

*Prepared by  
Robert J. Golec  
Hammond City Clerk*

MINUTES OF THE COMMON Council  
AUGUST 8, 2016

The regular meeting of the Hammond Common Council of the City of Hammond, Lake County, Indiana was held on August 8, 2016 in the Hammond City Council Chambers.

Council President Janet Venecz presided.

City Clerk Robert J. Golec facilitated.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE was recited by all.  
Invocation by Councilman Emerson.

ROLL CALL

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

ABSENT: None

TOTAL: 8

ANNOUNCEMENT by Michael Opinker.

Michael Opinker - The last Council Meeting on the 25th of July, I didn't realize that was going to be my last Council Meeting as Council President. Being Councilman for 6 plus years has been a great experience for myself and thanking all of you folks for the trust that you put in me as being President for the last four and half years. It's been a learning experience. There was a lot of times that we all didn't agree on certain things but then there was a lot of times, you know, we battled for what's right. Like I says, I respect everybody's decision in what we've concluded in our decisions as Council President and passing of hundreds of ordinances and resolutions. First of all I'd like to thank my constituents. If it wasn't for all my constituents in the 5th District I wouldn't have had that opportunity to act as their Councilman in the 5th. My Precinct Committee people and all of you, starting with Mayor McDermott. I'd like to thank Mayor McDermott, Councilman Rakos, Councilman Higgs, Councilman Markovich, Councilwoman Venecz, Councilman Torres, Councilman Emerson, Councilman Spitale, Councilman Kalwinski, and past Councilwoman Pucalik, who I worked with too, Councilman Uylaki. It's tough for me. I enjoy being up there working for my people. It's just one of them doors that closed and hopefully something else is going to open, and trust me it will open. You haven't heard the last of Councilman Opinker. Folks have a great evening and God Bless ya's.

Council President Venecz - On behalf of the Hammond Common Council we have a plaque for you in appreciation of your leadership and guidance as City Council President and 5th District Councilman.

READING OF THE MINUTES

Councilman Spitale, supported by Councilman Kalwinski, moved to accept the minutes of July 25, 2016 and place on file.



on Saturday at Martin Luther King Park from 12 to 3. First come, first serve.

#### COMMUNICATIONS cont.

Councilman Higgs discussed to a letter he received from Jessica Ramsey. He is investigating her incident and will respond at another date.

#### COMMITTEE REPORTS

Community & Crime Watch Committee - Councilwoman Venecz - Upcoming meetings:

Tues., Aug. 16; E. Ham'd Pullman C.W.; Ophelia Steen Center; 6:30 p.m.

Thur., Aug. 18; Hessville C.W.; Jean Shepherd Center; 7:00 p.m.

Thur., Aug. 18; S. Ham'd C.W.; Ham'd Housing Authority Building; 7:00 p.m.

Whiting/Robertsdale C.W.; Thur., Aug. 11; 6:30 p.m.; Calumet College

Also the Community & Crime Watch groups are continuing their blue ribbon initiative to say thank you to our Hammond Police Officers. If anyone is interested in displaying a blue ribbon certainly feel free to do so. If you do not have a blue ribbon we will have them available at all of the Crime Watch meetings. So please say thank you to our Hammond Police Officers.

#### ORDINANCE 3RD READING - FINAL PASSAGE

None

#### INTRODUCTION OF ORDINANCES

16-22            Appropriation-Hotel/Motel Innkeepers Tax - \$10,894.84

Councilman Spitale, supported by Councilman Kalwinski, moved the proposed ordinance to 1st and 2nd reading by title, referred it to the Council as a Whole Committee with a Public Hearing on September 12, 2016.

AYES: ALL

Councilman Spitale - Total funds for \$10,894.84 for Economic Development for marketing expenses.

#### RESOLUTIONS

16R-23            Establishing the City of Hammond's Contingent Support of the Hammond Alternative" to the West Lake Corridor Project

Councilman Spitale, supported by Councilman Higgs, moved for adoption.

Councilman Rakos, supported by Councilman Spitale, moved to amend into the final paragraph, which reads, "Now therefore be it resolved that is the above contingencies are met and the Hammond Alternative is concluded as the preferred alternative in the draft environmental..." , change "draft" to "final".

Council Coordinator Balboa read the resolution in its entirety as amended.

## RESOLUTIONS cont.

Councilman Higgs - I think my first question that I had posed to the Mayor was what was the initial agreement so that it's on the record, what was the proposal that was presented to the Mayor's Office in regards to this particular project. So if he could answer those questions that will help me in some way, as well as the public.

