

The regular meeting of the Hammond Common Council of the City of Hammond, Lake County, Indiana was held on June 24, 2013 in the Hammond City Council Chambers.

Council President Michael Opinker presided.

City Clerk Robert J. Golec facilitated.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE was recited by all.  
A moment of silence was observed.

ROLL CALL

PRESENT: Markovich, Spitale, Venecz, Kalwinski, Uylaki, Higgs, Emerson, Hinojosa, Opinker

ABSENT: None

TOTAL: 9

READING OF THE MINUTES

Councilman Spitale, supported by Councilman Kalwinski, moved to accept the minutes of June 10, 2013 and place on file. AYES: ALL

APPROVAL OF CLAIMS

Councilman Markovich, supported by Councilman Higgs, moved to approve the claims form June 5, 2013 through June 19, 2013. Claim #2827 through claim #3136, inclusive.

ROLL CALL VOTE (approval)

AYES: Markovich, Spitale, Venecz, Kalwinski, Uylaki, Higgs, Emerson, Hinojosa, Opinker

NAYS: None

ABSENT: None

Motion carried 9/0/0 CLAIMS APPROVED

PUBLIC HEARINGS

None

COMMUNICATIONS

Councilman Higgs thanked Council Atty. Berger and Councilman Markovich for participating in the annual 3 on 3 Basketball Tournament.

Councilwoman Venecz commended Councilman Higgs on his 3 on 3 Basketball Tournament.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Council as a Whole Committee - Councilman Hinojosa - Brought out 13-27.

ORDINANCE 3<sup>RD</sup> READING - FINAL PASSAGE

13-27 An Ordinance Amending Ord. 8746, also known as Section 32.47 of the Hammond Municipal Code as it pertains to Accident Report Fees

Councilman Hinojosa, supported by Councilman Higgs, moved for final passage.

Councilman Higgs - What this ordinance particularly does, and I guess Councilman Hinojosa can make a statement in regards to this particular ordinance as well, is the fees that apply when you have a crash report. A procedure that you have to go to. No longer will you be able to go directly to the Hammond Police Dept. and receive a crash report. You will have to pay a fee online or send it in by mail and then they will in turn send you a police report. So it's a different procedure. I'm sure some of the people are not going to be happy with it but it does generate additional revenue for the city.

Councilman Hinojosa - This is going to free up personnel in the Records Department and free up on a lot of paper work for the Records Department. A lot of people were getting their crash reports through this website already and we were making nothing off of it and through some studies at the Police Dept. done found out that by having a contract with this Apparus Company that we'll be able to out of the \$12 dollars that they charge for this fee the City of Hammond is gonna get \$8 and we're gonna benefit and generate more money out of this by doing it this way.

ROLL CALL VOTE (passage)

AYES: Markovich, Spitale, Venecz, Kalwinski, Uylaki, Higgs, Emerson, Hinojosa, Opinker

NAYS: None

ABSENT: None

Motion carried 9/0/0 ORDINANCE NO. 9214 PASSED

INTRODUCTION OF ORDINANCES

13-28 An Ordinance to Create a New Section of Title VII, Chapter 72, to Regulate Parking in the City of Hammond Parking Lots

Councilwoman Venecz, supported by Councilman Spitale, moved that the proposed ordinance go to 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> reading by title and referred it to the Council as a Whole Committee. AYES: ALL

Councilwoman Venecz - What this ordinance does is it will prohibit parking in any city owned parking lot between the hours of 11 pm and 5 am. What are city owned parking lots? Baseball fields, Jean Shepherd Center, the Civic Center, our parks, any municipal lot, there will be no parking after 11 pm. This will apply to all



NEW AND UNFINISHED BUSINESS cont.

Councilman Markovich - We've had several individuals tonight that walked in later on and I don't know if you know the procedures for the City Council but there's a sign in sheet and if you wish to address the City Council in about five minutes a lot of you probably knew to sign in and you still have a chance to sign in if you want to talk at the end of the meeting. So, just to let you know that there is a procedure if you're here for a particular issue or you want to bring it to our attention. You can sign your name and come to the podium and then you have three minutes to talk about it. Thank you.

