



City of Hampton

22 Lincoln Street
Hampton, VA 23669
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Council Approved Minutes - Final City Council Work Session

Mayor Jimmy Gray
Vice Mayor Steven L. Brown
Councilmember Randy C. Bowman, Sr.
Councilmember Carolyn S. Campbell
Councilmember Michelle Taylor Ferebee
Councilmember Hope L. Harper
Councilmember Martha M. Mugler

STAFF: Mary Bunting, City Manager
Courtney R. Sydnor, City Attorney
Katherine K. Glass, MMC, Clerk of Council

Wednesday, February 26, 2025

1:00 PM

Council Chambers

CALL TO ORDER

Mayor Gray called the meeting to order at 1 p.m. All members of the City Council were present except for Councilwoman Mugler who had a work commitment and will be joining the meeting as soon as she is able. The City Manager shared that the afternoon work session items will be done in a different order than on the published agenda.

Present 6 - Councilmember Randy C. Bowman Sr., Vice Mayor Steven L. Brown, Councilmember Carolyn S. Campbell, Councilmember Michelle T. Ferebee, Councilmember Hope L. Harper, and Mayor Jimmy Gray

Excused 1 - Councilmember Martha Mugler

JIMMY GRAY PRESIDED

AGENDA

3. [25-0032](#) Update on the 2025-2029 Consolidated Plan and Analysis of Impediments to Fair Housing Planning Process

Attachments: [Presentation](#)

City Manager Mary Bunting introduced Hampton's Housing and Neighborhood Division Manager, Jonathan McBride, to present the update on the five-year Consolidated Plan, Action Plan and analysis of impediments.

Mr. McBride greeted those on the dais and said that the information being presented

is what our consultant, Mosaic Community Planning, has worked on with staff and has shared with the community. In addition, public comment opportunities were made available online and another opportunity will take place via the public hearing at this evening's meeting.

First, Mr. McBride spoke about the Consolidated Plan which the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) requires in order for the City to access entitlement funds, which are funds that are received annually from HUD to support community development needs. Two programs are supported through this plan, the Community Development Block Grant Funds (CDBG) and Home Investment Partnership (HOME). This five-year plan includes an annual action plan which is adopted by Council each year that defines the specific activities that the plan will address. The plan also lays out goals for those five years and staff estimates what the goals should be. There is no guarantee of funding over the five years, thus, it is more of a strategy plan for which the City receives an annual allocation. Last year, the City received approximately \$907,000 in CDBG funds and approximately \$505,000 in HOME funds.

Mr. McBride noted that we have not yet received this year's allocation and also spoke about the uncertainty of funding this year due to the current activity going on in Washington D.C. Delays in receiving the allocation is also expected this year as a result of the federal budget process not yet being complete.

Mr. McBride spoke more on the two programs.

The CDBG program focuses on community development needs. Its activities must meet one of the following funding objectives: to benefit low- or moderate-income persons, prevent slum or blight, or meet an urgent need. Most of Hampton's activities fall in the first two categories as the requirement to meet an urgent need typically happens following a disaster. Some examples of eligible CDBG activities include construction of public facilities and infrastructure, rehabilitation of residential structures and public services. Some examples of CDBG funded projects in FY24-25 include Hampton Redevelopment and Housing Authority (HRHA) housing and homebuyer education services and HRHA's wheelchair ramp and exterior repairs programs.

The HOME Program focuses on housing. Funding objectives are to provide flexibility to allow communities to determine priority needs, encourage collaboration with community-based non-profits, ensure long-term affordability of housing, and target assistance to households with less than 80% of area median income. Hampton primarily focuses these funds on acquisition and/or new construction of affordable housing, rehabilitation of affordable housing, down payment assistance

and site improvements, however, another eligible HOME activity is called Tenant-Based Rental Assistance (TBRA) which requires that funds are provided for Community Housing Development Organizations (CHDOs). Hampton's local CHDO is Habitat for Humanity and funds are set aside to construct about two homes per year with the main challenge being the lack of vacant land to build on.

Mr. McBride spoke about income eligibility for these programs which is based on the area median income. For 2024, our area median income was approximately \$100,000, therefore to qualify for programs within these categories, households' annual income for a family of four must be below \$80,000. This equates to affordable housing costs or spending about 30% of their income on housing costs (about \$2,000 per month). Also included in this portion of the presentation is a map which outlines the low to moderate income areas of the City.

The last portion of the presentation is about the City's requirement to work on an assessment of impediments to fair housing. HUD's Affirmatively Furthering Fair Housing Final Rule requires: "Taking meaningful actions, in addition to combating discrimination, that overcome patterns of segregation and foster inclusive communities free from barriers that restrict access to opportunity based on protected characteristics."