Mayor McDermott - In 2008, when talk of this project first occurred, as you remember we had this discussion in 2008 and a couple of you were here with us then and it fell apart. The General Assembly refused to get involved at that point. But at that point there was two separate lines. The line coming from Munster left Hammond in the 4th District and went to Illinois ultimately and ended up in Chicago and the current line which leaves right around Gostlin and State Line. These two lines left Hammond, basically ran parallel to each other but never touched. I was a pretty new Mayor at the time and I realized right off the bat that was a horrible design because if you could touch those two lines together in Hammond we could create a Depot Station, a Gateway Station. That's what we're talking, the Hammond Alternative now. So, like I said, in 2008 that plan ultimately fell apart and then Mr. Noland and Mr. Hannah, who are both here today from the RDA and NICTD resurrected the plan. I know that Congressman Viscosky is very involved in this as well. The plan, the Hammond Alternative has always been discussed but it's the more expensive alternative. It is. If they build this in Hammond, we knew that it was going to cost extra money. It's cheaper for them to rebuild the infrastructure in Illinois. But what does that do for us and our jobs over here? The switchyard which we moved to the 2nd District in an abandoned piece of property was in the 4th District in the neighborhood, it worked with us on that. This plan's changed quite a bit from when we first got involved in giving \$250 thousand to NICTD for the Environmental Impact but I have to say that Mr. Nolan has been a pleasure to work with. I think we've come a long way and the way I see it now we have two options as a Council and a Mayor, we could continue to say no to the train and we're not gonna support this financially, we're not gonna give you our CEDIT money. We have that option. The question you have to ask yourself is if we take this option and we keep playing hard ball and we keep saying we're not gonna fund this, do you think the train's gonna happen anyway? Because I do. I think no matter what we do today or in the future, this train's gonna happen. Now the question is, are we doing our citizens a better service by remaining obstinate and not providing any money whatsoever or should we get on board and try to get the best deal for Hammond citizens. I really believe this is going to happen regardless of what we do today. I think if we work with NICTD, if we work with the RDA, we could get greater than 10 for 1 return on our money. We're gonna be in for \$27 million and the estimates are \$300 million worth of this work is gonna take place in Hammond. Much of it in Pete Torres' district, the 2nd District. Which is a district that badly needs investment. Badly needs clean up. And we're gonna focus \$300 million on some of the parts of our city that need it the most. It's gonna help Councilman Mark's district for sure. North Hammond's gonna be a beneficiary of this. We may be able to turn that part of the city around. I've had discussions with Mr. Hanna, CEO of the RDA, and he's assured me that is the Gateway Station happens, which means that we would have to support this, the RDA would be interested in helping Hammond expand transit oriented development around the Gateway Station. You know we go to Councilman Torres' district, in that part right now we see buildings that were busy in the 80's but they're not busy any more. We see some buildings that are falling down. We have a lot of roads that need a lot of repairs. And you know what, ten years from now, it will be totally different ten years from now. And it could be, if we work with the RDA, we could have condominiums there with people from the city that want to live there because it's only an hour away from Chicago by train. They could walk to the train station and go anywhere from South Bend to Munster to Chicago. So, we've come a long way, Councilman Higgs, I appreciate you asking that.

## RESOLUTIONS cont.

Councilman Higgs - I guess my other question is, the CEDIT money that comes income tax through the county,

I know it's line itemed as \$900 thousand per year. If we get additional CEDIT money at some point will we be taxed...

Mayor McDermott - \$900 thousand...I know what you're gonna ask.

Councilman Higgs - What am I gonna ask?

Mayor McDermott - If we have more in the future is it going to be 33 1/3% of a larger number, which means our percentage goes up and our payment goes up.

Councilman Higgs - Exactly.

Mayor McDermott - We're on the same page.

Councilman Higgs - So what happens then?

Mayor McDermott - The resolution says \$900 thousand max per year. It's a great question. \$27 million over the life. That's the commitment we're making.

Councilman Higgs - And for clarity, I guess you could explain what CEDIT money is.

Mayor McDermott - County Economic Development Income Tax. It's one of the reasons this tax was created. One of the reasons was, I think, I wasn't in the room when this decision was made. But I think part of the reason that County Economic Development portion of the taxes included so that we could local match the massive amounts of federal money that are going to come in and be needed to complete this project. This project's gonna be north of \$600 million, half of it's gonna be spent in our city. If we don't participate now, when they do the next leg, the next leg's gonna be from Munster to Lowell or Munster to Valparaiso, they're not gonna be talking to Hammond then. They're not gonna say, "Okay, Hammond", ten years from now, "Okay, do you want to do the Gateway Station now?" It's over, once they pass this. We're never gonna have this discussion again. If we don't do this now, it's never gonna happen.

Councilman Higgs - I guess my next question would be what's the great benefit that Hammond's gonna be getting from this expansion?

Mayor McDermott - Councilman Torres, can you answer that question?

Councilman Torres - Like the Mayor acknowledged, my district, the 2nd, we are in need of a lot of improvements. This is gonna greatly impact it by the commitment of the all the people involved. We're investing \$27 million where the whole project is \$300 million so that's about a 10th of our investment. We have to start somewhere and like the Mayor just said if it's not done now, it's never gonna get done. They're just going to overpass us and they're still gonna do it regardless. We're just gonna get less of a benefit from it. So,

RESOLUTIONS cont.

Councilman Torres cont. - from that point of view, even though it is a big investment, because I would like to see if I could \$900 thousand invested just in the district with the streets and the parks and everything it needs. It's a one time shot and we got to, in my opinion, we got to go for it.

Mayor McDermott - You know, if we, like Councilman Torres just said, to get what we're gonna get done it

would take Councilman Torres probably twenty years to get done what we're gonna get done in a period of five years. I think that we've got some explaining to do with residents for sure. There's residents that are mad at us because we are even considering this, okay. But the fact is, do we want to be obstinate and sit back and watch them build this line or do we want to try to get the best deal we can for Hammond residents. Because that's why I'm here. That's why I'm here. I want to make Hammond a better place. I think this does it. I think that's why all you are here too. This is an opportunity to get 10 for 1 on your money.

Councilman Higgs - I guess my question again would be as to what are the other surrounding cities investing? I know we're committing to a certain amount, but what are they committing as well to this project?