Councilman Hinojosa, supported by Councilman Higgs, moved to cancel the meeting of July 8, 2013.

AYES: ALL

Councilman Higgs - We have an ordinance currently as it relates to properties where there are trees not maintained by the homeowners and there's a procedure. But I would like particularly for a letter to go to Code Enforcement.

Councilman Higgs, supported by Councilman Hinojosa, moved to have a letter go to Code Enforcement in terms of addressing some of the vacant properties in my district and making sure that they are maintained this summer so that the load of phone calls that I get won't be so tedious. There are a number of properties, one in particular is on Ames Street, the 1000 block, it's not being maintained. There's dead trees falling over there all over the property and it needs to be cleaned up. Also the property on Calumet Avenue and Kenwood needs to be cut. I can name a number of properties throughout the district that need to be maintained and for some reason or another we have an ordinance on the books, we need someone to analyze, look at these properties, and do what's necessary to clean them up. Get the trees cut down and make the city look much cleaner and for whatever reason it hasn't been done and I'm constantly sending letters but I'm just requesting that someone take a feasibility study or analyze, especially my district, in terms of addressing these vacant lots and getting these dead trees. Just by the Haven House itself, on the corner, across the street, you have a beautiful new building and now on the corner there are trees falling down, the lot looks just hideous. I make a motion that we send a letter to Code Enforcement requesting that they go through and take a look at these vacant lots and see if we can do what's necessary. What happens if they don't clean them up, the property owners don't clean them up, then a lien is put on the property and they have to pay. So, that's my request. I so move.

AYES: ALL

LETTER SENT: June 25, 2013

Councilman Hinojosa, supported by Councilman Higgs, moved to send a letter to Donna Muta to have the city bush whacker knock down the weeds on the city property between the back of the houses on the 65 and 6600 block of Tennessee and the state fence by Cline Avenue.

AYES: ALL

LETTER SENT: June 25, 2013

Councilman Emerson - This is more of a reminder for my colleagues and anyone listening or watching and everyone in the audience, Hammond has a leash law. I received a few calls on unleashed dogs in the area of Lyman near the

NEW AND UNFINISHED BUSINESS cont.

Councilman Emerson - bike path running south, so to that end the Street Department has put up signs informing residents or anyone else that's walking their dog without a leash. One at 165<sup>th</sup> and the bike trail and one at 173<sup>rd</sup> St. and one relatively in the middle near Lawndale. The fine if you're running or walking your dog without a leash although I don't imagine you'd be doing that right now, tonight, is not to exceed \$500 and it also applied to doggies doing their business, which they are going to do, if you don't clean that up. It's a city ordinance and it is finable and I just want to remind people to do that.

Councilman Higgs - I want to send out special condolences to the McPie family, who Ms. McPie passed away today and also to the Armstrong family who Mr. Armstrong passed away last week and he was funeralized on Saturday. So I send my condolences to those two families.

Councilman Hinojosa - I wasn't able to make the last Council meeting but I noticed that the prayer is not on the agenda anymore. I know there's a lawsuit out there, whatever, but I think until that lawsuit is forced I think we should keep it as the way we had it.

Councilman Hinojosa, supported by Councilman Markovich, moved to return prayer back on the agenda starting next meeting.

Councilman Higgs - My only discussion is and I hope the press quotes this as I stated previously, whether it be in the Council Chambers, whether it be in my home, whether it be in the park, whether it be on the playground, whether it be in school, whether it be out of the school, whether it be in my car, whether it be at Food For Less, I'm gonna continue to pray and give him all the glory because without God I am nothing and he is first and foremost in my life.