Mr. McBride noted that this work was once done through a regional approach, but, now, the City will be addressing these strategies every five years. He then spoke about staff's analysis of impediments which considers fair housing in a broad sense. Staff will look at integration and segregation by race and income and will consider areas of poverty and other areas of opportunity where there may be concentrations of jobs, retail, activities, resources and the housing need/burden. Housing burden refers to how many families are paying more than 30% of their income on housing. Mr. McBride added that this summarizes what the impediment study is and the consultants are gathering this data and will return with key strategies and goals. These are not tied directly to funding, but our activities that are in the Consolidated Plan that should align with the strategies that we are putting into our impediment study.

Mr. McBride paused to open the floor for discussion. The following summarizes the information he provided in response to Council's questions and comments.

With regard to blighted properties, staff has moved away from using Federal funds to do blight abatement work because the objective with HUD is to use funds for affordable housing. In previous years budgets, CIP (Capital Improvement Plan) funds were allocated for blight. Mr. McBride spoke more about the logistics involved in obtaining properties and their uses and added that staff works with HRHA and

code enforcement on these projects.

Tenant-Based Rental Assistance (TBRA) refers to supplementing rent which is being paid monthly. It is not a Section 8 program or a VASH (Veterans Affairs Supportive Housing) voucher, instead, it is income-based, similar to Section 8, but a supplement. Hampton is not currently funding a TBRA.

Habitat for Humanity has criteria for the types of homes that they build. Examples of the criteria include minimum lot size, setback and structure. Mr. McBride is available to contact HRHA for more details about the criteria if needed.

Mr. McBride returned to the presentation and shared some of the questions being posed to the community related to housing needs in Hampton. He noted that the presentation is available online at Hampton.gov/hudplans along with the survey for those interested in taking it. Staff has also reached out to several community organizations to receive input on affordability, community needs and housing needs. The consultants indicated that approximately 170 survey responses have been received thus far and the survey will be open through the end of the week.

The next steps in the process are as follows: Community input will be gathered via community meetings, interviews, focus groups and surveys in February and March; the data and community input will be analyzed to identify community development priorities and fair housing barriers in March and April; draft reports will be presented for public review and comment in May; and final reports will be prepared for Council approval and submission to HUD in June.

Mr. McBride shared some of the input received thus far at community meetings and some of the highly ranked priorities. They include: quality, affordable housing; last mile connectivity which allows people to reach amenities, parks, crosswalks and sidewalks; general community and facility improvements; and improving/expanding community services such as Healthy Families. In addition, the Neighborhood Commission spoke about the need for redevelopment of older commercial centers and finding opportunities for housing within our community.

Mr. McBride closed the presentation and noted that he will bring additional information before Council in the next few months for consideration.

Ms. Bunting reminded everyone that a public hearing will take place this evening on this topic.

Mr. McBride also spoke more about the timeline for providing the results of the survey as it relates to the budget process so that Council will have the information as

early as possible for their deliberations.

4. [25-0072](#) I Value Citizen Outreach

Attachments: [Presentation](#)

Ms. Bunting provided information about the I Value Campaign. This annual opportunity allows residents to provide input on the budget prior to the release of the manager's recommended budget. Citizens are encouraged to take advantage of this opportunity because it allows staff to hear their priorities. This year, citizen participation is of the utmost importance because weighty decisions will be made as a result of the housing market, mortgage rates, tax rate, federal cuts and the potential for some Hamptonians to lose federal jobs which may impact tax revenue for the City.

Ms. Bunting introduced Hampton's Director of Marketing and Outreach, Mary Fugere, to outline the opportunities available for residents to provide their input.

Ms. Fugere greeted those on the dais and also encouraged residents to participate in the process as their opinion makes a huge difference in the decisions made during the budget considerations.

Ms. Fugere began reviewing the slide presentation by stating that all of the budget projects that have been proposed align with Hampton City Council strategic priorities which are economic growth, educated citizenry, excellence in government, family resilience, living with water, placemaking and safe and clean.

Ms. Fugere shared some of the priorities that were expressed by residents during the process. They include employee compensation, retaining the recycling program while addressing steam plant improvements, hand-held technology for Hampton City School (HCS) students, school-zone safety and expanded youth summer employment.

