

*Prepared by
Robert J. Golec
Hammond City Clerk*

MINUTES OF THE COMMON COUNCIL
FEBRUARY 22, 2016

The regular meeting of the Hammond Common Council of the City of Hammond, Lake County, Indiana was held on February 22, 2016 in the Hammond City Council Chambers.

Council President Michael Opinker presided.

City Clerk Robert J. Golec facilitated.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE was recited by all.
Invocation by Councilwoman Venecz.

ROLL CALL

PRESENT: Markovich, Spitale, Venecz, Kalwinski, Torres, Higgs, Emerson, Rakos, Opinker

ABSENT: None

TOTAL: 9

PRESENTATION of Proclamation to Paul Walker.

City Clerk read proclamation in its entirety.

READING OF THE MINUTES

Councilman Spitale, supported by Councilman Emerson, moved to approve the minutes of February 8, 2016 and place on file.

AYES: ALL

APPROVAL OF CLAIMS

Councilman Markovich, supported by Councilman Higgs, moved to approve the claims from February 3, 2016 through February 17, 2016. Claim #933 through claim #1285, inclusive.

Councilman Markovich, supported by Councilman Higgs, moved to amend in claims:

#1286	Rieth-Riley Construction	CDBG	\$180,915.44
#1287	People's Bank	CDBG	\$127,995.11

ROLL CALL VOTE (amendment)

AYES: Markovich, Spitale, Venecz, Kalwinski, Torres, Higgs, Emerson, Rakos, Opinker

NAYS: None

ABSENT: None

Motion carried 9/0/0 CLAIMS AMENDED

ROLL CALL VOTE (as amended)

AYES: Markovich, Spitale, Venecz, Kalwinski, Torres, Higgs, Emerson, Rakos, Opinker

NAYS: None

ABSENT: None

Motion carried

9/0/0

CLAIMS APPROVED

(as amended)

MINUTES OF THE COMMON COUNCIL cont.

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PUBLIC HEARINGS

None

COMMUNICATIONS

Councilman Higgs read correspondence from Code Enforcement in regards to the trees on 164th & Rev. Burns Dr. They will be cut down in the spring.

Councilman Higgs read correspondence regarding the drilling of three new wells to analyze the soil.

Councilman Higgs announced Hammond's 13th Annual job fair on Thursday, March 24th from 11 am to 3 pm at the Civic Center.

Councilman Higgs read correspondence from the City Engineer regarding the design and reconstruction of the 5600 block of Walter Street.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Council as a Whole Committee - Councilman Kalwinski - Brought out 16-05.

ORDINANCE 3RD READING - FINAL PASSAGE

16-05 NOTICE OF INTENT - An Ordinance Reclassifying Certain Lands in the City of Hammond for Zoning Purposes and Amending Ordinance No. 8514 (An Ordinance Establishing a Zoning Plan for the City of Hammond including the Regulations and Maps to Administer the Zoning Plan in order to Provide For Orderly Growth and Development within the City, all in accordance with the Comprehensive/Land Use Plan, as Amended) for property commonly known as 10953 and 11001 Indianapolis Boulevard, Hammond, Indiana

Councilman Kalwinski, supported by Councilman Spitale, moved for passage.

Councilman Kalwinski - This is the property where The Spot Liquor store is currently located and in it's place it will be torn down and a new building will be put in it's place. A bigger, larger, building on both parcels. Therefore we needed to clean up the zoning on that.

ROLL CALL VOTE (passage)

AYES: Markovich, Spitale, Venecz, Kalwinski, Torres, Higgs, Emerson, Rakos, Opinker

NAYS: None

ABSENT: None

Motion carried

9/0/0

ORDINANCE NO. 9333 PASSED

INTRODUCTION OF ORDINANCES cont.

Mayor McDermott - It's not that the Mayor wants it, I do want it, but it's city ordinance. So, it's not just like my whimsy wishes about people being on boards from Hammond. It's a city ordinance. And we found that on these boards in particular we're talking about Electrical Contractors, HVAC and Building Contractors, and I know that Councilman Spitale sponsored all three of those resolutions. Those three boards have long standing members that have been there in some cases two decades or longer and residency is not always followed on these boards and it's not that we have a problem with these people, we don't. It's city ordinance that they have Hammond residency and it's coming into sharper focus now that the council and the Mayor have raised the compensation for the boards. There's a lot more Hammond residents that want to sit on these boards which is why we did that in the first place. But the raise has brought into focus that we have non-residents sitting on boards against city ordinance. So, if these are passed by you all, we will literally start from scratch on those boards and appoint people in accordance with city ordinances.

Councilman Higgs - I guess my question would be, to the Mayor, as it relates to some individuals being on several boards. Are you going to eliminate that by just placing them on one board so it gives people the opportunity to serve on these other boards?

Mayor McDermott - There's no prohibition against it but I do try to follow that rule. Some boards are harder to fill than others, okay, but it seems now...

Councilman Higgs - The \$200 stipend will make them want to.

