

ORDINANCE 4637

AN ORDINANCE to amend and reordain Section 5-8-21 (DEFINITIONS), Section 5-8-22 (ABANDONED, UNATTENDED AND IMMOBILE VEHICLES TO BE REMOVED), Section 5-8-24 (NOTICE THAT VEHICLE HAS BEEN IMPOUNDED), Section 5-8-25 (REPOSSESSION OF IMPOUNDED VEHICLES; TOWING AND STORAGE CHARGES), Section 5-8-27 (SALE OF UNREPOSSESSED VEHICLES; PROCEEDS OF SALE), Section 5-8-28 (DISPOSITION OF INOPERABLE ABANDONED VEHICLES), Section 5-8-29 (SURRENDER OF CERTIFICATE OF TITLE, ETC., WHERE MOTOR VEHICLE ACQUIRED FOR DEMOLITION; RECORDS TO BE KEPT BY DEMOLISHER) and Section 5-8-30 (DELEGATION OF LAW ENFORCEMENT AUTHORITY) of Article C (DISPOSITION OF ABANDONED, UNATTENDED AND IMMOBILE MOTOR VEHICLES) of Chapter 8 (PARKING AND TRAFFIC REGULATIONS) of Title 5 (TRANSPORTATION AND ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES) of The Code of The City of Alexandria, Virginia, 1981, as amended.

THE CITY COUNCIL OF ALEXANDRIA HEREBY ORDAINS:

Section 1. That Section 5-8-21 of the Code of the City of Alexandria, Virginia, 1981, as amended, be, and the same is hereby, amended and reordained to read as follows:

Sec. 5-8-21 Definitions.

The following terms shall, for purposes of this article, have the meanings set forth below.

(1) Motor vehicle or vehicle means any motor vehicle, trailer or semitrailer, or any part thereof, as defined in section 46.2-100, Code of Virginia (1950), as amended.

(2) Abandoned motor vehicle means a motor vehicle that:

(a) is left unattended on public property for a period of more than 48 hours in violation of the Code of Virginia (1950), as amended, or this code; or

(b) is left unattended on the shoulder of a primary highway.

(3) Demolisher means any person or entity whose business is to convert motor vehicles into processed scrap or scrap metal or otherwise to wreck or dismantle such vehicles.

(4) Authorized city official means any of the following persons: the chief of police; any sworn member of the police department; the fire marshal; and any deputy fire marshal.

(5) Parking violation notice means a citation issued for the violation of a law relating to the parking of motor vehicles or of any other law relating to motor vehicles for which a parking citation may be issued.

(6) Scrap metal processor means any person who is engaged in the business of processing motor vehicles into scrap for remelting purposes who, from a fixed location, utilizes

machinery and equipment for processing and manufacturing ferrous and nonferrous metallic scrap into prepared grades, and whose principal product is metallic scrap.

(7) Vehicle removal certificate means a transferable document issued by the Virginia Department of Motor Vehicles for any abandoned motor vehicle that authorizes the removal and destruction of the vehicle.

(8) Department means the Virginia Department of Motor Vehicles.

(9) Commissioner means the Commissioner of the Virginia Department of Motor Vehicles.

Section 2. That Section 5-8-22 of the Code of the City of Alexandria, Virginia, 1981, as amended, be, and the same is hereby, amended and reordained to read as follows:

Sec. 5-8-22 Abandoned, unattended and immobile vehicles to be removed.