Next, Ms. Fugere spoke about capital investments and operating investments that were included in the FY25 budget. Some examples of capital projects (one-time projects) include Citywide street and traffic maintenance, improvements to the living shoreline, infrastructure improvements to downtown, housing needs, HCS maintenance and technology, and steam plant maintenance and upgrades. Some examples of operating investments (ongoing expenses) include employee compensation, new events, improvements to the senior center and the Y.H. Thomas Community Center, an Information Technology position dedicated to cyber security and investments in workforce development.

The next portion of the presentation was about residents' priorities for the FY26 budget. Some examples of proposed capital (one-time) projects include improvements to the History Museum, Bluebird Bap Farm, library facilities, City Hall, signage, landscaping, fleet, the Hampton Jail Annex, boating equipment and the Hampton Roads Convention Center. Some examples of proposed operating expenses (annual expenses or one-time investments) include an internship program, the Hampton VA250 & Sail250 2026 Commemorations, Hopeful Hampton Temporary Housing Program, training materials for the Police Division, traffic signal system support, integrated library system, marketing and advertising for City events, and tree maintenance.

Ms. Fugere shared the upcoming input opportunities. In-person opportunities will take place on Tuesday, March 18 at 6:30 p.m. at the Hampton VA Aquaplex and on Saturday, March 22 at 9:00 a.m. at The American Theatre. A virtual input opportunity will take place via the City Manager's Facebook live discussion on Thursday, March 20 at 6:30 p.m. Online polling will also take place between March 18-25.

Lastly, Ms. Fugere shared the next steps in the process. The I Value results will be presented on March 26; the City Manager's Recommended Budget will be released on April 15; public hearings will be held on April 23 and May 7; the first reading of the budget will take place on May 7; and the second reading and final approval will take place on May 14.

Ms. Fugere opened the floor for discussion. The below summarizes the discussion.

Several members of Council thanked Ms. Fugere for the presentation.

Councilwoman Harper spoke about creative ways of communicating with all citizens about this opportunity, particularly those who may not be on social media, like senior citizens and the retired community. She spoke about the success of informing residents about the Aquaplex via mailed postcards and suggested that may be a good way to communicate with the public about engagement for this process.

Ms. Fugere agreed that direct mail is an effective way to get the word out and that it can be expensive, but it is worth it. She also spoke about other ways of communication that will be used during the process, including the website, e-News and social media.

Vice Mayor Brown agreed with Councilwoman Harper and shared his experience of speaking with people in the community who have indicated that they were unaware of sessions because they are not on the internet. He added that a lot of this pertains

to senior citizens who typically check their mail every day, so he agrees that mailing cards is a good idea. He said if the resources are available or if Council can help find the money for it, then getting the word out via mail is important because in his opinion, that will help draw more people to the sessions.

Mayor Gray agreed with Councilwoman Harper and Vice Mayor Brown. He mentioned that oftentimes, presentations include statistics about low participation at sessions which leads him to believe that there may be groups that were missed or not reached. He agreed that we need to find a way to market this to a broader group in order to receive additional input.

Ms. Bunting spoke about online polling which reduces in-person participation, but increases overall participation because people like participating from the comfort of their own home. She spoke a bit about the benefit of in-person engagement and then indicated that if Council supports the use of post cards, she will find the money to do that.

Ms. Bunting encouraged residents to come to the in-person sessions if possible. She assured Council that she will do everything in her power to pull off the postcard idea this year and make it an ongoing practice for future years.

Mayor Gray offered kudos to staff for their marketing efforts to include the unique graphics and designs that are being used.

2. [25-0075](#) Analysis of The Hamptons Golf Course and The Woodlands Golf Course

Attachments: [Presentation](#)

Ms. Bunting acknowledged Interim Parks and Recreation and Leisure Services Director, Laurine Press, for serving in this role while a new director is being recruited. She also introduced the item about the study which will examine whether two golf courses are needed in Hampton and the potential uses for the vacant course if it is determined that two are not needed.

Ms. Press greeted those on the dais and shared that in 2022, City Council was given a presentation by National Golf Foundation Consulting which was to do Phase One of the golf course usage study to assess The Woodlands and The Hamptons golf courses with regard to uses, costs and sustainability of the courses.

Ms. Press introduced the founder of Richard Mandel Golf Architecture, Mr. Richard Mandel, to share the current state of the golf courses and the recommended options for them in the future. She noted that Interim Director of the Community

Development Department, Mr. Steven Lynch, would also speak about opportunities and restrictions moving forward. Ms. Press also recognized members of the Golf Advisory Committee who were in the audience.

Mr. Mandel thanked everyone for having him and clarified that he is a golf course architect, not an employee of the National Golf Foundation. The National Golf Foundation (NGF) subcontracted with him to help with the report regarding the golf architecture, but the representative from the Foundation was unable to attend today's meeting.

