site he wants to buy is 0.32 acre. The most current tax assessment values Mr. Conner’s property at \$67,452. The land he wants to purchase has just as nice or a better view, but he wants to buy it for \$49,000. How can the larger acreage be

valued at so much less when it joins Mr. Connor's property? He reminded Council that they have a fiduciary responsibility to the people of Astoria to get the most out of the land.

Councilor Warr said the property that Mr. Conner wants to buy does not have access to an improved road, it is very steep, and could never be developed for low-income housing. Development costs would be too high, the property would be located directly behind an occupied property without access to an improved street, and it does not have electric, water, or sewer. This reflects the difference in value between the two properties. He believed the appraisal and the price were fair.

Mayor LaMear closed the public hearing at 7:51pm and called for Council discussion and deliberation.

Councilor Nemlowill asked if the City had any current plans or long-term needs for the property. City Manager Estes said no, the property has been on the City's inventory for many years and there has never been a proposal to do anything with it, nor are there any plans to use it in the future.

Councilor Nemlowill asked if City Manager Estes was comfortable with the professionalism of the appraisal. City Manager Estes said after the last Council meeting, he and Director Cook spoke with Steven Weed about the comparables in the appraisal and the County's tax assessment. One comparable valued at \$80,000 was a ready-to-build lot in a subdivision with full infrastructure, which was different from the lot being considered for sale. Mr. Weed worked at the Clatsop County Taxing Office at one time, conducting appraisals. Rough values of many properties were established years ago just to assign a value to each one. Appraisers must consider the market, which is what Mr. Weed used, along with the comparables, to assess the property. He believed the City received a good appraisal and he trusted Mr. Weed's work.

Councilor Nemlowill said she did not have any issues with selling the property to Mr. Conner. She appreciated Mr. McCartin and Mr. Cantor and agreed Council had a fiduciary responsibility. However, she also trusted City Manager Estes' judgment on this sale.

Councilor Warr asked what the property tax revenue would be if the City sells the property. City Manager Estes did not have that information. Councilor Warr estimated taxes would be about \$800 a year.

Councilor Herzig said Mr. Conner has been completely transparent and open with the City and there is no fault in approaching the City to request this purchase. However, the City needs to remember that City-owned properties belong to the citizens of Astoria, not the Council. City-owned properties should only be disposed of with extreme discretion because land is a finite resource. He believe extreme due diligence should be done to confirm the City is getting the best price for the property and will be sold for the best possible use. This is difficult in the current real estate market and in this topography. He did not believe the City has demonstrated it would get the best price for this property or that it would be sold for the best possible use. Therefore, he opposed the sale.

Mayor LaMear said she and her husband visited the property. She had to travel up a very steep gravel road that ends at a parking lot. A muddy trail leads to the area where Mr. Conner plans to build. The only access to the property is through Mr. Conner's property. An easement would need to be installed through Mr. Conner's property, so this is not the type of property anyone would want to develop for affordable housing. The property is right behind Mr. Conner's house and building any other type of housing on the property would not make sense.

City Council Action: Motion made by Councilor Warr, seconded by Councilor Nemlowill, to approve/deny the sale of City-owned property southeast of 323 Alameda Avenue to Bruce Conner. Motion carried 3 to 1. Ayes: Councilors Warr, Nemlowill, and Mayor LaMear; Nays: Councilor Herzig.

Item 8(b): Financial Reports for Fiscal Year Ending June 30, 2016 (Finance)

Under Oregon Municipal Audit Law, the City is required each fiscal year to contract with an authorized accounting firm for the audit of its accounts and fiscal affairs (ORS 297.425). The firm of Pauly Rogers and Co., PC has completed the audits of the City of Astoria and the Urban Renewal Agency for the Fiscal Year Ending June 30, 2015. Finance Director Brooks will provide an overview of the Financial Reports at the Council meeting and will be available to answer questions.

Director Brooks presented the City's financial reports. The auditors found no discrepancies, so no management letter was included in the reports. Minor housecleaning items identified by the auditors had already been discussed during Budget Committee meetings.

City Manager Estes reminded that City Council had approved a contract with the new auditing firm at a previous Council meeting. The contract required the auditors to provide an annual presentation. Director Brooks made the presentation this year since the contract with the previous auditor has ended.

Mayor LaMear congratulated Director Brooks on a clean audit, adding she has done a great job as Finance Director.

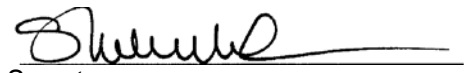
NEW BUSINESS & MISCELLANEOUS, PUBLIC COMMENTS (NON-AGENDA)

There was none.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 8:03 pm to convene the Astoria Development Commission meeting.

ATTEST:



Secretary

APPROVED



City Manager