Whenever a motor vehicle:

- (a) becomes an abandoned motor vehicle;
- (b) is left unattended on a public street or public property and constitutes a hazard to traffic;
- (c) is left unattended for more than 10 days upon public property without the permission of the city;
- (d) is left unattended for more than 72 consecutive hours on private property without the permission of the property owner (provided, that in the case of private property normally open to the public for parking, signs are posted on the property which provide reasonable notice that vehicles left on the property for more than 72 consecutive hours without permission will be removed at the vehicle owner's expense);
- (e) is left unattended on a public street or public property, or on private property, including a private street and road, but not including property which is owned or occupied as a single family residence, and there are three or more unpaid or otherwise unsettled parking violation notices pending against the vehicle;
- (f) is left unattended in a fire lane or within 15 feet of a fire hydrant or an entrance to a fire station; or
- (g) is immobilized while in a travel lane of a public street by weather conditions or other emergency situation; the vehicle may, at the direction of an authorized city official, be removed for safekeeping by city personnel, vehicles and equipment, or by a towing service under contract

to the city, to the city impoundment yard or another impoundment facility; provided, that a vehicle may be removed from privately-owned property only pursuant to the written authorization of the property owner or, where applicable, an association of owners formed pursuant to chapter 4.1 of title 55 of the Code of Virginia (1950), as amended.

Section 3. That Section 5-8-24 of the Code of the City of Alexandria, Virginia, 1981, as amended, be, and the same is hereby, amended and reordained to read as follows:

Sec. 5-8-24 Notice that vehicle has been impounded.

(a) The following notice must be provided for impounded abandoned motor vehicles:

(1) The authorized city official, a designee of the official or another city employee designated by the city manager, directing the removal of any vehicle under this article shall initiate with the Department, in a manner prescribed by the Commissioner, a search for the owner and/or lienholder of record of the motor vehicle, requesting the name and address of the owner of record of the motor vehicle and all persons having security interests in the motor vehicle on record with the Department. The Department shall check: (i) its own records, (ii) the records of a nationally recognized crime database, and (iii) records of a nationally recognized motor vehicle title database for owner and lienholder information.

a. If a vehicle has been reported as stolen, the Department shall notify the appropriate law-enforcement agency of that fact.

b. If a vehicle has been found to have been titled in another jurisdiction, the Department shall notify the city of that jurisdiction. In cases of motor vehicles titled in other jurisdictions, the Commissioner shall issue certificates of title on proof satisfactory to the Commissioner that the persons required to be notified by registered or certified mail have received actual notice fully containing the information required by this section.

c. If the Department confirms owner or lienholder information, the Department shall notify the owner, at the last known address of record, and lienholder, at the last known address of record, of the notice of interest in their vehicle, by certified mail, return receipt requested, and advise them to reclaim and remove the vehicle within 15 days, or, if the vehicle is a manufactured home or a mobile home, 120 days, from the date of notice. Such notice, when sent in accordance with these requirements, shall be sufficient regardless of whether or not it was ever received. Following the notice required in this subsection, if the motor vehicle remains unclaimed, the owner and all persons having security interests in the motor vehicle shall have waived all right, title, and interest in the motor vehicle.

d. Whenever a vehicle is shown by the Department's records to be owned by a person who has indicated that he is on active military duty or service, the Department shall notify the city of such information. Any person having an interest in such vehicle under the provisions of

this article shall comply with the provisions of the federal Service members Civil Relief Act (50 U.S.C. app. 501 et seq.).

e. If records of the Department contain no address for the owner or no address of any person shown by the Department's records to have a security interest, or if the identity and addresses of the owner and all persons having security interests cannot be determined with reasonable certainty, the city shall obtain from the Department, in a manner prescribed by the Commissioner, a Vehicle Removal Certificate. The vehicle may then be sold to a licensee or scrap metal processor as defined in Virginia Code § 46.2-1600 (1950), as amended.

(b) The following notice must be provided for all other impounded motor vehicles:

(1) The authorized city official, a designee of the official or another city employee designated by the city manager, directing the removal of any vehicle under this article, shall, within 15 days of the impoundment of the motor vehicle, by registered or certified mail, return receipt requested, provide notice to the owner of record of the impounded vehicle, as shown in records maintained by the Department; provided, that the vehicle has not already been released from the impoundment facility. The notice shall state the following: (i) the year, make, model and registration number of the motor vehicle; (ii) the address where the vehicle is being held; and (iii) that the owner and any person having a security interest in the vehicle may reclaim the vehicle within 15 days from the date of the notice, after payment of all towing and storage charges resulting from the removal and storage of the vehicle.

