



City of Hitchcock

Newsletter March 2020

CHARTER REVIEW COMMITTEE MAKES RECOMMENDATIONS ON SIX (6) PROPOSED AMENDMENTS TO THE CHARTER

In April 2019, former Mayor Dorothy Childress appointed a citizen charter review committee. The Charter Review Committee members are Dorothy Childress, Ena Hughes, Johnnie Anderson, Henry Coger, Mary Demby, Ronnie Meier, Gary Riley, Harry Robinson, Bobbie Tarpey, Commissioner Chris Armacost, and Mayor Randy Strickland as an ex-officio member. A consultant, who is an expert in city charters and Texas State laws with respect to city charters, was selected to work with the City Charter Review Committee.

The Committee was tasked with conducting a comprehensive review of the current charter and to make recommendations to the City Commission for appropriate changes to the charter. The committee held its first organizational meeting on September 30, 2019. On February 13, 2020, the proposed amendments to the charter were presented to the City Commission and, a special election was called to place the six (6) propositions on the May 2, 2020 ballot for the purpose of submitting to the qualified voters to decide whether the Charter of the City of Hitchcock should be amended. There is no anticipated fiscal impact to the City if the amendments are approved.

Cities in Texas are divided into two basic classes: home rule and general law. General law cities structure and power are defined by state statute. Home rule cities are defined by the charter that is adopted by the citizens of that city. Accordingly, the charter may create a “strong mayor” system, where the mayor is the city’s chief executive officer, or a council-manager form of government where the city council acts as the “board of directors” of the city, with an appointed executive responsible for the day-to-day operations of the City reporting to the City Council, i.e., city manager.

The City of Hitchcock is a home-rule municipality governed by its City Charter. The City Charter was adopted in 1960 and subsequently amended in 1971 and 1995. The City Charter is the basic governing authority of the City. The Charter determines the form of municipal government, the composition and power of the governing body, and establishes the legal framework for the city to function. Periodic reviews of the Charter are conducted to ensure compliance with state law and the Texas State Constitution.

To review a copy of the current City Charter and the proposed propositions on the May 2, 2020 ballot visit the City’s website at www.cityofhitchcock.org and click on the Charter Review button.

Please take time to review and educate yourself about the proposed amendments before voting!

(Continue on page 2)



INSIDE THIS ISSUE

- Charter Propositions.....1
- Charter Propositions.....2
- Election Information.....2
- Spring Clean Up.....3
- Address Numbers.....3
- Building Inspection/Permits.....3
- Employment Opportunities.....3
- Prevent Sewer Stoppages.....3
- Dates to Remember.....3
- Important Census Dates.....4
- Code Enforcement.....4
- Contact Information.....4

VISIBLE ADDRESS NUMBERS

The City of Hitchcock would like to remind residents that house and business address numbers must be prominently displayed so that they can be clearly seen from the street. This is required by City Ordinance and is important for your safety. These numbers are important for police, fire, and EMS response as well as utility and trash services.

SUMMARY OF THE PROPOSED PROPOSITIONS AMENDING THE CHARTER:

There are six (6) Proposed Propositions.

Proposition A

An amendment to the City’s home rule charter amending by deletion or revision those sections which are unnecessary to the Charter and to create a more clear and simple home rule charter.

If adopted this Proposition will make non-substantive changes to the City Charter by removing sections which are duplicative of other Charter provisions and duplicative of state law.

Proposition B

An amendment to the City’s home rule charter amending by deletion or revision those sections which are inconsistent with and in violation of State law.

If adopted this Proposition will remove those provisions from the City Charter which are not in compliance with state law.

Proposition C

An amendment to the City’s home rule charter requiring the City Budget to be adopted pursuant to State law.

Currently there are sections of the City Charter related to the budget process which are inconsistent with state law, are duplicative of state law and inconsistent with the City’s current budget process. If adopted this amendment would require the City to comply with the state law when adopting its budget.

Proposition D

An amendment to the City’s home rule charter authorizing the City to control public utilities and franchises consistent with State law.

Currently there are sections of the City Charter related to the public utilities and franchises which are inconsistent with state law or create additional requirements not found in state law. If adopted this Proposition would require the City to comply with state law when regulating and approving public utilities and franchises.

Proposition E

An amendment to the City’s home rule charter creating the position of City Manager.

The City of Hitchcock City Council previously created the position of City Administrator by ordinance and the City Administrator currently administers the day-to-day operation of the City based on the policy direction of City Council. If adopted this Proposition would formalize the City’s current way of administering the day-to-day operations of the City by placing the requirement to hire a City Administrator in the City Charter and changing the name from “City Administrator” to “City Manager.”