Mr. Mandel shared a map indicating the location of both golf courses. He also shared the purpose of the study which was to review the courses offerings to determine if they satisfy patrons and to analyze golf in the City of Hampton to determine if there was sufficient demand to support 45 holes of golf (18 at The Woodlands and 27 at The Hamptons). The report was presented to Council in 2022, and has now been updated.

Mr. Mandel reviewed the logistics of the scope of services in phase I of the project. This involved doing an assessment of both courses including a golf operations analysis, market analysis, golf surveys, and focus group tours. This phase also assessed revenue opportunities and included a capacity and utilization analysis.

The next portion of the presentation provides a comparison of the two courses related to size, age, condition, number of holes, amenities (driving ranges and club houses), renovations, revenues, COVID impacts, operating performance, and market analysis takeaways. The market analysis takeaways were both favorable and unfavorable.

Mr. Mandel paused to share a list of competitors in the Tidewater area. They include the Newport News Golf Club at Deer Run, Kiln Creek Golf Club & Resort, Ocean View, Sleepy Hole and Bide-A-Wee.

Next, Mr. Mandel spoke about stakeholder engagement. Engagement consisted of a roundtable discussion with golfers, walking tours, walk-throughs with staff and a golfer survey. Only golfers who played the golf courses in the prior 12 months were allowed to participate in the survey. The Woodlands rated strongly and benchmarked well on several key satisfaction measures including golf course conditions, overall experience and overall value, but the need for overall improvement in the conditions was expressed, especially when compared to other municipal golf courses. The scores and benchmarks for satisfaction levels were lower at The Hamptons, but it received positive responses with regard to convenience of location and tee time availability.

Additional takeaways from the walking tours at both locations can be found in the slide presentation. Also included in this portion of the presentation are lists of examples of aging infrastructure at both courses. Mr. Mandel noted that there have been some bunker renovations at the Hamptons course, but for the most part, the same features that were built in 1991 are still in existence today. The Woodlands course is in a similar situation in that the infrastructure is old with a few exceptions of some things that were rebuilt over the years.

Mr. Mandel summarized the possibilities for improvements at the courses and the estimated cost for them. Irrespective of any potential design changes, the Hamptons Golf Course needs complete reconstruction to replace failing infrastructure, repair drainage and improve playability. The estimated total cost is about \$8.85 million, including mobilization, signage and bonding. The Woodlands Golf Course also needs complete reconstruction to replace failing infrastructure, repair drainage, and improve playability. The estimated total cost is about \$7.4 million, including mobilization, signage and bonding. These numbers do not include potential costs related to repairing the maintenance building or adding equipment storage at either facility.

Mr. Mandel shared a few additional calculations related to financial projections and utilization and then spoke about the most important element of this project for the National Golf Foundation, which is to determine whether there is enough golf for the golfers in Hampton. This involves factoring in things like the number of playable days in a year, average day in light hours and average tee times per hour. In summary, based on capacity calculations, current and expected demand, the National Golf Foundation believes the City's appropriate golf inventory is not more than 27 holes.

Mr. Mandel summarized Phase One of the study as follows: There is a long-term deferral of routine maintenance, and capital investment has hurt the golfer experience. Rounds and revenue are in a negative trend, despite COVID 19. The estimated cost to renovate both facilities, regardless of design, could exceed \$16 million. Other challenges include the absence of modern technology and marketing platforms; the lack of a driving range at The Woodlands; an inadequate range at The Hamptons; and external factors such as the capacity utilization (no more than 27 holes are sufficient to meet the demand of golf in Hampton).

In response to Mayor Gray, Mr. Mandel explained that the drainage issue at The Hamptons can be resolved with renovation via new technology, despite the fact that it is wooded and on heavy soils.

Interim Deputy Director of the Community Development Department, Steven Lynch, came forward to speak about potential reuses for the courses.

First, Mr. Lynch shared information about an agreement regarding closing the landfill that was once where The Hamptons Golf Course is located. The agreement prohibited certain uses for the space in order to protect people from physical or mental hazards, including loud jet noise. It also clarified allowable uses for the site. Examples of prohibited uses include those related to residential, retail, office, religious, hospital and some recreation facilities. The agreement was specific about uses that would create a high density of people being on the site and spoke to limited opportunities such as manufacturing, warehouse distribution center, lumberyard and silviculture (plant nursery) which would involve fewer people. The agreement also referred to the City's intent which was to develop a golf course and create recreational passive activities on the site. The agreement also included considerations and requirements to be adhered to once the landfill closed. These are related to restrictions and/or no restrictions with regard to the environment, noise, the Chesapeake Bay and flood zone.