Mayor McDermott - It seems like there is a lot more interest. I agree with the councilman. But there's no rule against that, Councilman Higgs. Regular citizens can serve on multiple boards. It's legal. However, for an elected official it's not. So for us to serve on other boards other than your council seat or my mayorship, it's two lucrative positions. It's against the Indiana Constitution. I guess my answer is I try to follow that, Councilman Higgs. But there's no law against it. Any other questions?

Councilman Markovich - It doesn't say anywhere in the ordinance that you have to live in Hammond.

Mayor McDermott - I believe there is an ordinance that already says that, Councilman Markovich. I have no problem adding that. If you want to add it, Councilman Markovich, I have no problem with that.

Corporate Counsel Kantar - We do have an ordinance that has a residency requirement. On this we just wanted to make specific... there are lay people, we wanted to make sure that the lay people specifically are called out by name. The implication is that all the members need to be Hammond residents because of the other ordinance about anybody that receives compensation. Now if you want to add it in that would be fine. This is only 1st and 2nd, we can put it into committee and bring it out of committee 3rd and final at the next meeting with any changes anybody wants to make after we have our committee meeting. But we wanted to specifically state that the lay people had to be Hammond residents because they don't fit any of the other criteria. A lot of these other people serve by virtue of their position and that would go without saying that they would be a Hammond resident.

INTRODUCTION OF ORDINANCES cont.

Councilwoman Venecz - Correct me if I'm wrong but it does say, "two lay members that are Hammond residents". That does spell out that they are Hammond residents. Any other employee who is with the city of Hammond is a Hammond resident. We have a residency ordinance.

Councilman Markovich - Under Section A, Item 1, it says one journeyman electrician and one license holder. That doesn't mean they have to live in Hammond. That can be an outside contractor that doesn't live in the city of Hammond.

Mayor McDermott - I have no problem if you guys want to make it very clear.

Councilman Markovich - No, I mean, she's trying to spell it that it does say that.

Mayor McDermott - Councilman Markovich, if you wanted to add a line to it just to clear it up I'd have no problem with it.

Councilman Markovich - Well, it's gonna go to committee. But I was just curious what Sections B, E, F & G are, it says that they are unchanged. I would just like to have a copy of all of that.

Mayor McDermott - No problem, Councilman.

Councilman Higgs - I think, Councilman Markovich, if you want to amend that you can do such now. If you want to include that. Just amend it.

Mayor McDermott - There's three ordinances similar to the one you're looking at right now.

Councilman Higgs - Amend the ordinance.

Councilman Markovich - Well, I mean, they know what we're looking for so somebody can, the Law Department can make that change.

Mayor McDermott - If you add that to the ordinance, I'm fine with it, Councilman Markovich. If it's redundant it doesn't hurt. Okay.

Councilman Higgs - My whole thing, Mayor, has always been that people should be fairly selected throughout the city. One or two people serving on three consecutive boards is just ridiculous.

Mayor McDermott - I agree with you, Councilman Higgs.

Councilman Higgs - So whatever you can do to rectify that situation would be greatly appreciated.

INTRODUCTION OF ORDINANCES cont.

Mayor McDermott - In regards to this, Councilman Higgs, it's harder to fill these spots because you have to be qualified to sit on the Electrical Contractor's Board or HVAC. So sometimes it gets a little harder but I agree with what you're saying in spirit.

Councilman Spitale - Originally on this ordinance, 16-09, there was five members. They never had any lay members on this board and they had two contractors. Now you have eight members. You have two lay people and one employee, making three, and one contractor.

Councilman Markovich - He brings up a very good point. Two lay members that are Hammond residents, why would you want to put somebody on the Heating and Air Conditioning Electrical Board that has no experience or qualifications to sit on that board.

Mayor McDermott - That will not be the case. It will be a Hammond resident that's experienced in that area. Sometimes it's good to have Hammond residents on boards. I agree with the changes that are being proposed.

Council President Opinker - Any other discussion? All those in favor? Opposed? AYES: ALL

16-10 Amending Sec. 154.02 of the Municipal Code as it relates to the Composition of the
HVAC Contractor's Board

Councilman Spitale, supported by Councilman Emerson, moved the proposed ordinance to 1st and 2nd reading by title and referred it to the Council as a Whole Committee. AYES: ALL

Councilman Spitale - An example of what we just talked about, originally this board had four contractors, but only one lived in the city of Hammond.

16-11 Amending Sec. 150.026 of the Municipal Code as it relates to the Composition of the
Building Contractor's Board

Councilman Spitale, supported by Councilman Emerson, moved the proposed ordinance to 1st and 2nd reading by title and referred it to the Council as a Whole Committee. AYES: ALL

16-12 Amending and Replacing Flood Hazard Area Ord. 9117

Councilman Spitale, supported by Councilman Higgs, moved the proposed ordinance to 1st and 2nd reading by title and referred it to the Council as a Whole Committee.

Brian Poland, City Planning Director - This ordinance is amending our current Flood Hazard Ordinance. The Ordinance is based on the state model that we're required to follow in order for the residents who are in a flood plain, or at least the remaining flood plains that we have, in order to comply with the National Flood Insurance Program. This is just a technical correction to the ordinance that we've have since the early 1980's.