Proposition F

An amendment to the City’s home rule charter providing for authority to remove municipal judges.

Currently the City of Hitchcock does not have a process for removing a municipal judge. If approved this proposition would provide for a process to remove a municipal judge from office.

This article is provided for informational purposes only, and by law, the City of Hitchcock cannot and does not take a position either in favor of or against this Election issue. Don’t forget to vote on Saturday, May 2, 2020 on the ballot issue concerning the Amendments to the Home Rule Charter. **Early voting starts April 20, 2020 at City Hall.**

2020 GENERAL AND SPECIAL ELECTION IMPORTANT DATES:

The City will be holding a General and Special Election this year. On the ballot are City Commissioner seats for Districts 3, and 4 and 6 propositions amending the Hitchcock City Charter.

Candidates for District 3:
Tammi Barreras
Darrell Hunter
Wayne Newton

Candidates for District 4:
Armond Hurd
Andre Perkins
Lucy Dieringer

Last day to register to vote in this election is April 2, 2020.
Early Voting is scheduled in April at City Hall 7423 Hwy 6.
Monday, April 20, – Friday, April 24, 2020.....8:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m.
Monday, April 27, - Tuesday, April 28, 202.....7:00 a.m. – 7:00 p.m.

Election Day, Saturday May 2, 2020, 7:00 a.m—7:00 p.m.

CITY OF HITCHCOCK SPRING CLEAN-UP

March 27th and 28th 2020

This year, the disposal site for non-hazardous clean-up will be at the City Barn. 8401 Schiro Hitchcock, Texas 77563

Waste disposal at this event will be free of charge to residents as a service provided by the City of Hitchcock. The drop off site will be open March 27th and March 28th. Disposals may be made at AmeriWaste Services temporary collection point of the City Barn – 8401 Schiro, Hitchcock, Texas 77563, between 11am to 4pm on the 27th and 8am to 12pm on the 28th.

For questions, please contact – AmeriWaste 281-331-8400 OR City of Hitchcock 409-986-5591

BUILDING INSPECTION AND PERMITS



Inspection of construction projects allows the City to ensure public safety through the effective enforcement of construction codes and standards for the construction, repair, demolition, occupancy and maintenance of buildings, structures and properties. Inspection activities ensure that every step of the construction project is completed in accordance with the adopted City Codes.

When is a building permit required? Any owner or authorized agent who intends to construct, enlarge, alter, repair, move, demolish, or change the occupancy of a building or structure; erect, install, enlarge, alter, repair, remove, convert or replace any electrical, gas, mechanical or plumbing systems; or cause any such work to be done, should contact the building official and submit any required applications.

Are there any projects exempt from permitting? Yes, there are some projects that are exempt from permitting under the code as listed below. Please note that the following list is not all inclusive. Properties within the floodplain may require separate permits or approvals even if exempt from building permits. However, regardless of whether a project requires a permit or not, all projects must meet the requirements of the adopted codes and ordinances of the City.

- One-story detached accessory structures (50 square feet or less).
- Fences not over 7 feet high.
- Most finish work.
- Sidewalks (on private property).
- Prefabricated swimming pools.
- Swings and other playground equipment.
- Window awnings.
- Decks 50 square feet max which are not more than 30 inches above grade at any point, are not attached to the dwelling, and do not serve the exit door.
- Shade cloth structures.
- Minor repairs and maintenance,

Always remember that every project is different. It is always best to call the Building Inspections Department at 409-986-5591 **before starting any project.**

WAYS TO PAY YOUR UTILITY BILL



Online at
cityofhitchcock.org
or by automatic bill pay



By Phone at
(833) 282-0826



In Person at City Hall
7423 Hwy. 6
Or the Drop Box
In the parking lot



By Mail at
7423 Hwy 6
Hitchcock, TX 77563

Cash, Check, Money Order, Credit Card

The City of Hitchcock bills every month for water, sewer, and garbage services. If you have questions about you bill, contact the Utility Department at (409) 986-5591.

A \$50.00 administrative processing fee is added when a bill is not paid by the cut off date. This fee is for the cost of managing the delinquency process for past due accounts.

EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES

Equipment Operator
Utility Worker

For job descriptions, qualifications, and other information, visit our website at:

www.cityofhitchcock.org

PREVENT SEWER STOPPAGES

Tips to help prevent sewer stoppages:

- > Scrape grease and food residue from dishes and pans into garbage bag before putting it in your dishwasher or sink.
- > Unclog drains naturally by pouring 1/4 cup of baking soda down the drain followed by 1/2 cup of white vinegar. Follow a few minutes later with boiling water. Pour boiling water down the drains to prevent clogs.
- > Avoid release of hair into drains of showers, bath tubs, and wash basins to prevent clogs in the traps and drains.
- > Empty washing machine lint into a garbage bag to avoid the discharge of lint into the sewer line.
- > Clean vents annually (leading from toilets) located on the roof. It is identifiable by a 2 inch pipe on the roof. Failure to clean vents may result in stoppages, causing dangerous sewer line gases to back up into your residence.

DATES TO REMEMBER

Regular Commission Meeting
March 16th at 6:00 pm.

Planning & Zoning Meeting
March 24 at 5:30 pm.

City Offices Closed for Good Friday
April 10, 2020



2020 CENSUS IMPORTANT DATES

Counting every person living in the United States is a massive undertaking, and efforts begin years in advance. Here's a look at some of the key dates along the way:

March 12 - 20: Households will begin receiving official Census Bureau mail with detailed information on how to respond to the 2020 Census online, by phone, or by mail.

April 1: Census Day is observed nationwide.

May - July: Census takers will begin visiting homes that haven't responded to the 2020 Census to help make sure everyone is counted.

NEW EMERGENCY NOTIFICATION SYSTEM

A new emergency alert system is now available through the City's website. This system allows you to sign up for emails and /or text messages on topics of your choosing.

Visit the City Website for more details

www.cityofhitchcock.org

ANIMAL CONTROL

Animal Ordinance No 2019-005 is an ordinance to better serve and protect the health, safety, welfare and well-being of the citizens and animals of the City of Hitchcock.

Section 6 is in regards to dogs Running-at-large which is prohibited in our City.

It shall be unlawful for the keeper of any dog to permit such dog to run-at-large within the City. Such dog may be allowed beyond the premises of such keeper when leashed to such keeper or other person authorized by such keeper.

Fines for owner(s) or keepers(s) of any dog running-at-large will be issued and can costs up to \$400.00.



HOW TO CONTACT US

NAME	TITLE	E-MAIL	PHONE NUMBER
RANDY STRICKLIND	MAYOR	rstricklind@cityofhitchcock.org	(409)927-0058
MARY COMBS DEMBY	CITY COMMISSIONER DISTRICT 1	district1@cityofhitchcock.org	(409)986-7171
CHRIS ARMACOST	CITY COMMISSIONER, DISTRICT 2	district2@cityofhitchcock.org	(409)519-9646
Wayne Newton	CITY COMMISSIONER, DISTRICT 3	district3@cityofhitchcock.org	(409)770-3297
MARK COOK	CITY COMMISSIONER, DISTRICT 4	district4@cityofhitchcock.org	(281)782-7656
MARIE GELLES	CITY ADMINISTRATOR	mgelles@cityofhitchcock.org	(409)986-5591
WILMON SMITH	CHIEF OF POLICE	wsmith@hitchcockpd.com	(409)986-5559
NICHOLLE ANDRUS	CITY SECRETARY	nandrus@cityofhitchcock.org	(409)986-5591
CANDIE SERNA	CODE ENFORCEMENT OFFICER	cserna@hitchcockpd.com	(409)986-5559
D. JOE WOOD	COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT SPECIALIST	djwood@cityofhitchcock.org	(409)316-7234
FRED WELCH	INTERIM EXEC. DIRECTOR OF HIDC		
HENRY DEBOROD	INSPECTOR	inspector@cityofhitchcock.org	(409) 739-0822
JANIE AVILA	PERMIT CLERK	javila@cityofhitchcock.org	(409) 986-5591
RUTH ANN SORRELL	MUNICIPAL COURT CLERK/ASSISTANT CITY SEC.	rsorrell@cityofhitchcock.org	(409)986-9702
ANDY JENKINS	STREET SUPERINTENDENT	anthonyjenkins47@icloud.com	(409)986-5591
VACANT	WATER/WASTEWATER SUPERINTENDENT		(409)986-5591
BILL GARVIN	WASTE WATER TREATMENT PLANT OPERATOR	billgarvin@yahoo.com	(409)986-5591
ANIMAL CONTROL			(409) 948-2485
MOSQUITO CONTROL			(281) 337-4289
GARBAGE COLLECTION	AMERIWASTE		(281) 331-8400
AFTER HOUR WATER/ SEWER			(409)986-5559
AFTER HOUR WASTE WATER TREATMENT PLANT / LIFT STATION			(409)986-5559
NON EMERGENCY POLICE			(409)986-5559