Mr. Lynch spoke more about the Hamptons Golf Course, zoning designations and the City's zoning ordinance which refers to standards that can be used if specific activities are developed. Some of these specifications are related to building size and height and set back requirements.

Mr. Lynch shifted to speaking about The Woodlands Golf Course. Currently, the zoning requirements refer to limited use of the space for passive recreational use. The Land Use Plan also calls for public/semi-public uses. This site is encumbered by the Chesapeake Bay Preservation District and is encumbered by a flood zone. The potential to develop this site is limited to what the City wants to rezone the site to as rezoning is required in order for the site to be used for another purpose. In addition, two private cemeteries are a part of this area.

Mr. Lynch provided some history about the Woodlands property. When the Woodlands property was acquired, the City used HUD funds to acquire this land, and at that time, there were several restrictions in terms of reuse of this land because of the funding source. In 2021, a letter of confirmation was received from HUD stating that those restrictions no longer exist. This means that the City is free to use this land in the manner it sees fit.

The following summarizes the evaluation of the options presented by Mr. Lynch. The City is losing money annually on both golf courses; both courses are in need of significant improvements and investment dollars to make those improvements; the market and the study demonstrates that Hampton can only support 27 holes of golf;

the reuse of The Hamptons is limited by its presence on a landfill and in the Langley Flight Approach Zone; the Woodlands can be used for other purposes and the City has full latitude to rezone it and use it for any purpose it sees fit.

Mr. Mandel returned to the podium to speak about the Phase II scope of services. This involved reviewing the design of the courses in detail; developing modern, sustainable concepts; creating a broad appeal for the sport for all skill levels; promoting enjoyment; maximizing play opportunities; minimizing maintenance cost; determining preliminary cost estimates for design concepts; considering financial projections; and contributing marketing and promotional strategies for the courses upon reopening.

Mr. Mandel shared that NGF was asked to update the report and focus on two concepts (options): a 27-hole course and a driving range/practice facility at The Hamptons or an 18-hole golf course and a driving range/practice facility at The Hamptons.

Mr. Mandel elaborated on the 18-hole and practice facility concept. He explained that when the number of holes is reduced, there is more latitude to move holes, therefore, part of the design is to move holes away from the wettest portions of the property to improve drainage. Another significant proposed change is to move the warm up area to a more convenient and accessible location. Over the years, the trend has been to focus on practice, so there is an opportunity for The Hamptons to be a profit center because people are willing to pay to practice their golf game at a high-end practice facility. Additional highlights of this concept include increased sets of tees; golf course features similar to features at The Woodlands, including making it more walkable; a 300-yard-long driving range; and the lowland/northern portion of the site returning to its natural state.

In response to Mayor Gray, Mr. Mandel noted that a walkable, enjoyable course is not about yardage or length, but rather how close the greens and tees are to each other.

Mr. Mandel returned to the presentation and spoke about the financial model projections for the 18-hole and practice facility concept at The Hamptons. In summary, projected rounds played in year one is expected to be about 38,000; driving range/practice facility revenue per round could potentially be \$4.50 by year two; and the 10-year pro forma financial model shows a total gross operating revenue of approximately \$1.08 million in year one, growing to approximately \$1.6 million by year 10. Additional projected operating gains and losses can be found on the financial model projections slide in the presentation.

Mr. Mandel began highlighting the second concept for an 18-hole golf course with a practice facility and an additional nine-hole adjustable short course. This concept attracts golfers because it allows them to golf in several different ways. Before moving on, Mr. Mandel shared a few examples of similar projects that have been successful. He then summarized the concept with the following information: The concept includes a total of 27 holes and has the same goals of the first concept related to improved drainage and incorporating characteristics that people love about The Woodlands. Financial model projections for this concept are higher because there are more golf holes. The 10-year pro forma financial model shows the total gross operating revenues of \$1.3 million in year one, growing to \$1.86 million by year 10. Additional projected figures can be found on the financial model projections slide in the presentation.

Mr. Mandel reviewed the cost for each design option. The 18-hole concept will cost approximately \$8.85 million to rebuild and \$8.81 million to remodel, with an estimated stabilized net operating cash flow of approximately \$148,000. The 27-hole option will also cost about \$8.85 million to rebuild and \$9.67 million to remodel, with an estimated stabilized net operating cash flow of approximately \$335,000.

