

## **ASTORIA PLANNING COMMISSION MEETING**

Astoria City Hall

August 7, 2018

### CALL TO ORDER:

President Fitzpatrick called the meeting to order at 6:30 pm.

### ROLL CALL:

Commissioners Present: President Sean Fitzpatrick, Jennifer Cameron-Lattek, Daryl Moore, Jan Mitchell, Joan Herman, and Brookley Henri.

Commissioners Excused: Vice President Kent Easom

Staff Present: City Manager Brett Estes and Planner Nancy Ferber.

Consultants: Rosemary Johnson, Planning Consultant; Matt Hastie and Kate Rogers of Angelo Planning Group.

The meeting is recorded and will be transcribed by ABC Transcription Services, Inc.

### APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

There were none.

### WORK SESSION:

#### **Item 4: Riverfront Vision Plan – Urban Core**

President Fitzpatrick explained the procedures governing the conduct of the work session to the audience and advised that public comments would be taken after presentations.

City Manager Estes explained that this work session was intended to set the framework for implementing the Downtown Urban Core Area of the Riverfront Vision Plan. Presentations would begin with historical information on the waterfront, as requested by one of the Commissioners. This project is a City Council goal for the current fiscal year, so Staff had previously presented similar information to Council at a work session several months ago. At that work session, City Council directed Staff to continue moving forward with the public process necessary to complete the project, without offering any specific direction as to how the Planning Commission should proceed. Therefore, he advised that the Planning Commission refer to the Vision Plan as their guiding document. He introduced the Staff and consultants who would be working on the project.

Matt Hastie, Angelo Planning Group, introduced his colleague Kate Rogers and explained she would be doing the bulk of the work on this project with his assistance.

Rosemary Johnson, Planning Consultant, presented a brief overview of the history of Astoria's downtown, beginning with city's first settlement in 1890. Her PowerPoint presentation demonstrated the evolution of shorelines, development, infrastructure, and population changes over time. She noted the dates of significant events and pointed out the locations of current city features on historic maps.

Mr. Hastie gave a PowerPoint presentation on the Riverfront Vision Plan's guiding principles, goals, objectives, and land use recommendations, with a focus on the Urban Core Area. He also reviewed the approaches used by the City to implement the other three areas identified in the Plan. He posed questions for the Commission to consider as they begin to think about what Code amendments would be appropriate for the Urban Core Area and noted draft Code amendments would be reviewed and refined over three work sessions. In addition to the upcoming work sessions, next steps would include a town hall meeting on September 13, 2018 and a public hearing to adopt the Code amendments and recommend them to City Council. He anticipated the project would be complete by May 2019. He and Staff answered questions and responded to comments from the Commission as follows:



- When the boundary of the Urban Core Area was established, the area included everything north of Highway 30, with Commercial Street being the southerly extension of the highway. Because the area narrows to the east side of the Urban Core, the S2-A zone was not included to maintain consistency with that methodology.
- Commissioner Mitchell distributed to the Commission and Staff a list of questions and considerations she wanted responses to at future meetings. She also recommended the Commission consider the development of a parking district and implementing development fees.
- The only way to amend the Riverfront Vision Plan would be through Comprehensive Plan amendments. The Planning Commission is tasked with interpreting the Plan, not amending it, and developing zoning ordinance language appropriate for implementing the Plan. The recommendations in the Plan are general, so there is flexibility in interpreting the Plan. If the Planning Commission believed the Comprehensive Plan should be amended, Staff would need to facilitate a dialogue with City Council.
- The four areas of the Riverfront Vision Plan were each designed to create a different experience on the River Trail [Riverwalk], beginning with open green space and no development to the east in the Civic Greenway Area. The Urban Core Area recognizes that there is already development built up to and north of the River Trail in a more urban form and opportunities exist to extend the River Trail out over the water alongside existing overwater developments. This area is meant to have a different feel than the Civic Greenway and other areas of the riverfront.

President Fitzpatrick called for public comments.