Mayor McDermott - Could we maybe suspend the rules, we have a lot of speakers here from NICTD, from the RDA, from (unclear), from One Region, that I know that would like to speak. And I'm sure there's plenty of people on the opposite side who would love to speak as well.

Council President Venecz - Could I have a motion to suspend the rules?

Councilman Higgs, supported by Councilman Torres, moved to suspend the rules to allow the organizations that are part of the South Shore Expansion to speak.

Councilman Higgs, supported by Councilman Spitale, moved to amend the motion that anyone who is interested in the South Shore Expansion to speak.

ROLL CALL VOTE (suspend rules to allow the public to speak)

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

NAYS: None

ABSENT: None

Motion carried

8/0/0

RULES SUSPENDED

Bill Hanna, President and CEO of the RDA - Members of the Council, I appreciate your time. Mr. Mayor, thank you. And citizens of Hammond I am honored to be here in front of you today. The Mayor put it very well. I think we've been through a process of sharpening through discussions and what we have today is a very great product for not only the city of Hammond but for Northwest Indiana for the RDA to be excited about. We see ourselves as really the first choice in Chicago for new residents, existing residents, new business. We want to be the place to be. We know that that's tough work in order to get there. And a lot of places in the Midwest haven't done it so well. But in Hammond if you look back at what's happened, and these are just a few things, Wolf Lake, your trail system, the Purdue Northwest combination that's happened here, College Bound, clearly this

RESOLUTIONS cont.

Mr. Hanna cont. - Council and this Mayor has a strong vision and today we see a massive difference in what's going on and it's all positive stuff and we've been proud to be a strategic partner with you. We think that what the Mayor has negotiated at this point, especially with the Gateway Station component offers Hammond the chance to be the hub in the system where residents can get anywhere and it becomes a central part of this exciting opportunity. It also gives us a piece that some of our Chicago peer communities or even competitive areas have and puts Hammond in a completely different position in order to be marketed. So we are excited about representing Hammond to not only facilitate RDA funds in a significant way but to also bring in private sector investment to achieve our goals. So we will be committed to moving forward with you as a partner as always and again I appreciate your time and the vision and commitment to making this a better place not only for

your citizens but for the citizens of NW Indiana and the state of Indiana. Thank you.

Mike Nolan, President of the South Shore Railroad - It's my privilege to be here before you today, before the citizens of Hammond to talk to you about the South Shore Line Project, the extension through Hammond. You know, a little bit of history, my second day of the job here when I took over the South Shore was a public forum about this project. At that time the design that we were looking at did not have a Gateway Station. It had a yard at South Hammond. Had most of the construction work over in the state of Illinois and as part of this process one of the things that we are charged to do under the National Environmental Protection Act is to have outreach, to have stakeholder meetings, to have public forums to listen to people, to listen to our communities. We've had that and Munster's told us, they had given us a resolution, they've told us what they want with respect to the railroad. I think that's partly what we want here today from Hammond. The second thing is that working with Hammond the Hammond staff, the Mayor's staff, presented an option to us that allowed us to consider moving that rail yard out of 173rd Street and putting it up in North Hammond. That came from dialogue back and forth with the city of Hammond. It also, because of that route option, allowed us to do what the Mayor had talked about, was to bring the South Shore Line and the West Lake Extension together in a Gateway Station. There's a couple things about that that excite me as a railroad guy. One of them is that we could have cross platform transfers whereas the Mayor said you could come down from South Bend and go down to Munster and go from Munster back to South Bend, you can go from Chicago to Munster, or from anywhere in the system you can go back and forth. The other thing it does is it allows us to increase our service levels, our initial projections for the West Lake was we were gonna run five trains in the rush hour in the morning with what we call a reverse train back at six in the morning, and five in the evening with the reverse coming back. So a total of twelve trains. With the Gateway Station, now that we could connect the railroad, we can run trains back and forth between North Hammond and Munster and effectively have this Cross Platform Transfer and double the amount of service that we're offering. So, as a result of this discussion the opportunities for additional service for weekend and evening service now present themselves. So, we're in the process right now we're considering multiple options that are part of this process. We're gonna be publishing in the Federal Register in the next couple of months what the preferred alternative is. I can tell you that the Hammond Alternative has tremendous advantages but one of the things we want to hear from is Hammond's viewpoint on that as well and so I thank you for your time today. I'm happy to answer any questions. I can tell you that the Mayor is right, it's gonna be about \$300 million that we will spend in the corporate limits of Hammond. We're gonna add about 100 new jobs, railroad jobs that will be mostly located in Hammond. So, we appreciate the time before you today and be happy to answer any questions.

RESOLUTIONS cont.

Councilman Higgs - I guess my question would be to you as the Director of the South Shore, you're saying 100 jobs, what are those jobs entail? You say railroad jobs, does that mean they're gonna be building railroad tracks or are people gonna be working on the trains? Exactly what kind of jobs? Because I'm all for economic development and I think it's a plus. How long is it gonna take for this project to come to total fruition? What is the direct impact gonna be on the residents that currently this new train station may affect? How many homes are gonna be deleted from the are so that this train can com into fruition? Those are some of the questions that may be thrown out. But, as for me I'm all for economic development. I think it's a great idea as long as the citizens of Hammond benefit from the project. That's the key point, and they're not left out in the process. Because sometimes businesses or companies have a tendency to move into Hammond and what happens once they get here they forget about the residents that's been here and there are a number of people especially in the district that I represent that are looking for jobs. So, you know, my main question is, actually, how long is it gonna take before this is totally completed?