Lastly, Mr. Mandel shared the key operational recommendations from the NGF report. They include: regular nominal increases to cover inflation; tiered pricing to reflect differential demand as opposed to same flat rate; discounts for seniors; increased staffing; utilization of modern technology in operations; and marketing.

Mr. Mandel opened the floor for questions and discussion. Several members of Council thanked Mr. Mandel for the comprehensive report. The following summarizes information provided by Mr. Mandel in response to Council's questions and comments.

It was determined that the best solution to golfers walking the long distance to the clubhouse is to increase staff, some of whom would be responsible for taking golfers to and from the clubhouse in golf carts.

The concept of the 27-hole option includes two courses, one 18-hole course and a separate nine-hole course. The nine-hole course provides an opportunity for golfers who may be apprehensive about playing 18 holes to practice and learn and graduate to the courses with more holes. It also serves as a less intimidating stepping stone to expand the game of golf.

Mr. Mandel spoke about the input received from citizens. Many participants spoke of the standing 7:15 tee time and their loyalty to The Woodlands. He said that the people's love for The Woodlands is a relational thing, but some aspects can be

transferred anywhere, including The Hamptons. In addition, people liked the walkability and the fact that The Woodlands is compact, thus the idea of shrinking holes at The Hamptons to make it more compact. This will help speed up the pace of play and create the intimate experience that people enjoy at The Woodlands. People also expressed that they liked the design characteristics and features at The Woodlands, which was re-designed in 1928 by famous golf architect, Donald Ross. Mr. Mandel shared that he has experience in these municipal designs and has done projects which incorporated them, so he has the knowledge and experience necessary to give The Hamptons a redesign that will have the characteristics and features people are looking for that are relatable.

Mr. Mandel paused to list some of the awards he has received for doing this type of work.

Mr. Mandel spoke more about some of the planned concepts for The Hamptons including tee shot distance equity, tree clearance, widened fairways, drainage improvements and improved putting surfaces.

With regard to restrooms and upgrades to the clubhouse, Mr. Mandel said that the restroom capacity will be adequate and there are plans to work on access to the clubhouse from the parking lot, but Council will need to determine whether there will be upgrades to the clubhouse. He noted that golfers typically come to courses to play golf, not to eat and socialize at the clubhouse. He recommended focusing on golf, doing minor upgrades to the clubhouse, but move away from the idea of a new clubhouse because municipalities that move forward with a new clubhouse typically end up in the red.

Mr. Mandel noted that he was unable to speak on the impact that this project could potentially have on the driving range on Mercury Boulevard. In addition, while this area is not lacking in golf courses, this project will most likely attract golfers from places like Newport News and Suffolk.

Ms. Bunting commented that the goal was to make Council and the community aware of the study results and the next step is to decide what path to take. She reminded Council that money was set aside some time ago for this once Council is comfortable with what direction to take.

Ms. Bunting and Mayor Gray again thanked Mr. Mandel for the great presentation.

Councilwoman Mugler arrived at 2:20 p.m. which was during the

presentation of the Analysis of The Hamptons Golf Course and the Woodlands Golf Course.

Mayor Gray called for a recess at 2:48 and indicated that Council would reconvene at 2:55 p.m.

1. [25-0067](#) Recommendations by the Hampton Electoral Board Concerning Polling Place and Precinct Changes

Attachments: [Proposal](#)
[Presentation](#)

Ms. Bunting stated that our Electoral Board voted to make recommendations concerning our polling places. The recommendations were to change a polling place and also make precinct changes. City Council must consider the recommendations and then approve or reject them.

Ms. Bunting introduced City Attorney Courtney Sydnor and Hampton's General Registrar, Tara Morgan, to speak about the recommendations and outline the legal process by which Council considers them.

Ms. Sydnor greeted those on the dais and said that the Electoral Board made recommendations to modify precinct boundaries and relocate a polling place for the East Hampton Precinct from Phoebus High School to the Hampton University Convocation Center.

Ms. Sydnor shared the current precinct map then summarized the first recommendation related to precinct boundary changes. The recommendation is to combine the Syms Precinct with half of the Smith Precinct (voting at Smith); combine Peake and Langley Precincts (voting at Langley); combine the other half of Smith with Phoebus (voting at Phoebus High School); combine City Hall and the Hampton Main Library (voting at the Hampton Library); move Blue Bird Gap Farm into the Lindsay Precinct (no voters should be affected, but, there is potential for four houses to be); shift portions of the Machen Precinct to Sandy Bottom; and shift portions of Cooper into half of Machen. Ms. Sydnor noted that the City's GIS Manager, Allan Lambert, indicated that the last change would split the Hampton Club community in half.