Robert Clark, 145 2<sup>nd</sup> Street, Astoria, said he lived just to the west of the Urban Core boundary line. He is at the corner of 8<sup>th</sup> and Commercial every week and has noticed the need for traffic control. As traffic on 8<sup>th</sup> Street turns east on to Commercial, many people have almost been hit. He had not received much response from Oregon Department of Transportation (ODOT) on installing a traffic signal at that corner. He hoped City Council would put this issue on a future meeting agenda.

Elizabeth Menetrey, 3849 Grand Avenue, Astoria, said that when discussing visual access to the river, it was very important to consider that most people did not view the river from the Riverwalk, but from the streets and from the rest of town. She was on the Riverfront Vision Planning Committee, which started 11 years ago. At the end of its last meeting, the Committee was told by Blair Henningsgaard that they were simply creating a vision and could not make concrete recommendations. Therefore, it is up to the Planning Commission to be conservative because developers will push as hard as they can to get maximum heights and masses. The vision for the Bridge Vista was sweeping open vistas along the water's edge and broad views along the river. However, much of the Bridge Vista had unrestricted height and mass, which is not sweeping open vistas.

George Hague, 1 3<sup>rd</sup> Street, Astoria, said one of the buildings that was displayed on the screen had burned down since the Riverfront Vision Plan was created at least 10 years ago. He was concerned that elements of the presentation did not match the language in the document. The first slide displayed the document's language, "allowing managed views of the river through building corridors." This means the river can only be seen from between buildings, not from the Riverwalk. However, the next two pictures showed more open views. People might try to say 14<sup>th</sup> Street is an example of a view corridor through buildings, but it is not because 14<sup>th</sup> Street has a wonderful vista off to the east. He had provided the Commission with a letter on August 6<sup>th</sup> and asked Commissioners to read it. The presentation also showed a building on one side of the trail. However, the plan allows buildings on both sides of the trolley tracks, which would create a tunnel along the Riverwalk. He urged Commissioners to refrain from just watching the slides and to actually read the words and interpret them correctly. In Astoria more than in any other city, he sees couples walking along the river holding hands. He believed that was due to the vista. He attended a City Council meeting where the Mayor had indicated that Astoria needed a parking district. The parking shown in the presentation from 10 years is already taken. The City cannot allow the first person who comes in with a project to have parking because the all of the people who come in down the road will not have parking. The Planning Commission needs to identify the parking spaces currently available. He asked that the Commission not accept the idea that limiting parking is the way things are now happening. Cities like Portland are limiting parking, which is appropriate in areas that have transit and bike trails. People in Astoria must use their own transportation to get to the Riverwalk. Side streets two blocks away from the Riverwalk are parked up during the week. Parking spaces should be identified now and not just for the first project that comes along. Parking is needed for the ultimate build out of the vision.

REPORTS OF OFFICERS/COMMISSIONERS:

There were none.

STAFF UPDATES:

The location of the September 13<sup>th</sup> town hall meeting for the Riverfront Vision Plan's Urban Core Area was yet to be determined, but Staff would announce the meeting and its location soon.

Ms. Johnson announced that anyone in the audience who wanted to continue receiving notices about the Urban Core Area could sign up for the mailing list.

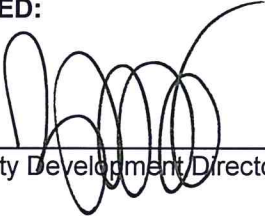
PUBLIC COMMENTS (non-agenda):

George Hague, 1 3<sup>rd</sup> Street, Astoria, said he believed the Parks survey led the public to the outcomes that the City wanted. He hoped that on Urban Core surveys, the questions did not predetermine an outcome the City is looking for. The surveys should be very open.

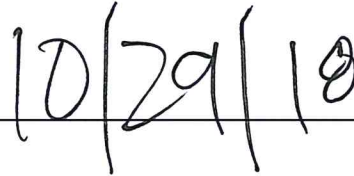
ADJOURNMENT:

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 7:34 pm.

**APPROVED:**



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Community Development Director



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Date