

Minutes of the August 19, 2024, Hampton City Council Workshop

The Hampton City Council Workshop was called to order at the Hampton City Council Chambers by Mayor Steve Birdsall at 6:00 p.m. The workshop was also offered electronically through Zoom. Council members in attendance were Kevin Blanford, James Davies, Jerre Grefe, Bill Hodge, Barry Lamos, and Patrick Palmer. Also present were Police Chief Mark Morrison, City Manager Ron Dunt, and Public Works Director Doug Tarr. Mayor Birdsall invited those present to join in the Pledge of Allegiance to the U.S. flag.

Mayor Birdsall offered time for public comment. There was none.

Police Chief Morrison updated the council on the recent racially related flyers placed on Hispanic businesses in town and the related search warrant and arrest. The case is now in litigation.

Public Works Director Tarr and Police Chief Morrison updated the council on nuisance properties. Both departments are continuing to issue notices and have several cases pending in court. Chief Morrison and Tarr answered questions from the council.

Franklin County Auditor Katy Flint and Facilities Director Ryan Peterson addressed the council again regarding the removal of the sidewalk at the Food Pantry property at 302 5th Ave NE. Peterson said he did talk to a few of the neighbors, and none had concerns about the sidewalk being removed. Council members are concerned the removal of the sidewalk would set a precedent that would cause others to want to remove sidewalks. The overall view of the council was that the city should be encouraging citizens to improve sidewalks as they are a benefit to our community in a variety of ways. The general consensus was not favorable to approving the request to remove the sidewalk.

Madison Alert and Garrett Thompson from Franklin County REC gave an update on the wood archways in Bandshell Park. They are still looking at ways to make them permanent and more secure without the use of guy wires. In addition, the REC would like to add archways on the remaining 2 sidewalks in the park. The council expressed their gratitude and would like to see the archways stay up year-round. Citizen Marlene Tapp encouraged the council to remember maintenance challenges with park improvements. The council asked REC to come up with options to make the archways permanent and bring them back to council. Bill Hittle informed the council he recently applied for a grant to get plastic recycled benches at Bandshell Park. Hittle will ask to be placed on an agenda after he hears back on if the grant is obtained.

Council member Palmer reported he gets contacted regarding dog issues and invited concerned residents to address the council. Denise Ditch addressed the council regarding her concerns on dog living conditions and treatment. She is concerned the current regulations are not adequate and they should be improved. Ruth Tapp also informed the council of her recent experiences with dogs at large. Chief Morrison said the feedback is appreciated and these issues are taken seriously. After discussion, the council thanked the community for their input and will continue to discuss to seek out potential ordinance improvements.

City Manager Dunt presented the council with a draft resolution establishing a housing steering committee and authorizing city commitment for a local match for an application for Iowa Rural Housing Readiness Assessment grant. The resolution will be on Thursday's agenda for consideration.

City Manager Dunt informed the council of meeting schedule changes for September. The regular session meeting will be Thursday, September 5th. There will be no Council Workshop Monday, September 9th, and no Regular Session on Thursday, September 12th.

Motion by Davies, second by Palmer to go into closed session under Iowa Code Section 21.5(1)(i) to evaluate professional competency of an individual whose appointment and performance is being considered. Roll call vote: Hodge, Grefe, Palmer, Lamos, Blanford, and Davies. Nays: None. Entered closed session at 7:13 p.m. Motion by Davies, seconded by Grefe to open session at 7:48 p.m. Roll call vote. Ayes; Hodge, Grefe, Palmer, Lamos, Blanford, and Davies. Nays; none. Motion approved.

City manager Dunt opened the council chambers up to the public. (none present)

Mayor Birdsall adjourned the workshop at 7:48 p.m.