Mr. Nolan - We're on a schedule right now with the Federal Government to get to them in August of next year with our final Environmental Impact Statement Record of Decision done and go to them and ask them for a project rating. Once we get into that project rating phase, they give us the thumbs up or thumbs down. We're looking for a 50% share from the Federal Government here and we get that into the Federal budget the following year. Our goal is to start construction in 2020 and open up operations in 2022. To your point about the jobs in Hammond these are skilled craft jobs, these are onboard collectors, conductors, engineers, most of them will be located here at the North Hammond site. From my experience, from our Michigan City shop where we have about 300 of our workers, most of them live within five to ten miles of the main shops. I can't imagine why when we open up here at the North Hammond facility the same kind of circumstance would not occur here when we start service, to answer your question.

Councilman Kalwinski - When there was talk earlier, there was talk earlier, there was talk some years back about construction in Illinois. Would RDA dollars would have followed into Illinois had this happened?

Mr. Nolan - The construction project, the investment in the rail, would have required that the bridges, and the rail, and the infrastructure, and the ballast, and the signal system, to follow where the railroad needed to go to connect up into the South Shore. So, yes, it would have flown over to Illinois.

Councilman Kalwinski - Mr. Hannah, is that correct?

Mr. Hannah - Yes, sir, and additionally, of course, that's not our preference. I mean this solution works both ways for not only Hammond's benefit but the RDA and the State's benefit. As I said, this is just a better scenario for Indiana taxpayers, for workers, people who live here. So, I mean, in addition to getting a great deal you're contributing a lot to the success of the overall system and our ability to develop very well and do what we'd rather do as Hoosier taxpayers with this.

Councilman Kalwinski - Thank you for that. I just wanted to be clear about that because what I was thinking was RDA dollars, instead of coming to Hammond would have gone to Illinois and I don't want to see that happen. I just wanted to be clear on that. Thank you. The other thing is initially some were talking about a freight line and that no longer would be in the equation with our resolution.

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Mr. Nolan - There's a couple things I would point out about that. Number one, to design the bridge structures to accommodate the freight traffic would require us to spend Federal dollars on a passenger rail line that would not be used for the passenger rail line. We're not doing that. The second thing is, because of the grade, the slope that we have to travel up to accommodate the Gateway Station, it will be an elevated station. The freight locomotives can't handle that grade so it effectively precludes it.

Councilman Kalwinski - Very good, thank you for that. I guess I want to say another thing that hasn't been mentioned yet is that we see development all around our city on its perimeter, and good things happening in Robertsdale, and good things happening off of the Boulevard, and it's easier to have development come into our city at those points. Now we're having, basically, a potential \$300 million or more in the city of Hammond in the 2nd District and across the street from the 1st District, so here we have an opportunity for inner city investment that we haven't had in this kind of grandiosity in my lifetime and it seems like an opportunity that can work for Hammond and inner city Hammond and actually with the Chicago Avenue make over that's about to begin and the taking of some properties there along with the Gateway, taking of some properties. There's a renaissance possibility in the 1st and 2nd District and maybe touching other districts in the city of Hammond as

well. So, this is a real important time for Hammond. I just wanted to impress that on people and thank you fellas for taking the mic.

Councilman Emerson - Thank you gentlemen for coming tonight. I appreciate it. As you know, or you may not know, I'm the 4th District Councilman and I'm really torn tonight on this issue, me personally. Because I love the city and I love this idea. The Hammond Gateway Station, I compare it to a city in Illinois I saw that was built around the Metra, even Homewood, what they've done over there and I used to imagine the current Gostlin Street Station like that. Okay, this was before all this has come about. And I'm torn because I saw the drawings and I'll get to about information in a minute, I saw the artists conceptions of the Hammond Gateway recently and it's just beautiful. The problem I have is the people that put me in this seat at a nine to one ratio are upset and do not want the part of the project at 171st Street Station due to the volume of traffic that they think will happen. And maybe I'm not hearing from the people that want it, but I mean these people have my attention. And I've heard, the information from the beginning, I've heard different amounts of parking spaces. I've heard a thousand, that was early on. Lately I've heard 900. One of the questions I have is if that could ever be reduced to 500 that would be something I would like to look at. I also would point out to the At Large Council respectfully, you know you represent these people in the 4th as well and I know you know that. And to the District councilmen, you'll be losing \$4.5 million of CEDIT tax money for your projects which we already know, the District councilmen know, we've lost half of the gaming infrastructure money for the last five years. Interestingly, and I know it's all changed now. Time changes things. I still agree with the Mayor and his call a couple years ago for a referendum on the project. This is a sensible and fair proposal. I thought it then and I should have been more vocal but at any rate, you know, we did it before with the gaming votes and believe me I appreciate the gaming votes as a District Councilman, thirty years ago. As a result of that millions of dollars have been thrown into infrastructure to improve Hammond and the College Bound Program. It was mentioned in caucus. All of that was from a referendum that my neighbors said, "You know, it's gonna bring prostitution to Hammond and you're gonna vote for it?" I was a citizen then. I said, "Yes, I'm, gonna vote for it. It sounds like the gaming boats are gonna help the city." And lo and behold I think that it's pretty obvious they have on the