Councilman Markovich - I know that the Mayor mentioned something in the caucus and he was just trying to protect the citizens from any lawsuits and I think it's been brought up since that time and you know, they're still praying in the State House and the House of Representatives here down state, the state over here, and they bring in a different chaplain every time before their meetings and have a prayer being said and I think maybe we're jumping the gun and you know talking to a lot of people and then you know prayer people and groups and so forth. I mean this country and everything, we're hurting, everybody's hurting, and it seems like what's the thing you do, when you find out you're sick, or you got cancer or whatever, you start praying, but sometimes it's already too late. We need to start doing that now. I mean our young kids, I mean we need to let them have some kind of values. Because things are changing with the internet with pornography and all these other kind of things that are going on there. Until that decision is made by the Supreme Court that you can't do it I don't think it's really hurting anything. We all have different denominations and Christianity and everything. You know, but one of the things that I was researching, I mean, a couple articles have been in the newspaper about people researching about the constitution saying that you know it's freedom of speech, okay fine. But one of the things I looked at, what do we worship the most, and you could probably say the almighty dollar. Because on the one, five, ten, twenty and fifty dollar bill it says, "In God we trust." And everybody uses money everyday. I even checked on the coins, penny, nickel, dimes, quarters, it says, "In God we trust". So it's gonna be interesting that is the Supreme Court rules you can't do it are we gonna have to burn all our money now? You know, we're gonna have to burn all our money, melt down all our

NEW AND UNFINISHED BUSINESS cont.

Councilman Markovich cont. - coins and change it. So it's really gonna open up a can of worms. But we're gonna make a big deal about praying at some meeting but yet every day we're using the value of money. You know, worshiping not God but money but it says, "In God we Trust" here, so. I hope the Supreme Court is gonna make a good decision that it's not gonna cause an uproar because it could open up a can of worms for everything.

Councilman Higgs - In the Pledge of Allegiance we say, "One Nation under God". Are we gonna stop saying the Pledge of Allegiance?

ROLL CALL VOTE (prayer on agenda)

AYES: Markovich, Higgs, Hinojosa

NAYS: Spitale, Venecz, Kalwinski, Uylaki, Emerson, Opinker

ABSENT: None

Motion carried

3/6/0

MOTION FAILED

Councilwoman Venecz - For those who are interested in what is going on in your neighborhood, I'd like to announce some upcoming crime watch meetings:

Thursday, June 27<sup>th</sup> -6:30 pm-Jefferson C.W.-United Methodist Church

Tuesday, July 11<sup>th</sup>-Whiting/Robertsdale C.W.-Calumet College-6:30 pm

Tuesday, July 16<sup>th</sup>-East Hammond Pullman C.W.-6:30 pm-Ophelia Steen Center

Thursday, July 18<sup>th</sup>- Hessville C.W.-Jean Shepherd Center-7 pm

PUBLIC EXPRESSION

Carlotta Blake-King - If we can't pray at these meetings what happens to the three faith based events that the city sponsors?

K.C. Thompson II - The new Ch. 72 Parking regulation will affect Aquavor Night Club events on Friday and Saturday nights.

Alex Ortiz - Brings comedy acts and celebrities to the region including Aquavor. The parking ban will hurt them.

Dr. Thomas Juul - Recommends that Council review the possibility of two new ordinances. First, to include sexual orientation or identity to the city's non-discrimination clauses. Second, open equal rights for employees of the City of Hammond who have marriage licenses or civil certificates from other states.

Enrique Balerini - Opposes Ch. 72's no parking past 11. There is nowhere near us to park. This jeopardizes the night club.

Michael Swiger - Supports the parking ban. Nothing good happens in a city park between 11pm and 5am. No one here for Aquavor is from Hammond. This business has had more police calls for service than the number of days that they are open.

PUBLIC EXPRESSION cont.

William J. O'Connor - There have been menaces in downtown Hammond. Aquavor has the problems that many bars have. The problems in downtown are a lot broader in scope and you know what they are. Address the Aquavor problem but address the real one too. As far as the prayer thing, I would encourage those that say you have to have prayer to concentrate more on the conduct directed by their lord and creator than praying to him. Forget the form and get to the substance, action.

Councilman Spitale, supported by Councilman Kalwinski, moved to adjourn.

AYES: ALL

ATTEST:

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Michael Opinker, President  
Hammond Common Council

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Robert J. Golec, City Clerk

Time: 6:45 pm  
cb

Minutes approved at the Common Council meeting of July 22, 2013.