Ms. Sydnor reviewed the next group of slides which provide more information about the impact of the proposed changes. The presentation also includes maps of the current precincts and maps of what is being proposed.

Ms. Sydnor noted that driving distance impacts will be shared later in the

presentation. There is also potential for a subsequent presentation to Council with more information if needed.

Ms. Morgan made a few comments related to the potential for some backlash as a result of the difference in driving distance to and from Phoebus Library versus Phoebus High School. Ms. Sydnor also thanked Mr. Lambert for putting these maps together so quickly.

Ms. Sydnor returned to the slides which compare the current precincts to what is being proposed. She also indicated that Blue Bird Gap Farm is now part of the Aberdeen Precinct. This proposal proposes to move Blue Bird Gap Farm into the Lindsay Precinct which could potentially affect about four homes (voters) in the area, but that number is uncertain.

Ms. Sydnor clarified that precinct refers to the geographic area and explained that every precinct has to have its own polling place. This means when precinct boundaries are modified, it may or may not require changing the polling place.

Next, Ms. Sydnor summarized the Board's rationale behind the first proposal. In summary, it will eliminate precincts, saving taxpayer dollars; provide more efficient utilization of officers of election; require less equipment to be purchased in the future; eliminate problematic locations; provide the same legislative districts; and keep bigger precincts to preferred sizes (as recommended and identified in the Code of Virginia).

Ms. Sydnor summarized the Board's second recommendation to relocate the East Hampton polling place from Phoebus High School to the Hampton University Convocation Center. She paused to clarify that Phoebus High School is not located within the boundaries of the East Hampton Precinct, but, it is within a mile of it. The Code of Virginia indicates that a polling place is allowed outside of the precinct as long as it is within a mile.

Ms. Sydnor returned to speaking about the second proposed recommendation. She stated that the community and Hampton University students expressed their inconvenience during the last election and suggested that moving the polling place to Hampton University (HU) would be more convenient for voters. She added that the Virginia Code indicates that public buildings should be used for polling places when possible, however other buildings like charitable, religious and educational facilities are permissible. Securing the terms of this proposal with HU would be required if this option is selected to move forward.

Ms. Sydnor paused for discussion related to what had been presented thus far.

The following summarizes the information that Ms. Sydnor and Ms. Morgan provided in response to questions posed by Council. The layout of HU would help with long lines and other inconveniences expressed by the community and HU students. There is potential for elected officials to volunteer at precincts. There was a short discussion between Councilwoman Mugler and Ms. Morgan about Peake, Old Tyler and Y.H. Thomas. The voter turnout number is the total number of those who came out on Election Day and those who came to the Registrar's office for early voting. City Council cannot affect the General Assembly districts as that is done at the state level. The City cannot shift any precinct boundaries in a way that would have it split across General Assembly or Congressional districts and in the case of a change in precincts, the City would have to be cognizant of the election district boundaries.

Councilwoman Campbell shared her opinion on the proposed polling places and which do and do not make sense to her. In summary, her concern is for those who have to drive through the interstate traffic in the late afternoon to reach their voting/polling location. She also spoke about the 86th district.

Vice Mayor Brown also shared his opinion on the proposed polling places. He expressed concern about people having access to voting/polling places, places on the maps that appear to be disproportionate in the black and brown communities, and the confusion this will cause for citizens who have become accustomed to their voting/polling places. He also strenuously indicated that Council needs to hear from the Board why they believe these changes are necessary.

Councilwoman Ferebee also questioned the rationale behind the proposed changes. She noted that the communication is confusing and questioned if this would put resources toward a problem that does not need to be solved.

Councilwoman Mugler agreed that Council needs to receive the rationale for this change. In addition, Council still has questions about some details, for example the distance between the Library and Phoebus High School. She also expressed concern about precincts and districts in areas near water, the interstate issue near HU, and the 86th district.

Mayor Gray spoke about people in the community who will ask Council questions about this. He also suggested that the Board come before Council to answer questions about their recommendations versus staff only presenting a slide of summarized information. He noted that Council appreciates the legal perspective from the City Attorney and the perspective from the Registrar, but he would like for Council to have the opportunity to ask questions of the Electoral Board.

Councilwoman Ferebee concurred with Mayor Gray and also said that Council needs additional information, such as the cost benefit analysis, prior to hearing from the Board. She also said that at a time when it is so important for people to vote, she does not want to cause more disruption or create a situation where people are unable to get out to vote.