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Councilman Emerson cont. - whole. So, I would ask Atty. Berger or our City Attorney, if we could just pursue that option in the interim I know maybe the horse is out of the barn as they say, so that, the other thing is the information has not been forthcoming the way I think it should be. You know I had to ask a lady at a meeting in Munster and tell her who I was, I wasn't trying to be grandiose, I just said, you know, the project's going through the heart of my district, I think I would like to have a little something here. So anyway, there's been so many options that it's been confusing for me and I'm sure confusing for a lot of the residents. The other thing I have, and it's a very tough issue for me, you know committed \$250 thousand for the Environmental Study. We don't know the result of that yet. So, the parking lot and a lot of other issues, you know, I love the city, I want it to succeed, but I'm trying to listen to the people that I represent. So I would like to get the idea here that I would be in favor of a resolution like this but the concrete thing I'm coming away with is the \$27 million for a project that benefits a lot of our neighbors and in my opinion are neighbors to the west. A lot of our other neighbors, I'm sure, in Hammond. Again, we could use some data for that. But the 4th District not so much and that's who I'm accountable for at the end of the day. Those are the crux of my questions.

Councilman Higgs - Just for some clarity, I guess Councilman Emerson has stated that he wanted ..... are you requesting a referendum at this point? Is that something that you're throwing out there? Because I'm not clear as to what you're requesting. I heard it but then again I'm not sure.

Mayor McDermott - Madame chair, we have people waiting to speak. Could we wait til the end, when they get done talking. I mean there's people waiting in line to speak.

Peter Novak, Chief Executive Officer of the Greater NW Indiana Association of Realtors - You know, it's fascinating sitting here listening to all the dialogue. For a number of years now I've listened to Mayor McDermott at times opposing the project based on some of the same concerns I'm hearing here as well. All along I always knew that Mayor McDermott was always just fighting for what he thought was going to be in the best interest of his city. He should do so. You all should do so as well. I did want to talk a little bit just briefly about, you know, from our perspective, I represent over 2400 realtors here in NW Indiana and over 500 offices in a seven county area and I just want to talk a little bit about the 10,000 foot view on a project like this. You know our organization has supported this project since about 2012 and the four main reasons why we have supported it is first and foremost is the population shift in NW Indiana. Our association does a lot of generational studies about what future home buyers want out of a home, what they're looking for in the particular areas that they move to and one of the things that they're looking for surely is transportation, public transportation, convenient access to jobs. I don't know if people know this or not but the biggest segment of home buyers right now are the millennials and if you guys, because I hear a lot of talk about what the concerns are now. I would implore you to think a little bit further than that. Think about what we want to see ten, twenty, thirty years from now. Because the studies that I read, the future home buyers are going to be looking for something a lot different than what they are looking for today. When I look at what it is they are looking for, a lot of it reminds me of Hammond. It reminds me of the opportunity that is before you today to reshape what your city looks like. My peers, generation X, many of them wanted to move to suburbs and more land and have more space, that's not exactly what the millennials are looking for. They're looking for walkable neighborhoods. They're looking for convenient access to transportation, convenient access to jobs, everything that this

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Mr. Novak cont. - opportunity represents. So, again, from our perspective, this isn't really about the benefits of now. It surely is that you have to balance that with the costs associated with this, but this is really about your opportunity to shape the future of not only Hammond but NW Indiana. So, again, I would encourage you to support this resolution. You know, I hear a lot of talk about the benefits of other communities, some people say South county and Illinois. But to me, I've heard some criticism about the existing line and how that has not produced any economic development and, you know, having served in Hammond as the Planning and Development Director, I can tell you, at least from my perspective, there was never any focus on developing that. You know, that's a hundred year old line that at one point in time was primarily used for freight. So I think this is an opportunity if you really focus, if we have a regulatory environment that is conducive to development, I think you have an opportunity to do something wonderful for your city and I really hope that you guys will consider doing that.

Ken Davidson - I want to thank the Mayor for suggesting that you open up the microphone. Some of the comments today really alleviated some of the concerns I think that people have. For instance, the maximum contribution, I know the town of Griffith tried to do a flat contribution and that was rejected. First I want to clarify what we're talking about here today, okay, we already have a train. If millennials want convenient access to Chicago we can offer them that. This is about offering convenient access to Chicago for someone else, namely Munster and Dyer. But, the train is gonna happen as the Mayor stated. Most likely whether you vote for this today or not. So the question today is whether or not you are willing to commit \$27 million of Hammond taxpayer money to possibly, maybe, get \$40 million back in the future. That's really what this is about. Because

these guys are gonna come in and they're gonna bulldoze whatever they want in the city of Hammond. They've already decided that. They already have red x's over 100 homes. And Councilman Emerson, I congratulate you for speaking to your constituents. I want to know if Councilman Torres spoke to his constituents. For instance did you go out to speak to Francisco Dominguez who happens to live in a house that has a red x over it right know. Did you let him know that you're gonna tear down his house when you asked him for your vote. There's 100 people that live in that area approximately, 100 homes that are going to be bulldozed for this project. Now, that might be a good idea, but it's something that the citizens should have a discussion about and should know about before the plan is made. Now let's talk about the RDA. Virtually everybody was on board for eliminating the RDA in 2014. Every project that they've done in the past, I mean Mr. Hanna stood up here and talked about some of the projects that he's done, every single one has either gone over budget exponentially or been cut in half. Marquette Park had a list of about eleven major items they were supposed to do. They got five or six of them done for the same cost that they originally were supposed to do. So, once you get on board for this \$27 million and the project goes way over budget, double, triple, six or seven times, like the Gary Airport Project, how do you get out? What do you do at that point? The construction started, it's halfway done, we need another \$30 million Hammond City Council, what do you do? They're gonna build this train line if they're gonna build it. They have the money for the train line. This is all about the extra money for the TOD and it's \$27 million now for maybe \$40 million in the future. We're already giving \$3.5 million of casino money and by the way, just so you know, just to make sure everybody here is clear, the state legislature changed that statute so if the casino money falls short they're gonna take it out of your budget. That \$3.5 million is guaranteed to the RDA because they have to sign that bond. So we are committed to \$105 million for this project already.

