



City of Hampton

22 Lincoln Street
Hampton, VA 23669
www.hampton.gov

Council Approved Minutes - Final City Council Work Session

Mayor Donnie R. Tuck
Vice Mayor Jimmy Gray
Councilmember Chris L. Bowman
Councilmember Steven L. Brown
Councilmember Hope L. Harper
Councilmember Billy Hobbs
Councilmember Martha Mugler

STAFF: Mary Bunting, City Manager
Cheran Cordell Ivery, City Attorney
Katherine K. Glass, CMC, Clerk of Council

Wednesday, January 11, 2023

1:00 PM

Council Chambers

CALL TO ORDER

Vice Mayor Gray called the meeting to order at 1 p.m. He welcomed new members of City Council, Hope Harper and Martha Mugler. He then shared that the Mayor and City Manager are not present as they had a press conference they had to attend. He indicated that Brian DeProfio, Assistant City Manager, would sit in the place of Ms. Bunting.

Present 6 - Councilmember Chris L. Bowman, Councilmember Billy Hobbs, Councilmember Steven L. Brown, Vice Mayor Jimmy Gray, Councilmember Hope L. Harper, and Councilmember Martha Mugler

Excused 1 - Mayor Donnie R. Tuck

JIMMY GRAY PRESIDED

AGENDA

1. [23-0002](#) TruWeather Solutions Presentation

Attachments: [Presentation](#)

Mr. DeProfio introduced the item and announced that NASA Langley played a role in the project and provided grant funding for it.

Marco Sterk, the CEO of the Longbow Group, provided some background information about the company and shared that, in recent years, the Longbow Group has worked with NASA Langley, Hampton University and other partners to

bring research in unmanned systems to Hampton. He invited everyone to visit the Longbow Group, located in the Harbor Center, to learn more about the business and it's efforts here in Hampton.

Mr. Sterk turned the floor over to Sam Tinnesz of TruWeather Solutions to begin the presentation about the upcoming project involving the installation of sensors in downtown Hampton. These sensors will monitor weather patterns.

Sam Tinnesz, Sensor Systems Technician for TruWeather Solutions, announced that TruWeather Solutions has been awarded a NASA-funded Phase II Small Business Innovation Research (SBIR) contract to implement an urban weather sensing infrastructure testbed in Hampton. He listed some of the other partners involved in the project and then explained that the testbed will demonstrate delivery of more high density weather data and forecast services for low altitude urban and suburban flights. The purpose of the project is to enable Beyond-Visual-Line-of-Sight (BVLOS) operations for the Advanced Air Mobility (AAM) industry and any Uncrewed Aerial Systems (UAS).

Mr. Tinnesz stated that through this project, TruWeather Solutions hopes to demonstrate the value that novel weather sensors bring in detecting micro-weather and to improve urban wind models. In addition, TruWeather hopes that this project will demonstrate micro-weather data collection and the processing and delivery of that data to the necessary entities.

Dr. William Moore, Professor at Hampton University and Co-Director of the Severe Weather Center, reviewed the next portion of the presentation about challenges associated with traditional weather infrastructure and why Hampton was selected for the testbed. He shared that Hampton was selected because it is the best weather-measured city in the U.S.; is a complex area with water and land interface; has complicated air space with defense installations; and has variable weather. It was determined that if this project can be done in Hampton with all of these variables, then it can be done anywhere.

Mr. Tinnesz returned to the podium to speak about how Hampton will be turned into the testbed to develop this technology. The next slide included a diagram of the intended installation sites for the sensors. Mr. Tinnesz emphasized that the sensors communicate with a hub-based station over 900 megahertz radio waves in the unlicensed band and will not affect emergency department communications which operate on a 4.9 gigahertz frequency.

The next group of slides provided the preferred and alternative locations for each sensor and a description of the installation method to be used at each location.

Locations include: 135 High Court Lane (the Hampton Jail) with the Registrar's Office as the alternative location; the NE corner of Settlers Landing Road and Old Hampton Lane with the light pole in the adjacent parking garage as the alternative location; 6 Queens Court (Queens Court Park) with an adjacent light pole as the alternative location; 100 Eaton Street (Mill Point Park) with an adjacent wooden fence as the alternative location; 600 Settlers Landing Road (the Virginia Air and Space Science Center) with the opposite side of the building as the alternative location; and 120 Old Hampton Lane (the History Museum) with the alternative location on the upper roof of the building.

Dr. Moore made a few closing remarks. He also thanked Council for the opportunity to present this information and indicated that all of the partners look forward to moving forward with the project.

Vice Mayor Gray opened the floor for questions and comments from Council.

Councilman Hobbs and Councilman Brown asked a series of questions about the potential for the sensors to pose danger to humans and wildlife; the effect sensors may have on home devices such as televisions, phones and microwaves; the location selection process; and whether trees and other foliage will impede sensor accuracy.