INTRODUCTION OF ORDINANCES cont.

Councilman Higgs - Brian, since this is being introduced and they are being taken out of the flood plain has their insurance premiums went down?

Director Poland - I'm not really familiar with that. That's a question for Don Novak. The Zoning Administrator. If we send it to committee we can have that as discussion at that time.

Council President Opinker - Any other discussion? All in favor? Opposed?

AYES: ALL

RESOLUTIONS

16R-09 To Support a Due Diligence Study for the Relocation of Hammond City Hall

Councilman Torres, supported by Councilman Rakos, moved for adoption.

Councilman Higgs - I guess my question was, in regards to this particular issue, is not getting the information that I requested a couple of months back. Just today I received approximately, maybe fifteen pages, that I haven't had an opportunity to review to analyze to actually get a feel for what exactly is going to be done. Not only that, the point of the matter is this building is in my district. Not only is it in my district but it's historical and certainly I don't think the residents within my district are happy about the fact of the City Hall being moved. However, there are some issues that are plaguing this building in regards to repairs. So that's some of the things you have to look as well. But, as a councilman it disturbs me that everything that's important to my particular constituents and that serves a great deal to my community is being taken. That's basically all I have to say in regards to this particular issue right now. But I have some concern in terms of what's the cost to renovate versus us moving into another facility. It may be \$5 thousand, \$5 billion, excuse me, to stay here or \$10 million to move. We had an opportunity to tour the building and get an idea what some of the things that need to be repaired. However, there is no outline cost analysis in front of me. So, that's my concern. Had I had the information prior to it would have gave me a better idea of which direction to go.

Mayor McDermott - The good news for Councilman Higgs is alls we're deciding, if this goes through, if this resolution's passed today, what you're doing is allowing us to hire an architect, hire a construction manager, to give you an accurate number on what it would cost to locate Hammond City Hall to Downtown Hammond. Okay? So, what Councilman Higgs has in his hand is if that resolution fails, which is a possibility, how much would it cost to make City Hall livable for the next thirty years. So, the way I see it we got three options, and we just talked about this in the back and I realize that members of the public weren't there so we'll talk about it again. We have the option to do nothing. We do have that option. We could do nothing. We could ignore the fact that the back wall is falling down, that there's a river that is eroding the foundation of this building, that we're not ADA compliant in a lot of respects, that we don't have a sprinkler system. We could ignore all these facts and keep on operating as though everything is fine. That's an option. Second option is we could fix this building and what Councilman Higgs has before him and every member of the council got was a range. One range is about \$5 million, one range is about \$7 million, to make this building livable for the next thirty years. That's the second option. The third option is the eight story building in Downtown Hammond. We have the

RESOLUTIONS cont.

Mayor McDermott cont. - ability to get that building on the cheap and if this resolution is passed what that does for us is it gives me the ability to hire an architect and a construction manager so that I could come back to you in the summer and give you an accurate number of what it would cost to move there. Those are the three options and quite frankly I made a promise I wasn't gonna lobby any of you, and I haven't. I made it clear how I feel. I'm not calling you out. I'm not putting pressure on. Quite frankly, I know that members of your own council are lobbying harder against this than I am for it. I want to know honestly how you feel about this. If you vote it down today, that's the last you'll hear Tom McDermott talk about this. I promise. I won't hold a grudge. I'll just say to the business community in Downtown Hammond that badly want us there, I'm sorry. We tried our best.

Then we will start making the decision on whether we are gonna fix this building or ignore it. Okay? So if you do pass this resolution today I'm not gonna acquire a building. I'm not gonna start making changes to buildings. I'm gonna hire an architect to give us an accurate number. That's all we're doing.

Councilwoman Venecz - I think it needs to be pointed out that it has been in excess of thirty years since anything substantial was done to this building. We did replace some windows. The roof was fixed, not replaced. But it's been well over thirty years since anything has been done. As with our own home, if something is neglected for a period of thirty years it reaches the point of what do you do. It was pointed out that City Hall is a historical building. I did look into the fact that both City Hall and the building on Hohman Avenue, while they are both historical buildings, neither one of them have been registered with either the national or the state register to make them historical buildings. What we need to find out is what is it going to cost. What needs to be done to the building on Hohman Avenue. We will undoubtedly find out the cost of renovations. I'm asking will we find out where there will be additional parking. That has been brought up to me. Obviously technological upgrades will be needed in both buildings so that is a wash. It has to be done no matter which way we go. The truth of the matter is this building as beautiful and grand as it is, we've outgrown it. I asked in caucus the square footage of current City Hall and that is 56000 sq. ft. The Downtown building is 90000 sq. ft. It's been no secret that we have talked about water and how the sale of our water will help us in the future. If we are able to expand on the sale of our water, which will help us in the city, it would also enable us to expand some of our departments. Planning and Development, When you took office I'm sure there had to about thirty people there and now they're down to ten, maybe.