#### RESOLUTIONS cont.

Donna Dunn - And yes, I'm a railroader. I work for the railroad industry. I work in the freight side. And you know what, this would be a great plan for me personally because the more people that pay into railroad retirement the better for me and the more money I'm gonna get. But this is a bad, bad plan for the region. And for them to say that there's not going to be any freight on this line is disingenuous at best. For them to say that the trains can't get up over this hill. We take 2 mile freight trains over the Rocky Mountains what makes you think that we're not gonna get up over a little hill in Hammond, Indiana? We have push pull service. There are many, many ways to get trains up and down hills. Believe me, when this passenger service starts to lose money the first place they're gonna go is freight. Because freight is what makes money and freight is what makes South Shore money. And that's what's gonna happen, so don't kid yourselves. The South Bend Tribune reported just today that the rider ship on the South Shore is down for the past six consecutive years. If rider ship is down, why do we need this rail? Why do we need to spend \$900 thousand a year for this train. I'm disappointed people consider Hammond blight. I'm disappointed you are backing this terrible plan. I've walked in the area this train is going, have any of you? Maybe Mr. Torres has. I want to know if Mr. Torres or any of the other councilmen up here, councilwomen, are gonna go and knock on these Hammond residents doors before the environmental impact study comes out and says, "Guess what? Your house is at risk of being torn down." Because I'll tell you what, I doubt that you do. You know when I walked this neighborhood what I saw was positive things. I saw people improving their land. I saw people building new decks. Putting on new siding. Putting up new windows. Repairing their roofs. I didn't see all the negative. We have to look at the positive aspects that are going on in North Hammond as well. One of the things I want to know is we have all these homes that are gonna be destroyed but we already have a train station. The RDA says, "Oh, it's gonna bring great ....you build it and they will come." Why isn't the RDA doing anything right now for North Hammond? Where is our money? Where is our economic development in North Hammond right now? We have a train station in North Hammond and we have one in East Chicago. You can get from Purdue to the train station in 2½

minutes. This is not gonna improve anybody's travel commute. The only thing this is gonna do is make it easier for people in Munster and down in Briar Ridge to not have to drive to Hammond. I've been to those meetings down in Munster and Dyer and St. John. I've seen what people have said that don't want to drive to Hammond. That's why this train's being built. I've been to those meetings. I've seen people with tears in their eyes when they see that red X on their home. If it was my home, I live in Hessville, if it was my home... a train coming through my neighborhood, you bet your bottom dollar I'd be pretty mad. I am mad. I'm upset because I think we're being lied to. I think we're being fed a bill of goods. Why are we sending people to chase jobs in Chicago where the job market is on the decline. Why aren't we bringing them jobs to NW Indiana. I think we're looking at this backwards. With this \$900 thousand that we're spending every year, how many kids could we put in the College Bound Program? The Mayor has an awesome program. The casino revenue is down. This is where we could be spending this money. How many more home rehabilitation loans could we have for the city of Hammond. I am a recipient of one of those rehabilitation loans when I was barely making minimum wage. I love that rehabilitation loan. It's what kept me in Hammond. Not some dream of some pie in the sky better place to shop or a new Starbucks. That's what kept me in Hammond was that rehabilitation loan. How many needy or homeless people could we help with this money. Hammond has a lot of those. We could be helping those people instead of putting people on a train. The Mayor mentioned roads and bridges, how many roads and bridges could we repair in Hammond, throughout Hammond, throughout the whole city, in Central Hammond, in Hessville? How much more could we make our city beautiful? We could make the parks better and all these other things with that money. There

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Donna Dunn cont. - are other things that could have been done ahead of time. Mr. Davidson mentioned a referendum, or somebody mentioned a referendum, why didn't we have a referendum? Why weren't we allowed to decide where our money is going to be spent? It's our money. There are other ideas that we could have had. We could have spent a quarter of the dollars that we're gonna use on this rail and repair Cline Avenue, charge people a toll and use that money to finance this train. There are other ideas out there. This is not the best idea and this is not the best move for Hammond. I have a map right here of everybody's house that's gonna be destroyed. It's a lot of homes. If it was my home, like I said, I'd be mad and I know there's people here that are upset. Who have been lifelong residents and don't want to lose their homes because another thing that we have to look out for is we have a County that likes to do reassessments on our property all the time. How many of us are gonna get reassessments in the mail saying our property is not worth as much right before it gets sold or right before it gets confiscated by the government. That's something else we have to watch out for. So this is not a good deal for Hammond. Thank you.

Councilman Higgs - I know you're saying that homes are gonna be demolished. Do you know approximately how many homes?

Ms. Dunn - From the map that I've seen, I see at least sixty homes that are gonna be destroyed.

Councilman Higgs - What area in the city are they located? I understand where the train is supposed be, but...

Ms. Dunn - In between Sheffield Avenue and I believe that is Clark Avenue, and then from Gostlin going East and West from there. So there are quite a few homes that are gonna be destroyed in that area and also businesses are gonna have to relocate.