Mr. Tinnesz explained that the sensors admit a radio frequency in the 900 megahertz range which does not affect anything other than possibly other commercial off-the-shelf instruments that communicate on that same frequency. With regard to eliminating a potential problem, Mr. Tinnesz explained that the hub could be moved closer to the sensor so that radio waves are not transmitted as far. Mr. Tinnesz added that he has one at his house and they are great devices which are reasonably priced and have the same frequency range as a cordless home phone.

Mr. Tinnesz said the location selection process was done by the Chief Scientist at TruWeather Solutions who pinpointed locations that would be most influential to the urban wind modeling system. The team was originally given 55 suitable locations, which were narrowed down to 30 most feasible locations and so forth. With regard to impeding accuracy, Mr. Tinnesz explained that the sensors do not impede accuracy; however, a goal of the project is to understand the effects of wind flow in an urban environment based on buildings, trees and other obstacles.

Mr. Sterk added that a sister project is also taking place at NASA Langley and it will provide a broader sensor base.

Councilman Bowman commented that he liked the alternative site plan and also asked what fastening mechanism will be used. For example, will there be some form of construction adhesive or another non-penetrating fastening process.

Mr. Tinnesz explained that six cinder blocks are placed on a metal bracket for weight and with wind rates around 200 miles per hour, the surface area that the wind load is acting on is very small and does not create a lot of force. This non-fastening mechanism has already been set up in downtown on private property locations and in other locations around the country with no problems thus far.

Councilwoman Mugler asked why the sensor located at Mill Point Park was not located on top of the Harbor Center which is very close by.

Mr. Tinnesz explained that part of the plan already included a sensor on the Harbor Center and that the area at Mill Point Park was a preferred location separate from the Harbor Center. He also indicated that he did not know the scientific reason why it was placed at Mill Point Park. Dr. Moore explained that this is one of the places in town that provides a good sense of the vertical variations in wind.

Vice Mayor Gray commented that Hampton holds the distinction of being the best weather-measured city in the United States and asked if that is for the next two years during the research period or are the sensors going to be moved to other locations to do additional research.

Mr. Tinnesz replied stating that decision will be up to Hampton and the sensors can be removed after the contract period; however, TruWeather would prefer to keep them there in order to have Hampton remain the best weather-sensed city in America.

Vice Mayor Gray made closing remarks and thanked all of the partners for choosing Hampton for this research project.

2. [22-0351](#) Hampton Roads Bridge Tunnel Traffic Congestion Impacts on Phoebus and on Settlers Landing Road

Attachments: [Presentation](#)

Mr. DeProffio introduced the item and reminded everyone that several presentations have been given on the Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT's) Hampton Roads Bridge Tunnel (HRBT) Expansion Project and the impact it has had on traffic in Hampton. He introduced Public Works Director Jason Mitchell to provide updated information about this subject. He also indicated that City Attorney Cheran Ivery would provide some information.

Mr. Mitchell greeted those on the dais and began reviewing the slide presentation. The first few slides included images of traffic congestion on I-64 (east bound) and around Hampton University; and the pilot program involving the Mallory Street Bridge area with limited closure of the entrance. This pilot program has resulted in reduced traffic congestion in Phoebus and has allowed emergency services to reach customers.

Mr. Mitchell shared that over the past few months, Hampton has been working on options to improve the traffic flow on Settlers Landing Road. Efforts include working with VDOT and HRTAC (Hampton Roads Transportation Accountability Commission) for funding support; exploring red light camera technology, overhead and roadway signage to improve the corridor, new configuration of lane delineators and raised curbing, and roadway stencils to highlight correct travel lanes on Settlers Landing Road.

The next section of the presentation provided information about Hampton's plan to implement red light camera photo enforcement. This enforcement will improve traffic flow and require traffic signal adjustments, traffic control adjustments, traffic cameras, and roadway signage to help indicate where traffic should flow.

Mr. Mitchell turned the floor over to City Attorney Cheran Ivery to review the proposed ordinance and legal items related to the effort.

Ms. Ivery spoke about the legal authority for what the City is seeking to do. She explained that Virginia Code allows localities to implement red light camera enforcement at one intersection per 10,000 residents. In order to effectuate such a program, Council will consider adopting an ordinance to that effect at the January 25th meeting.

Ms. Ivery reviewed the next section of the presentation related to the Red Light Camera Ordinance; the criteria included in the Virginia Code; and the proposed legislation related to this ordinance.

Mr. Mitchell returned to the podium and shared a few images of the proposed locations for the red light camera enforcement program, including Settlers Landing Road, Mallory Street and the Mallory Street Bridge.