Mayor McDermott - Maybe.

Councilwoman Venecz - So, we have to think forward here. We have to think about growing. As grand and wonderful as this building is, it's my opinion that it's served us well but in terms of looking forward we have to thank our old building and look forward to growing. I may not be here but my grandchildren will be. That is always my goal. Is that when my grandchildren are old enough to have a family of their own, I hope that they will call Hammond their home with the same sense of pride that I have for our fine old city today. The only way that we can expect our young people coming up to be able to look forward to the growth in our city is for us to be forward thinking. If this resolution passes it does not say that we are going to move downtown, we're going to get the numbers. We're going to analyze the numbers and find out if it is feasible for us to do it. Whether it be all at once or whether it be a graduated move. So, this is not anything that is final. It is our opinion that we need to gather information in order to move forward.

RESOLUTIONS cont.

Councilman Higgs - That's fine being said, and I totally accept your comments in regard to moving forward. Move and change is always good. But the reality of it is this feasibility study, I requested it a couple of months ago and this is dated July 31, 2015. I'm supposed to actually say yes or no to moving forward to something that I requested months ago and I haven't even had an opportunity to review this. Had I got this this morning I would have had an opportunity to at least look at it and read it before something is saying, "hey". I get my packet and I knew the resolution was in my packet but to not have the information that I requested doesn't give me an opportunity to give a good sound judgement. That's what I'm saying. I don't think anyone up here is prepare to say yes or no to something that they don't even have the answers to. There's nothing wrong with, hey, I could say, "give me an assessed value of my property and tell the realtor to come out there and pay them and say, hey, how much is my house worth and how much would it cost", we could do that all day and night but the reality of it is you need to look at two fold. What is gonna cost to fix this building? What would it take to

make this building feasible for everybody in our city? What would it take to fix the building Downtown? And what would it take for us to consolidate? There are options. I understand that maybe North Township is interested in this purchase in this building. What's gonna happen with this building? Is it gonna be another vacant building in my district? Have you road down Calumet Avenue and Columbia Avenue lately to see all the abandoned properties? It upsets me knowing that when I was a kid and walked out my door all I saw was new buildings. So it's nothing to be excited about. The reality of it is, hey, if the building needs repair that's like anything you own. If your car needs repairing what do you do? You get it repaired. So, that's my question. The only thing that I have a problem with is the fact giving me something the day of the meeting and saying hey, let's go vote for this or vote that. Yes or no. Had I had an opportunity to review this, I would be more able to say yay or nay.

Mayor McDermott - The packet you guys contain is an estimate, not detailed, not the kind of report we need to present to give you accurate numbers. It's a range of \$5 to \$7 million. We could make it zero too. We have the option of not doing anything. That's an option, do nothing. Let's just pave roads and buy lighting projects and do park projects. That's an option. The responsible thing is to fix the building we're in or move downtown. It's a hard thing to do, because we have to spend money. But an option is, Councilman Higgs, spend zero on this building. Let's move forward. When there's a leak in the roof we'll put a bucket down. When somebody crashes into the flower garden we'll pull them out. That's an option.

Councilman Higgs - Mayor, in no form or fashion am I saying not repair this building. Let me make that clear. Make sure you put that in the paper now. The reality of it is that I am saying is that I don't have the numbers to compare what it takes to fix this building versus us moving into another.

Mayor McDermott - To get that number we would need to hire and a construction manager to crawl all over current city hall to give you the number you're seeking Councilman Higgs will cost money. To get that number for the building in Downtown Hammond will cost money. By approving this ordinance you have before you what you're saying is, Mayor McDermott, you could spend money on hiring an architect and a construction manager to investigate the building in Downtown Hammond to give Councilman Higgs and the rest of the city council members an accurate number on how much it would be. It has nothing to do with this building. This resolution has to do with the downtown option and if you're uncomfortable, vote against it Councilman Higgs. Okay, and if four of your colleagues join you this is a dead end. If you don't think that we've done our job in

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Mayor McDermott cont. - regards to you, vote against it Councilman Higgs, ok, and if four of your colleagues vote with you this is a dead issue. Then we could look at Downtown Hammond Council, we could look at the businesses in Downtown and say, "Sorry, it's not gonna work." Then we'll start talking about this building. Then, Councilman Higgs, to get you the number you're seeking you're gonna have to give me permission to spend money and if you give me that permission I can give you an accurate number. In the meantime all you got is a range. That's it. That's why you have a range.

Councilwoman Venecz - So, if I understand correctly we are talking about repairs to City Hall within the \$5 to \$7 million range, correct?

Mayor McDermott - That's what the estimates are at this point.

Councilwoman Venecz - And we do not know precisely but we have a range of what it would cost to move to

City Hall and what we are attempting to do with this resolution, not an ordinance, it's a resolution, is to get accurate figures on what it would cost to move Downtown Hammond.

Mayor McDermott - Exactly.