Councilman Higgs - Interesting. I guess my question would refer back ..... I don't know if anyone else from the

audience wants to speak because I know the Mayor stood up but if someone else wants to speak I'll pose my question back to (unclear).

MaryEllen Slazyk - This train idea is like one of the most stupidest things I've ever heard in my life. You know what, all these people here are talking, "Oh, it's all good. It's all good." it's not their tax dollars and it's not their homes that are in jeopardy or their quality of life being destroyed like us in Hammond here. Yes, we need jobs in Hammond. Is this the way to do it, sixty homes, maybe more than that, and what about the rest of us? We get the quality of life diminished. Don't we have enough problems here? We're gonna throw money away on this thing? That money could be better used in so many ways in Hammond. What about going to Chicago for jobs? You're right, the South Shore ridership is down because the jobs have gone down in Chicago a little bit. People are losing their jobs even in Chicago. What about bringing them over here? My main thing is definitely safety, because where this rail line's gonna go is by a major park, right next to a middle school, over residential neighborhoods. That spur going over there between Lyman and Blaine is gonna be at the end of my street. At the end of one of my daughter's streets, because I got a daughter that owns a house a block over from me and I got three grandchildren there ages 2, 4 and 6. This puts them in jeopardy. It reduces our quality of life tremendously to hear those trains. I used to live by the South Shore train. I lived on Henry Street for about a year

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Mary Ellen Slazyk cont. - and a half and I was about three doors away. It was horrible. The commuters were bad enough and of course there were freights at night, late at night. The whole place would shake. Pictures would fall off the walls and everything else. I was three houses down. I used to live at 4519 Henry and that was a long time ago but trains are trains. What this lady said before me is saying the truth. We're not hearing everything. It's all good, all good, but it's our money that could be used for other things and it's our quality of life that's gonna be destroyed. Why are we, the poor, getting our money taken away to subsidize these rich people south of us? You know it's not supposed to be that way. Robin Hood robbed and gave to the poor but we got the poor getting their money taken away from us. What benefit are we gonna get out of this? None at all. Because they don't live in Hammond. They're not gonna live down the street from where the darn lines are gonna be at. They're not gonna have their money that could be used for projects in their community, desperately needed things given for some stupid boondoggle of a train. We need a referendum on this and you're gonna find out that people of Hammond don't want this. Thank you.

George Stoya - You know, the concerns that are being expressed are all well and good. I think they're fortunately or unfortunately, depending on perspective, equally valid or close to being equivalent in terms of who's interest, how to weigh them, etc. But one thing trumps all others, and I think the Mayor brought that out, initially is it's gonna happen. Now in the past as I understood it and I'm not an expert on this, I do not claim expertise so I'm just voicing my opinion like everybody else and it's obviously a limited perspective. So, point being, it's gonna happen anyway. Earlier, a year ago or maybe even earlier, when this project really started getting up and everybody got their ire up about the money and all this, Hammond was an incidental beneficiary of this project. From what I understand the Mayor through negotiation as the administration, the council, etc., everybody that's involved in the government of the city has taken us from a status of incidental beneficiaries to direct beneficiaries. I think this is significant, very significant. You know, we're not just oh whatever happens we got to absorb it. Now we have a seat at the table. I believe, if I understand it right, that the Mayor is positioned us better where we have actual bargaining leverage. Maybe not the greatest, I don't know to what extent. I'm not privy to those discussions. But, we are now a direct beneficiary. I think some of the fears are being inversely expressed. This may be premature to raise this and I haven't briefed it and I haven't really gone

into it, I've read studies on it, articles, but this fear, this bias against gentrification of our neighborhoods. You know, not only is the train gonna come, it's inevitable, so is the future, and so are the millennials. They're coming. Are we gonna be ready? Are we gonna permit ourselves and take this opportunity to become more integrated with the Chicago Metro area and reap some of its benefits? In respective, Downtown Chicago is not the great Mecca it was, there's collar counties and we're gonna get hooked up into this network of transportation. We can be the Southeastern spur, I guess, if you want to envision it one way. That's just my own rhetorical position here. I'm trying to raise issues or questions or refine if I be so bold. Again, I think that there's almost like a phobia. I mean, Hammond has been static as to growth. We've had these projects come up and it's pushing, it's almost like we are being forced into the future. But we can't be the old sleepy town we once were and I love that town. That's the reason I moved here. It was a nice working mans town. Hey, it's coming. There's expansion, population expansion We can't remain the same. I mean there's a great fear of dislocation. But in all honesty I think if we apportionately balance, yes sixty homes, maybe dislocated peoples lives, maybe somewhat disrupted and I don't want to sound callous because I'm not callous about it because it's one thing to state things in theory and in principle and then when you get down to the nuts and bolts and the practices, you

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George Stoya cont. - know, they're gonna have to maybe find a new home. But to the extent that there is eminent domain. They will be accorded the reasonable value or they should be accorded the reasonable value of their homes. The point is maybe they'll need some representation. But, I don't know, you got to take a chance. I guess there's some element of uncertainty or more formally there are contingencies know and unknown, foreseeable, unforeseeable. But I'm just raising these issues. I'm not taking a stand one way or the other. I live in the 1st District, one a year there's traffic jams on Calumet Avenue because there's a concert going on. You know, you cuss under your breath and damn I got to go over to Indianapolis Blvd. Okay, so I go over to Indianapolis Blvd., big deal. You know, sometimes it's inconvenient. I feel sometimes the inconvenience is being elevated into something more, into some sort of irrational bias and prejudice and just this emotional factor that's obscuring our reasoning about it in a objective way. That's the whole point, we've got to be objective about this and I think these visions, whether it's the Mayor's, the governments, and the citizens and the opposition need to clash and hopefully we can do it in a rational manner.