(2) If the owner fails or refuses to pay the cost or if his identity or whereabouts is unknown and unascertainable after a diligent search has been made, and after notice to him at his last known address and to the holder of any lien of record with the Department against the motor vehicle, the vehicle shall be considered an abandoned motor vehicle and the provisions of subsection (a) apply.

Section 4. That Section 5-8-25 of the Code of the City of Alexandria, Virginia, 1981, as amended, be, and the same is hereby, amended and reordained to read as follows:

Sec. 5-8-25 Repossession of impounded vehicles; towing and storage charges.

(a) The owner of any vehicle impounded under this article, a person duly authorized by the owner and any person possessing a security interest in the vehicle shall be permitted to repossess the vehicle up to the time of its sale by:

(1) payment of a towing charge of \$100;

(2) payment of a storage charge of \$30 per day;

(3) payment of a charge of \$70 to cover the administrative costs incurred by the city in impounding the vehicle, in learning the identity of the vehicle owner and the holders of a security interest in the vehicle and in conducting the sale; and

(4) in the case of vehicles identified in section 5-8-22(e), payment of the outstanding parking violation notices for which the vehicle was removed.

(b) Payment of the charges and costs identified in subsection (a) shall not operate to relieve the owner of the impounded vehicle or the owner's agent from liability for any fine or penalty.

Section 5. That Section 5-8-27 of the Code of the City of Alexandria, Virginia, 1981, as amended, be, and the same is hereby, amended and reordained to read as follows:

Sec. 5-8-27 Disposition of unrepossessed vehicles; proceeds of sale.

(a) If a motor vehicle impounded under this article is not repossessed

(1) the city shall obtain from the Department a Vehicle Removal Certificate in a manner prescribed by the Commissioner;

(2) the vehicle may then be sold or transferred to a licensee or a scrap metal processor, as defined in Virginia Code § 46.2-1600 (1950) as amended; or

(3) if the city desires to sell the vehicle at public auction, the city shall post notice for at least 21 days of its intent to auction the motor vehicle with the Department.

a. Postings of intent shall be in an electronic manner prescribed by the Commissioner who shall also ensure that written notice of intent is provided in public locations throughout the Commonwealth of Virginia.

b. If the Department confirms a lien, the city shall notify the lienholder of record, by certified mail, at the address on the certificate of title of the time and place of the proposed sale 10 days prior thereto.

(b) The purchaser of an impounded vehicle at public auction shall take title to the vehicle free of all liens and claims of ownership of others, shall receive a sales receipt, an Abandoned Vehicle receipt and a completed Vehicle Removal Certificate, and shall be entitled to apply to and receive from the Department a certificate of title and a registration card for the vehicle.

(c) The proceeds from the sale of an impounded motor vehicle shall be forwarded to the director of finance who shall pay from the proceeds the towing charge, storage charge and any costs incurred by the city in learning the identity of the vehicle owner and the holders of a security interest in the vehicle and in conducting the sale. The balance of the proceeds shall be

held by the director of finance for the owner and paid to the owner upon satisfactory proof of ownership; provided, that the owner makes application for such proceeds within 90 days from the date of sale. If the owner fails to make timely application, the balance of the proceeds shall become the property of the city, and shall be deposited in the city general fund. Any personal property found in an impounded motor vehicle may be sold along with the sale of the vehicle.

Section 6. That Section 5-8-28 of the Code of the City of Alexandria, Virginia, 1981, as amended, be, and the same is hereby, amended and reordained to read as follows:

Sec. 5-8-28 Disposition of inoperable vehicles.