Councilwoman Venecz - That's exactly it, so all we're doing is saying Mr. So and so give me correct figures on what it would cost to move Downtown. That is it. We're not spending any more money than ... we're not spending \$5 or \$7 here and we're not spending \$7 or \$8 over here, we're spending money on the construction manager to give us an estimate of what it will cost to renovate the building Downtown.

Mayor McDermott - And at that point, even if you approve the resolution today, what if there's a game changer, the architect we hire goes in the building finds a flaw that we can't see walking through the building and looking at the offices, a fatal flaw that would make it so costly that it's not even an option anymore. Then I come back and say, "Good thing we hired that construction manager because they found something we could have never found because we're not experts at this. We would say, "Ok, that's not an option what are we going to do now?" That is an option. That could easily happen.

Councilman Emerson - I would just like to comment that the questions the councilman had are the very definitions of due diligence and another comparable, but not the same I know, before the South Shore Extension could be built environmental impact study, you know, you just can't start, you know, my opinion of what this building is worth and what it needs, you know, I've made mistakes in my own house repairing things. So you need someone that knows what they're doing before we can get a estimate of what it's going to cost.

Councilman Markovich - I had discussion with the Mayor, and I'm probably more of a sentimental type person about this, you know. You know, born and raised here in Hammond taking numerous tours here through City Hall here as a kid. You know that was a big deal back then when you're in grade school to go ahead and let's tour City Hall and see what it's all about. That's where our government seat is. We all took that tour and I went to the places where nobody else went. I went up on top of the roof and took a look. I went up into the , not

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Councilman Markovich cont. - the penthouse where everybody had their parties but where all the work needs to be done. In looking at them top six to ten floors, 5 to 8, 9, floors, that's where all the wind, the rain, the hail and the sleet and snow hits it. That's where all your damage is being done. The inside walls up there, you could just see the leakage that was coming through. If that was a good building that they wanted to sell, First Midwest Bank would still be in there. They haven't even put it into the Dodge Report. They haven't even advertised it in the Wall Street Journal. They didn't even tell anybody it was for sale. They just walked away. They deserted us. First Midwest Bank deserted us. And you know what, they want us to take care of their white elephant. Even if they gave it to us for free it's not worth it. When BP had their expansion going on the last four or five years, they looked at the Mercantile Bank. BP's got a lot more money than the city of Hammond. They estimated it would be \$15 to \$20 million to fix the Mercantile Bank. They walked away. The big reason was parking. Another reason was security. We all walked through that building. God forbid, I mean do we have to have a security guard on every floor up there if somebody gets in there with a gun? Would anybody know what's going on? Here you got three floors, it's wide open, you know. You know, we've had that building empty, they were looking for tenants. They're kicking tenants out. Lawyers are in there, they left, and so forth. We have the Downtown Hammond Council at one point that I sat on and we have still two members that sit on it now. Yes, the Lakeshore Chamber of Commerce who is a member of the Downtown Hammond Council, where have they

been for the last twelve years to bring in new businesses? When I sat on that council, the Hammond Development Council, before, you know, they were always advertising for Chicago people to come here, move you IT Departments here. How much cheaper it is per square foot, and you're only a half hour away from Chicago and the taxes are lower and everything. Where has that happened? Nothing has happened there. We have the innovation Center there, that's good. That's nice that we've done that. But again, getting to the historical thing, you know, you have the north wall here and it says, "Hammond City Council", on this north wall. This building was built in 1931 when Herbert Hoover was president and we were going through the depression, just like they built the Civic Center to spur economic development throughout the city. The east wall on the back, where they say it's falling down or whatever, yes, I went down there and looked. He had the same problem there at the building at the Bank Calumet. That building says Bank Calumet. It says Hohman Avenue on one side and Fayette Street. They didn't even taken all of their signage off of there. It's never gonna be City Hall. You tell people to go Downtown Hammond go to City Hall they're gonna come here first because it's gonna say Hammond City Hall on the top and then they're gonna go looking for it. The east wall here in the back says, "The Law of the People is the Supreme Law". It says, "Hammond City Hall built in 1931." The south wall says, "Hammond Municipal Court". The west wall on the front it says, Hammond City Hall". On one side it says "Law" on the other side it says, "Justice". That's why this thing was built. In the front you have a memorial. A memorial of all wars, "They died that we might live. The rest is honored glory." So, I mean, it's historic, and maybe I get a little too emotional and so forth and all of that. But Saturday I went out there and looked at the building again on Hohman Avenue. There's only seven parking spots in the back. When we went for that tour I was standing there and Councilman Opinker pulled up and before he even parks he says, "Where we gonna park?" I said, "That's a good question." There's only seven spots behind that building. You look at the top tiles, the tiles are broken and falling off. That's telling you that there's major construction work that needs to be done. You look at that very top, they're all chipped and battered and they're falling off. You look at the east wall all the bricks are weather beaten, bricks are popping out. The fascia on the bricks are falling off. It's losing it's integrity. Someone even used crazy glue to fix a crack in the wall, I call it crazy glue, but we all

RESOLUTIONS cont.

