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Briefing on Zoning Ordinance Amendment Pertaining to Parking Vehicles on Unimproved Surfaces in Residential Areas

Background Statement:

Requests that the city regulate vehicles parked on lawns have been made by multiple neighborhood groups and individual citizens over the past several years. In 2012 City staff formally began the outreach effort to create an ordinance that balanced the interests of all citizens. More recently, with the beginning of the Resilient Hampton efforts, staff saw an opportunity to combine new green area requirements with the regulation of vehicle parking in residential areas.

On December 9, 2020, City Council approved a series of related Zoning Ordinance amendments which: set a minimum green area requirement for all lots with a one-family, two-family, or a duplex dwelling as the primary use or proposed primary use; permitted a 12'x 25' driveway and 3' wide walkway regardless of minimum green area requirement on residentially used parcels; created a zoning permit requirement for new impervious surface otherwise exempted from obtaining a building permit; limited the materials that can be used for driveways on residentially used parcels to concrete, asphalt, pavers designed to support the weight of motor vehicles, rock, gravel, oyster shells, or any other similar impervious surface, not to include grass, dirt or compacted soil. At that meeting City Council indefinitely deferred the amendment to regulate parking of passenger vehicles on residential lots due to the economic uncertainty associated with COVID-19 with the intent to bring it back at a later date. In May of 2021, City Council requested the amendment be brought back after the COVID-19 related restrictions were lifted.

On July 15, 2021 City staff presented an amendment to the Planning Commission which would prohibit the parking of passenger cars or commercial vehicles in street frontage yards on an unimproved surface, except in the case of the following: lots adjacent to streets identified by signage as prohibiting parking; during a City approved special event permit; during street closures; during severe weather events; and when the vehicle is actively being washed. This amendment would not require citizens to install a new driveway on lots with an existing dwelling.

This briefing is an update on the amendment prior to it's being brought forward for action by City Council on August 11, 2021. No action is requested of City Council at this time.