Ms. Sydnor reviewed the next portion of the presentation related to the legal requirements for the physical precinct boundaries; precinct size requirements; registration and voter numbers in Presidential election years; and other legal requirements for precinct and polling place changes.

Ms. Sydnor reminded everyone that the purpose for today was to introduce the topic and determine where Council is with it before further analysis is done. She also addressed the concern about voter confusion stating that there are specific notice requirements that must be given to include a physical notice on the old polling place on Election Day, newspaper publication requirements before an ordinance can be adopted, and a certificate of no objection review requirement before changing any polling place. She also emphasized that it is not recommended to make changes mid-year.

Lastly, Ms. Sydnor noted that Council may accept some, none, or all of the Board's recommendations.

Additional discussion took place among staff and the members of Council. Topics of discussion include the distances voters would have to travel to polling places; adding more smaller precincts may not save money since additional staff would be needed; and the result of the cost analysis will most likely reveal the miniscule amount that will be saved.

Mayor Gray opened to floor to receive input from Council on the next steps in the process.

Vice Mayor Brown said that he would like more information on the cost analysis and the origination of this. He also indicated that he would like the Electoral Board to come before Council to answer questions.

With regard to origination, Ms. Morgan shared that a citizen made the request. She shared a bit more, but clarified that the origin of this goes back to an individual that came to the Registrar with the request.

Councilman Bowman thanked Ms. Sydnor and Ms. Morgan for the information and agreed with Vice Mayor Brown in that Council needs to know the reason behind this

so that they can answer the public's questions appropriately.

Councilwoman Ferebee spoke about the need to minimize staff's workload keeping in mind the cost associated with salaries to do the analysis. She suggested perhaps leaning more on the Electoral Board for the analysis.

City Manager Bunting noted that she was going to suggest what Councilwoman Ferebee suggested for the next step. She added if Council decides to move forward, she would suggest that the City Attorney's Office and the Community Development Department do the work. If Council is not decided and would rather hear from the Electoral Board first, she would suggest not doing the full analysis and let the Board provide their rationale, cost analysis and proposal work so that our staff will not have to do the work for them.

Ms. Sydnor clarified that she has the material that was sent to her from Mr. Anderson, who she understands first approached the Electoral Board about the precinct changes, but it is unclear if that material represents the view of the Electoral Board.

Mayor Gray made a few closing remarks and then asked if Council agrees that the next step is to revisit this at a future meeting at which the Electoral Board will be present to answer questions. There were no objections to what Mayor Gray offered as the next step in the process.

REGIONAL ISSUES

There were no regional issues to report on.

NEW BUSINESS

There were no items of new business.

CLOSED SESSION

5. [25-0071](#) Closed session pursuant to Virginia Code Sections 2.2-3711(A) (1) and (3) to discuss or consider the disposition of publicly held real property in the area of Downtown Hampton, where discussion in an open meeting would adversely affect the bargaining position or negotiating strategy of the city and to discuss appointments as listed on the agenda.

At 4:02 p.m., a motion was made by Vice Mayor Steven Brown and seconded by Councilmember Michelle Ferebee, that this Closed Session - Motion be approved. The motion carried by

the following vote:

Aye: 7 - Councilmember Bowman Sr., Vice Mayor Brown,
Councilmember Campbell, Councilmember Ferebee,
Councilmember Harper, Councilmember Mugler and
Mayor Gray

6. [25-0027](#) Consideration of Appointments to the Hampton Commission on the Arts

Attachments: [Additional Applications 250409](#)

7. [25-0028](#) Consideration of Appointments to the Hampton FADA
8. [25-0063](#) Consideration of an Appointment to the Virginia Peninsula Community College Board of Trustees
9. [25-0064](#) Correction of Appointment to Western Tidewater Regional Jail Authority
10. [25-0068](#) Consideration of an Appointment to the Neighborhood Commission
11. [25-0069](#) Consideration of Appointments to the Coliseum Advisory Committee
12. [25-0070](#) Consideration of an Appointment to the Hampton Community Policy and Management Team

CERTIFICATION

13. [25-0029](#) Resolution Certifying Closed Session
- A motion was made by Vice Mayor Steven Brown and seconded by Councilmember Michelle Ferebee, that this Resolution be approved. The motion carried by the following vote:

Aye: 7 - Councilmember Bowman Sr., Vice Mayor Brown,
Councilmember Campbell, Councilmember Ferebee,
Councilmember Harper, Councilmember Mugler and
Mayor Gray

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 4:51 p.m.

Donnie R. Tuck
Mayor

Katherine K. Glass, MMC
Clerk of Council

Date approved by Council _____