Councilman Markovich cont. - use that stuff at home, you know, that foam insulation, you know, to do the cracks and all that. They didn't even take the time to use mortar to brick it up. The took that orange foam insulation and sprayed it in there. So, I mean, you know, I can concur to a certain extent that we're doing a due diligence and that's good what we need to do, I'm not gonna say hopefully that's gonna come back wrong or whatever but, you know, the way the resolution's written I really can't support it because the way it says, where it says, "The cost of renovating the cost of renovating the Historic Hammond City Hall to make it more technologically productive, energy efficient and fully ADA compliant is expected to be over \$5 million". I mean \$5 million is still a lot better than spending \$15 to \$20 million that BP didn't want to spend for down there. You know, if we're outliving our space, you know, we keep talking about cars falling in the Rose Garden or the Rose Garden's historic thing. You know, fill it in and lets build an annex. A brand new energy efficient City Hall Annex which would make more sense. Still we're preserving the old and we're gonna show the new. You know, that we are moving forward. Yes, the Hammond Common Council wants to support the development of the existing Downtown Hammond area by creating a newly remodeled ADA compliant, energy efficient, Hammond City Hall at 5231 Hohman Avenue. That's always gonna be called the Bank Calumet Building because even when 1st Midwest was in there they didn't even take that plaque off. It still says the Calumet Building. Things, one of the things I see, I can't concur with is, why would we be buying a building that's older than this one. It doesn't make sense. You know, and I can concur with Councilman Higgs, you know, this report was in July written and we just got it tonight and we're expected to make a decision tonight. I would request at least let's postpone this for two weeks, at least have some work sessions and talk about it so we can

look at it ourselves and come up with other questions and maybe have a public hearing. Have people come down here and see what it is. Like I told the Mayor, I was just at a festival at St. John the Baptist for three days and I tended bar and the first question out of their mouth is, "Are you guys really gonna move down there? Do you really want to do that? Do we really wanna need that?" I says, "Hey, you know, five people, six people, are gonna decide that." Really we don't have to decide that. The Mayor can do whatever he wants to do. If he wants to do that on his own he can do that. Hammond Development Corp., Redevelopment Corp., already spent money on this project. They've already done it. We heard about this two months ago. Why weren't we told from the get-go, well we're thinking about it? Two or three years ago the Mayor brought it up and was looking at it and at the time we didn't have the money and he walked away from it and I can concur with him and he made the decision to do that and that was... I'm not gonna say it was good but, you know, maybe at the time we really didn't have the money and we probably still don't have the money. It's a tough decision, you know, and I talked, and I maybe was given the wrong information about he roof being ten years old, okay we fixed the leaks and so forth and all that. We put all new windows in here. We tuck pointed the building. We upgraded the air conditioning here. And now we're talking about walking away from it or tearing it down. You know, it says here, "replaced the existing boilers with high energy efficiency devices. The boilers that we have here are exactly the same boilers in that other building. The same boilers exactly. I was looking at the boiler plate over there when they were built and who operated them and so forth and all of that. They have a full time stationary engineer from, I believe, 399 Union that probably cost over \$100 thousand just to have that guy there to know how to operate those boilers to make sure they're working efficiently. We could probably take two or three floors, you know, if we wanted to move everybody down there and, you know, I don't even know if that's a good idea. I don't know if you want to take your Fire Chief away from the guys in the field. Take away your water department superintendent away from the guys in the field. The Port Authority. Put them all in one building and they can't

RESOLUTIONS cont.

Councilman Markovich cont. - see what's going on in their own department or in their own area. I mean, that's something to look at. You know, I've had calls from people here at City Hall, I mean, they're worried about the parking. If they have to park at the old Midas parking lot, because they're afraid of getting mugged in there. We want to go ahead and help Downtown Hammond.

Mayor McDermott - It sounds like it. You're really pitching it well, Bob. You're making Downtown Hammond sound like a great destination. I mean if any of the developers are watching I'm sure they're gonna move

Councilman Markovich - Mayor, I'm not gonna get in debate with you. I respect your ...

Mayor McDermott - You're slamming the city your supposed to represent. You're slamming the city of Hammond. That's embarrassing for the city.

Councilman Markovich - No, I'm not doing that.

Mayor McDermott - You're a councilman for the entire city, Councilman Markovich, and it's embarrassing listening to you talking about a city you've been a councilman on for over two decades. If it's in that kind of shape you've obviously haven't been doing a very good job as a councilperson. You're slamming the city you represent. It's embarrassing. Listen to yourself.

Councilman Markovich - Mayor, may I continue please? You know, I was born and raised here. You know.

We have St. Margaret's Hospital with four to five thousand people working there. We built the Federal Courthouse here that was supposed to spur economic development. We even had First Baptist Church go ahead and expand. They bring thousands of people here on the weekend. But do they come here and go ahead and go to any of the businesses in Downtown Hammond or anything? I'm just telling it like it is.

Mayor McDermott - No, you're not.

Councilman Markovich - I'm representing the people.

Mayor McDermott - No, you're not.

