

Minutes of the 2-23-15 Hampton City Council Workshop

The Hampton City Council held a workshop at 6:00 pm in city council chambers. Members present; Hickman, Harms, Lukensmeyer, Davies, Pralle and Freie. Also present were Mayor Boehmler, City Manager Ron Dunt, Public Works Director Doug Tarr and Police Chief Bob Schaefer.

Public Comment: None.

Ron provided a status update of the use of Nixle for mass texting of public safety alerts to citizens. He stated that he and Chief Schaefer have completed the registration process for the services of Nixle. Nixle is a web based service that will allow the city to send mass texts and emails to citizens who register their mobile phone number or email address with Nixle. This service will be used to alert citizens in the event that a snow emergency ordinance is in effect and inform them of other public safety announcements. Ron explained that citizens can either sign up to receive alerts on the Nixle website or just use their mobile phone and text 50441 to 888777. Once they have completed this simple registration process they will receive alerts sent by the Hampton Police Department. Upon completion of registration, Nixle offers registrants the option to receive the messages in Spanish as well. Ron will finalize the press release and forward to elected officials prior to sending to media.

Ron handed out a draft of revision to Section 69.12 Hampton Municipal Code which seeks to clarify the snow ordinance to eliminate some ambiguities in the current code. After discussions, the council directed Ron to include the following in the amendment; utilizing the north downtown city parking lot, the east library parking lot and the Progress Park lowing parking lot as public parking areas available to the public to use during designated snow emergency ordinance events. The vehicles must be removed from these public parking lots within 24 hours after the snow emergency ordinance has been lifted by the city. There will also be a 24 hour limit on front yard parking after snow ordinance has been lifted. Marlene Tapp, 221 1st St. SE provided input regarding parking limitations of the proposed amendment. Steve Everman, 12 3rd Ave NE, voiced input regarding the ordinance amendment, alternate side parking alternative and questioned city snow plow pushing snow on his sidewalk. Doug and Ron stated that the city did research the alternate side parking option and some longtime residents had stated that Hampton tried alternate side parking a few decades ago and found it to be cumbersome and returned to the current policy. City staff conducted a recent poll of 7 other communities comparably sized to Hampton; all disallow any parking on streets during a snow ordinance. Alternate side parking is however utilized in larger cities. Further research indicated that alternate side parking would increase snow removal expenses for the city, increase the exposure to liability having city plows moving snow in streets with parked vehicles and likely to lead to other issues related to messier streets as people clean off their vehicles and drag snow into the clean lane. If remaining snow then hardens prior to the second plowing event, citizens may claim chunks of frozen ice/snow damaged undercarriage parts of their vehicle which exposes the city to lawsuits and insurance claims. The consensus of the council was retain the "no parking" requirement during snow emergency ordinance events. After much discussion, the council consensus was to review the updated draft at the February 26, 2015 council meeting.

Ron reminded the council they will have a Special Session at 6:00 p.m. March 9, 2105 as the time for public hearing and final adoption of the fiscal year 2016 budget and there will be a council workshop immediately following the special session.

The council concluded its workshop at 7:21 pm.