



The park is off Marine Drive downtown between 15th and 16th streets and near the Astoria Riverwalk.

Photos by Lydia Ely/The Astorian

Park: 'Will be here for many, many centuries'

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ident of the heritage association, told The Astorian.

"At one time, 35% of Astorians identified as Scandinavian. The festival is in its 55th year and people keep telling us, 'You come to Astoria and it's only one weekend. What if I can't that weekend?' People want to see the Nordic connection year-round. So that's what we're really hoping for — the park will show that Astoria was a Nordic town and still has many Nordic connections."

Earlier this year, Bowler and Judi Lampi, who led the park committee, were honored by the Astoria-Warrenton Area Chamber of Commerce when they were presented the George Award for community service for their efforts to build the park.

The heritage association reached the fundraising goal last summer after receiving donations from over 400 individual donors, 14 foundations, 11 corporations and two government agencies.

Under an agreement with the city, the association built the park over what was formerly known as Peoples Park. The improvements were dedicated to the city and the association has agreed to carry out maintenance and upkeep.

During the celebration, Mayor Bruce Jones said the park helps preserve Astoria's unique character and inspires visitors to reflect on their own heritage.

"The story of how this park was brought to life from its original dreams and today's dedication is really a reflection of the essence of the immigrant experience that this park celebrates," he said. "Because it's a story of vision, perseverance, grit, a desire to create something



Joan Paddock performed an improvisational piece on a lur, a traditional Scandinavian wind instrument.

better, the willingness to roll up your shirt sleeves and be generous with your hard-earned dollars and just get it done.

"So it's a very Astorian story. It's the story that lies behind so many of the accomplishments that collectively have made Astoria stand out as the great small city that is."

The park was designed by The West Studio, a landscape architecture firm based in Seattle, and was constructed by Rickenbach Construction of Astoria.

The design tells the immigrant story in three parts — "From Scandinavia to Astoria" and "We Said Our Last Goodbyes" to "We Came to Work."

Bowler said the grand entrance from the Astoria Riverwalk represents the journey immigrants took after they said their last

goodbyes.

Icons featured on panels along the railings and below interpretive signs are things immigrants had to leave behind or maybe brought with them. Bowler said the 22 different icons were picked with a lot of thought and include a windmill for the Danes and dala horses for the Swedes.

The path from the entrance leads to an arrival plaza, which features steamer trunks and granite pillars and flags representing Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway, Sweden and the United States. A midsummer pole stands in the middle of the plaza with a chicken on top to represent fertility.

Bowler said most immigrants who came to Astoria at the beginning of the 20th century brought steamer trunks with a few possessions. The granite pillars and flags rep-

resent their pride in country, heritage and traditions.

The path from the plaza guides visitors under a gateway arch, which Bowler said represents immigrants coming to work. The arch features flags that light up at night.

The path continues past interpretive panels that explain the significance of Scandinavian immigrants to the North Coast, along with Astoria's traditional Scandinavian neighborhoods and typical immigrant professions. A bench off the path is a place people can sit and reflect on their experience.

There are also six friendly concrete trolls scattered throughout the park that are intended to bring joy and smiles to children and others who visit.

Loran Mathews, the president of the heritage association, thanked the crowd and all the donors and volunteers. He credited Bowler and Lampi for making the vision a reality.

"We think this park will be here for many, many centuries," he said.

Port: 'We've really been in that state of contraction and trying to cut our costs wherever we can'

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facility at this site, whether it be retail, food, a pier to walk on, et cetera," Jeremy McNett, an architect for the project, said.

To kick off development, Astoria Crab & Fish is eyeing the construction of cranes along the side of the pier for unloading fishing vessels.

The group is also looking to potentially add a small-scale processing facility and a number of fishing services, such as cold storage, shower and laundry facilities and leasable space.

Following construction of the cranes, the rest could take time given the engineering, planning and permitting that needs to happen first, McNett said.

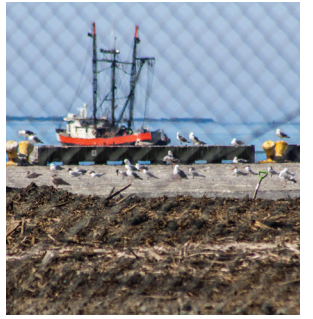
Down the road, Pier 1 could hold spaces for retail, a restaurant and community gathering.

The Port has been looking to occupy Pier 1 since log exports dried up during a U.S. trade war with China. "This is step one — a very important step — to bring commerce to Pier 1," Frank Spence, the president of the Port Commission, said.

Discussions with Pacific Dream Seafoods have been ongoing for over a year, McGrath said, and were done in conjunction with the development of the waterfront master plan.

The plan, a collaboration between the Port and the city, will seek to encourage redevelopment along the Columbia River between Pier 1 and the Astoria Bridge.

A large emphasis is to make the area more suitable for the community while complementing the city's working waterfront.



Edward Stratton/The Astorian
The Port has sought to redevelop Pier 1.

"A lot of the information from the master plan and what the community has been discussing is having something on the piers, having something along the central waterfront that is not just going to appeal to just the cruise visitors or just tourists, but something that can be used by the community, as well, even when we don't have tourists, when we don't have cruise ships," McGrath said.

For Will Isom, the Port's executive director, the new agreement is a sign of progress for the agency following years of financial struggle.

"It feels like, as we've gone through the pandemic and the natural business cycle sometimes, you have these periods of contraction and expansion," he said. "It just feels like with the pandemic and a loss of log ship revenue over these last few years, we've really been in that state of contraction and trying to cut our costs wherever we can."

"... I am hopeful that as we move forward we can get more into that expansion state where we're really looking at opportunities for development and hopefully looking to do some things that we just couldn't do as we've navigated the waters of the pandemic."

Child care: County will contribute \$500,000

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The county will contribute \$500,000 in American Rescue Plan Act dollars to the grant program over the next four years: \$150,000 a year for three years, \$50,000 in the fourth year, Mander-son said.

Columbia Memorial Hospital in Astoria and Providence Seaside Hospital also have pledged funds, Dan Gaffney, a task force leader and former educator, said.

Additional funding sources may come from the state and federal governments, cities and school districts, philanthropic organizations, local businesses and private individuals.

To qualify, child care providers must be licensed or working toward licensing, Gaffney said.

They must be listed in Find Child Care Oregon and be open for referrals, he said.

Providers will be required to accept employment-related day care program funds, provided by the state Department of Human Services, for low-income families.

In addition, they must participate in a program through Clatsop Commu-



Lydia Ely/The Astorian

The lack of child care options has created challenges for parents.

nity College's Small Business Development Center designed to strengthen their business. Northwest Regional Child Care Resource and Referral will pay for their participation for the immediate future.

Northwest Regional Child Care Resource and Referral is seeking a specialist to work with providers on professional devel-

opment and improving their programs.

Commissioner Courtney Bangs, who serves on the task force, said on Wednesday, "We're going to need the community to be involved in solving this continuous issue of this 'child care desert' that we have."

The proposal will soon come before county commissioners for approval.

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