Councilman Markovich - It's hard to sell something that people don't want. If there's an agenda, there's a plan, that's on the fast track, that's fine. So be it. But is money's being spent already, which it has been, you know, for the past eight months. This is the first we're hearing about it.

Mayor McDermott - What are you talking about? Be specific, Councilman. What are you talking about?

Councilman Markovich - Mayor, July, 2015 on this report.

Mayor McDermott - What money was spent on that, Councilman? How do you know?

RESOLUTIONS cont.

Councilman Markovich - Whether they've been doing work with acquisition with lawyers.

Mayor McDermott - Be specific, you said money's been spent. What money?

Councilman Markovich - I've been asking questions...

Mayor McDermott - What money? You said money's been spent, what money?

Councilman Markovich - Well, what is the cost for this report? What did we pay Hutton & Hutton for the report?

Mayor McDermott - He did it for free.

Councilman Markovich - Okay. Alright. So no money's being spent.

Mayor McDermott - Thank you.

Councilman Markovich - So no money was being spent with lawyers looking at acquisition fees or anything to that expense but, you know, I don't know anybody that would be doing a report for free, in that respect. But I agree with the Mayor, he's trying to do a good thing. But I have to present the other side of people that call and tell me. They're not gonna call the Mayor and say, "Mayor, I don't think it's a good idea" or anything. But they're gonna call me because they know that I'll bring it out and I'm sorry that I'm being called negative or anything to that effect or whatever but that's what I'm doing, my job as a councilman. When I became a councilman twenty nine years ago Downtown Hammond was thriving. It was. And they talked about moving City Hall down there then. But it didn't happen. I mean, people want to go ahead and move forward, that's fine

and dandy. But at the taxpayers expense. And if, you know, four or five people, six people, want to do that, that's fine. You know, we can go along with the report and that's good, you know, but I think whatever happens is gonna happen and so be it. I'm sorry that I'm trying to be

Mayor McDermott - Can I ask Taxpayers Watchdog a question? How much is the addition that you're talking about in the Flower Garden gonna cost, Mr. Watchdog?

Councilman Markovich - Mayor, you know what, my name is Bob Markovich, Councilman, okay? I address you as Mayor, okay. I'm not trying to combat you or anything. I'm trying to work with you. I'm trying to do my job and ask the questions.

Mayor McDermott - The question isn't about what the condition of the roof of the new building, what the boilers of the new building, the question is can we hire somebody to get an accurate estimation on how much it would cost. That's the question. You're slamming the other building. You obviously feel the way you do. I respect your decision. You're one of the votes I've already counted against this.

RESOLUTIONS cont.

Councilman Markovich - Mayor, my background is in construction and inspection engineering, so that I know. I just applied what I learned what I went to school for at Purdue and what I've learned in the passed working in nuclear power plants, Inland Steel, refineries and so forth.

Mayor McDermott - I worked for six years in nuclear power plant, I don't know the first thing about how much this building costs. Six years. I worked day and night in a nuclear power plant for a power plant. That doesn't make me anywhere near qualified to tell you how much it's gonna cost to move into that. I was an electrician, I have no idea how much the electrical will cost. I worked for six years at a nuclear power plant, Councilman. I have no clue how much it would cost, because I'm not an expert and neither are you. You have no idea what you're talking about. You're just talking.

Councilman Markovich - Like I said, Mayor, I'm not trying to debate you or anything. I'm just bringing out my feelings, my concerns and people that have called me. I'm not here to get into attack mode with anybody or anything. I'm just bringing forth what was told to me and I'm representing my constituents.

Councilman Torres - As the Mayor has stated a thousand times. I know I've heard it. This is merely a resolution to get the cost so that he can hire his contract manager and his architect to bring us the figures. So, all this can be discussed later when he brings the figures to us and we can make up our mind whether you're gonna vote yes or no. For right now I just move to have final passage of this resolution so that we can make a decision tonight.

Council President Opinker - Thank you, Councilman Torres. Clerk Golec, roll call vote.

ROLL CALL VOTE (adoption of 16R-09)

AYES: Spitale, Venecz, Kalwinski, Torres, Emerson, Rakos, Opinker

NAYS: Markovich, Higgs

ABSENT: None

Motion carried

7/2/0

RESOLUTION R09 ADOPTED

NEW AND UNFINISHED BUSINESS

Councilwoman Venecz announced the Community & Crime Watch meetings coming up:
Columbia C.W.; Wed., Feb. 24; 5:30 p.m.; Columbia School
Edison C.W.; Wed., Mar. 2; 6:30 p.m.; Edison School
Edison C.W. on the Road; Thur., Mar. 3; Golden Manor Senior Building
Irving C.W.; Fri., Mar. 4; 9:15 a.m.; Irving School
Jefferson C.W.; Wed., Feb. 24; 6:30 p.m.; Jefferson School
Pulaski Park N.A.; Tues., Feb. 23; American Legion; 6:30 p.m.
Whiting/Robertsdale C.W.; Thur., Mar. 10; 6:30 p.m.; Calumet College

Councilwoman Venecz announced Mayor's Night Out on Wed., Feb. 24, 6:30 p.m. at Gavit Middle/High School Cafeteria. That is in the 5th District and is an excellent opportunity for anyone in the city to come and address the mayor directly and any of the department heads. So please come out to that.