Notwithstanding any other provisions of this article to the contrary, any inoperable motor vehicle which has been impounded pursuant to this article may be disposed of to a demolisher, for the sole purpose of having the vehicle wrecked, dismantled or demolished, without the title and the notification procedures otherwise required by this article. The demolisher, upon taking custody of such motor vehicle, shall notify the Department of this fact on forms provided by the Department.

Section 7. That Section 5-8-29 of the Code of the City of Alexandria, Virginia, 1981, as amended, be, and the same is hereby, amended and reordained to read as follows:

Sec. 5-8-29 Surrender of certificate of title, etc., where motor vehicle acquired for demolition or scrap metal processing; records to be kept by demolisher or scrap metal processor.

(a) No demolisher or scrap metal processor who purchases or otherwise acquires a motor vehicle pursuant to section 5-8-28 for wrecking, dismantling or demolition shall be required to obtain a certificate of title for the motor vehicle in the demolisher's own name. After the motor vehicle has been demolished, processed, or changed so that it physically is no longer a motor vehicle, the demolisher or scrap metal processor shall surrender to the department of motor vehicles, for cancellation, the certificate of title, vehicle removal certificate, properly executed vehicle disposition history, or the sales receipt from a foreign jurisdiction for the vehicle.

(b) A demolisher or scrap metal processor shall keep an accurate and complete record, in accordance with section 46.2-1608, Code of Virginia (1950), as amended, of all motor vehicles purchased or received in the course of business. Demolishers and scrap metal processors shall also collect and verify: (i) the towing company's name and, if applicable, the license number issued to the towing company by the Virginia Board for Towing and Recovery Operators, (ii) one of the ownership or possession documents set out in this section following verification of its accuracy, and (iii) the driver's license of the person delivering the motor vehicle. If the delivering vehicle does not possess a license number issued by the Virginia Board for Towing and Recovery Operators, the license plate number of the vehicle that delivered the motor vehicle or scrap shall also be collected and maintained.

(1) In addition, a photocopy or electronic copy of the appropriate ownership document or a Vehicle Removal Certificate presented by the customer shall be maintained. Ownership documents shall consist of either a motor vehicle title or a sales receipt from a foreign jurisdiction or a vehicle disposition history. These records shall be maintained in a permanent ledger in a manner acceptable to the Department at the place of business or at another readily accessible and secure location within the Commonwealth for at least five years.

(2) If requested by a law-enforcement officer, a licensee shall make available, during regular business hours, a report of all the purchases of motor vehicles. Each report shall include the information set out in this article and be available electronically or in an agreed-upon format. Any person who violates any provision of this chapter or who falsifies any of the information required to be maintained by this article shall be guilty of a Class 3 misdemeanor for the first offense. Any licensee or scrap metal processor who is found guilty of second or subsequent violations shall be guilty of a Class 1 misdemeanor.

(3) If the vehicle identification number has been altered, is missing, or appears to have been otherwise tampered with, the demolisher or scrap metal processor shall take no further action with regard to the vehicle except to safeguard it in its then-existing condition and shall promptly notify the Department. If the vehicle is a motorcycle, the demolisher or scrap metal processor shall cause to be noted on the title or salvage certificate, certifying on the face of the document, in addition to the above requirements, the frame number of the motorcycle and motor number, if available.

Section 8. That Section 5-8-30 of the Code of the City of Alexandria, Virginia, 1981, as amended, be, and the same is hereby, amended and reordained to read as follows:

Sec. 5-8-30 Delegation of law enforcement authority.

Pursuant to section 27-34.2:1 of the Code of Virginia, 1950, as amended, the fire marshal and the deputy fire marshals are delegated, and shall possess, the law enforcement powers that are necessary to enforce this article and article D of this chapter.

Section 9. That this ordinance shall become effective upon the date and at the time of its final passage.

WILLIAM D. EUILLE
Mayor

Final Passage: December 12, 2009