The final slide of the presentation listed staff's recommendations moving forward. The recommendations are to extend the Mallory Street pilot program until the red light camera technology is approved and installed; implement red light camera technology at various locations in the City to reduce congestion created by the

HRBT construction projects; continue exploring the use of technology to enforce traffic violations for congested areas and school zones; and request that Hampton City Council support these efforts moving forward.

Mr. Mitchell opened the floor for questions and comments.

Councilman Brown stated that there is a civil penalty for those who run red lights, but would like clarity on whether it is also considered a moving violation.

City Attorney Ivery stated that it is not considered a moving violation and does not affect points on an individual's driving record.

Councilwoman Harper asked if statistics are available related to the impact the pilot program had on the reduction in traffic in Phoebus.

Mr. Mitchell shared that congestion in Phoebus was reduced by approximately 52% three weeks into the pilot program.

Councilman Bowman commended Mr. Mitchell on the proposal and asked if the program will be state or locally funded.

Mr. Mitchell said that Hampton is working through negotiations with VDOT and HRTAC who have indicated that they will invest approximately \$1.1 million in this effort. Currently, Hampton has no financial contributions other than the time invested for staff to work through these issues.

Councilman Brown said Council was advised that there is a five-year commitment for red light cameras and the initial idea was that the cameras would be in place until the HRBT project was complete. He asked who is burdened with the remaining cost since the HRBT project is scheduled to be completed prior to the five-year commitment timeframe.

Mr. Mitchell explained that Hampton intends to use the photo enforced cameras in this area until the HRBT project is completed with the intention to move those cameras to other congested areas in the City, so they will be outside of the HRBT footprint. He confirmed that ultimately, the cost would fall on the City after the HRBT project is complete.

Vice Mayor Gray said that currently, Hampton uses police officers to block access to the Mallory Street Bridge during 3:00-6:00 pm and asked if officers will no longer be at this location once the camera is installed.

Mr. Mitchell clarified that officers will no longer be there and the light will remain red between the hours of 3:00-6:00 pm. Any cars that run the red light will be issued a photo enforced ticket.

Councilman Brown asked if citizens will be notified about the plan to install red light cameras.

Mr. Mitchell assured everyone that, upon Council's approval, staff and VDOT will implement marketing and messaging so that citizens are aware before the cameras are in place.

Vice Mayor Gray thanked those who worked on this project for their time and commitment.

Mr. DeProfio identified the members of the task force who assisted with this evaluation and thanked them for their service:

Allison Richter - VDOT

Robert Holmes – Downtown Hampton Business Owner

Bill Thomas – Hampton University

Charlotte Hurd – Zel Technologies, LLC

Laura Sandford – Phoebus Business Owner

Michael Harper – VA Medical Center

Dorethea Spells – Hampton University

Other individuals who served but were not named at the meeting were:

John Ishon – Hampton Stationery

Faye Lucas - Hampton University

Taquisa Simmons – VA Medical Center

Rev. King – Zion Baptist Church

REGIONAL ISSUES

There were no regional issues to be discussed.

NEW BUSINESS

There were no items of new business.

CLOSED SESSION

3. [22-0358](#) Closed session pursuant to Virginia Code Sections 2.2-3711.A (.3) and (.6) to discuss the disposition of publicly-held real property in the Phoebus area of the City where discussion in an open meeting would adversely affect the bargaining or negotiating strategy of the City; and to discuss or consider the investment of public funds where competition or bargaining is involved, where, if made public initially, the financial interest of the City would be adversely affected.

At 11:42 a.m., a motion was made by Councilmember Steven Brown and seconded by Councilmember Billy Hobbs, that this Closed Session - Motion be approved. The motion carried by the following vote:

Aye: 6 - Councilmember Bowman, Councilmember Hobbs, Councilmember Brown, Vice Mayor Gray, Councilmember Harper and Councilmember Mugler

Mayor Tuck and the City Manager arrived during closed session.

Present 7 - Councilmember Chris L. Bowman, Councilmember Billy Hobbs, Mayor Donnie R. Tuck, Councilmember Steven L. Brown, Vice Mayor Jimmy Gray, Councilmember Hope L. Harper, and Councilmember Martha Mugler

CERTIFICATION

4. [23-0008](#) Resolution Certifying Closed Session

A motion was made by Councilmember Billy Hobbs and seconded by Councilmember Steven Brown, that this Closed Session - Motion be approved. The motion carried by the following vote:

Aye: 7 - Councilmember Bowman, Councilmember Hobbs, Mayor Tuck, Councilmember Brown, Vice Mayor Gray, Councilmember Harper and Councilmember Mugler

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 4:11 p.m.

Contact Info:
Clerk of Council, 757-727-6315, council@hampton.gov

Donnie R. Tuck
Mayor

Katherine K. Glass, CMC
Clerk of Council

Date approved by Council _____