NEW AND UNFINISHED BUSINESS cont.

Councilwoman Venecz - We in Hammond are so very fortunate in many respects. We have many volunteers in our city that work tirelessly to make our city a better place to live and we have water that is not only inexpensive but clean and safe for our families and children. As you all know, Flint, MI is in the midst of a severe water crisis. One of our residents, Ms. Anne Herbert is a Red Cross volunteer who just returned from a two week deployment in Flint and is painfully aware of the devastation the Flint residents have been subjected to. So arrangements have been made to drop water donations off at the Hammond Civic Center, Wed. or Thur. between 10 a.m. and 1 p.m. and 4-6 p.m. also on Wed. and Thur. or you can drop donations off at the Pantry Deli at 5808 Hohman Avenue from 8 a.m. to 8 p.m. Monday thru Friday. Donations will be taken until March 10th. The water will then be transported to Flint by caravan with Northwest Indiana Truck Club on Saturday, March 12. We ask that Hammond show their 219 Region pride and donate a case of water. If you have any questions you can contact Ms. Anne Herbert 219-213-1503 or you can contact me at 219-937-9774. Thank you very much.

Councilman Higgs - To my constituents and the residents of Hammond I am pleased to know that we now have ownership of the Memorial Park again. For a number of years the park somehow or another was sold by the School City for whatever reason I was unable to get the documentation showing that the purchase of the property had taken place. However, the property is now back in the ownership of the city of Hammond and so now everybody can know here to call and get any of their questions, concerns, as it relates to the park. Hopefully this summer I can start investing some of the casino dollars in renovating Memorial Park.

PUBLIC EXPRESSION

Richard Barnes - Grew up and graduated in Hammond. On the board of the Hammond Historical Society. Remembers when Hammond was prospering. Wondered why Hammond was declining. Believes that the city fathers had no vision for the future of the city. Owns property in Downtown Hammond and believes in Hammond. Has brought business from Illinois to his buildings.

Dave Ryan - Thanked council for approving 16R-09.

Carlotta Blake-King - Has concerns about this building vs. the building in Downtown Hammond. Residents in the 3rd District are concerned about what will be done with the current building. To not have a fool proof plan in terms of what you're gonna do bothers her as a taxpayer. It's gonna start at \$10 million and end up \$40 million just like the golf course. Let the 3rd District Councilman do his job. Give him the information he requests.

Laurie Czulno - Answered regarding flood insurance. If your property is removed by FEMA from flood insurance from Flood Plain you do not have to carry flood insurance. There is an optional secondary flood insurance which costs 15% of what you would pay previously if you still want some type of insurance. Supports 16R-09 but does have questions regarding the current building. Is in favor of revitalizing Downtown Hammond.

Ola Smith - Has been in the construction industry for thirty years. First and foremost you need a structural engineer. They will determine what structural damage has been done and the cost of the repairs. They gave an

PUBLIC EXPRESSION cont.

Ola Smith cont. - estimate to secure the building, they didn't say how much it was going to be to do the complete repair of the building. The Mayor said he neglected this building purposely because he had his eye on that building Downtown. That sounds like a derelict of duty to fulfil your own agenda. If the stores in Downtown were coming back, they'd be back already. The development is all between Hessville and Highland. This is to fulfil a personal agenda.

Reymundo Garcia - Respects the council and the decisions it has to make. Discusses the broken window theory. The last ten years will likely be viewed as the worst economic downturn in the U.S. history. Taco Real has invested more money in the last ten years than in the previous twenty five. Austere times call for reinvestment not parsimony. If we do not reinvest we perish. Bringing City Hall Downtown will continue the revitalization of that district and continue to strengthen the city's reputation.

Alvin Cheeks - This building means a lot to me. Has been a life long photographer. I sit there because I earned that seat.

George Stoya - Agreed with Mr. Garcia's affirmation of the promise of Downtown. We've got to have some faith. The Mayor has worked tirelessly to not let Hammond "die". It galled me when the new courthouse went in and put in a cafeteria so nobody goes out to eat lunch at the local shops.

MaryEllen Slazyk - Has been to the Calumet Building recently. There are problems with that building. There's water damage, window damage and possibly mold issues. It is a heating and cooling pig. There's no parking. This building is centrally located. It's more accessible to our elderly and disabled residents.

Verline Jackson - The building should stay here because it's a legacy, easy access for the disabled, and it's a pillar of this community. Asked the Mayor to keep it here. The foundations were built here. Did not like the rat representing the 219.

Councilman Higgs, supported by Councilman Rakos, moved to adjourn.

AYES: ALL

Michael Opinker, President
Hammond Common Council
ATTEST:

Robert J. Golec, City Clerk

Minutes approved at the Common Council Meeting on March 14, 2016.

Time: 7:40 pm

cb