Phil Taillon - I wear several hats, obviously one of them being the Hammond appointee for the RDA. But the two hats I really want to be brief about and talk about my overseeing economic development for the city of Hammond, number one. Economic development in a lot of forms is regarded as the creation of wealth for our community. This project, I believe, giving us better connectivity to the 3rd largest economy in the U.S. has the opportunity of creating better wealth for the city of Hammond. Obviously some people are saying, "Well, we have connectivity already, again, it's better connectivity, number one. Number two, as part of this project we know that there is the potential for a lot of transit oriented development. For those that have seen the graphic as Councilman Emerson talked about earlier. The transit oriented development around the gateway station, the maintenance facility, and this hub if you will, is going to great for the city of Hammond. It's gonna create a lot of other economic development type opportunities in that area as well. Secondly, I'm a resident for the city of Hammond, so for people that are saying the people that are for it are not residents of the city of Hammond. I am a resident of the city of Hammond. The track itself with go about a half a block from my house if not closer. In the beginning I was a little skeptical because of all the questions that we had including is freight gonna go through this track, which has been answered. It will not. But also, I use the bike path that goes along the Monon Trail which is where this train will go through. As part of this resolution the bike trail is going to be replaced and make sure it's kept in tact so that folks like myself that live in that area can continue to use it and a lot of my

neighbors use that trail as well. So, although I was skeptical at first I believe as leaders of the city of Hammond I think you have to address this question as a leader of the city of Hammond and where we're gonna be ten, twenty, thirty years from now as some of our folks have spoke about. I think we'd be short sighted to not take advantage of the opportunity that's put in front of us today. So, I support this resolution.

Mayor McDermott - My father was the Mayor for Hammond for ten years and we were just at a dedication the other day of a street that was names after him that leads to the Hammond Marina. The reason we were there was because my dad was the driving force behind the Hammond Marina when it was built. Something he's very proud of. I remember hearing the stories about that. About how beat up my father was. How criticized he was. You know, I think it was about a similar type of number. Like \$25-\$30 million at the time, and how it was preposterous. People just couldn't imagine looking at that beach, knowing what it looked like and what was done there and the glass and the litter and just the reputation it had. They would call my dad every name in the

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Mayor McDermott cont. - book. They said, "You're crazy. You're wasting your money. Nothing's ever gonna become of the Hammond Marina." Here we are twenty five years later and it's the driving force in our city. Without the Hammond Marina I think we all agree Hammond would be a lot different today. If it wasn't for my dad taking lumps and getting criticized, and getting made fun of. If he wasn't brave enough to get through that process Hammond would be worse off right now in 2016. I think we all appreciate that. I'm not saying this is easy, okay. A young lady came up here and talked about houses that would be taken by immanent domain, that will be. And they'll be compensated for the loss of their house. And that's a horrible thing and I don't take it .... do I want to knock on somebody's door and say, "Hi, your house is gonna get knocked down"? No. I don't. Neither do you, okay. We've done immanent domain procedures before. In fact, we did one right in this neighborhood on Gostlin Avenue. We took about twenty five to thirty homes so far, and businesses. And I'll tell you what we found, we found people knocking on our doors saying, "When am I getting my check?" I'm not saying everybody loves it but for the most part in this neighborhood on Gostlin, we've had more people wanting their checks sooner than fighting us to keep their house there. That's a fact. Now I'm not gonna say it's gonna be like that further to the south. It may be harder, it may be just the same. But we do take houses in some projects. It's part of being government. So, the referendum idea was my idea. I thought it was a genius idea when I came up with it to be honest with you. There really has been no support. I know, let's face the fact, Congressman Pete's not here but he is the driving force behind why we're talking about this. He's our Congressman. He's been our Congressman for three decades. This is his number one project. He's not here to talk about it right now but he is a presence in the room right now. Now, I brought up the referendum idea knowing that if it goes to a vote, the voters, it's probably not going to succeed. I think if you talk to voters and say, "Hey, do you want to spend \$600 million on this project?", a lot of them are gonna probably say no. That's the job of leaders like us that's supposed to explain why we support a project like this. Besides, if we are gonna have a referendum it wouldn't be a Hammond referendum, it would have to be a Lake County referendum. For that you would have to go through Lake County Board of Elections. You'd have to have a certain percentage of eligible voters petition with the language of the referendum and get it on the ballot. Our next election is November. You got to get to work if we're gonna have a referendum. It's just not realistic that it's gonna happen. The RDA has been criticized, which I guess is sort of coming with the territory. I'm sure Bill is used to taking his lumps. Hammond has been a member of the RDA for ten years. We do \$3.5 million a year into the RDA. The project that we have a Wolf Lake was right around a \$35 million project. So everything we put into the RDA we got back and we focused it on the Wolf Lake Project. I've had discussions with Bill Hanna about Hammond's next big project. We both agreed Hammond's next big project should be transit oriented development around the gateway station. So we're already discussing what we should do for the next

development. So I wanted to hit on that. Freight, it's part of our contingencies that freight is not included in this. We've been assured by Mike Mullin who's never been untruthful with me in the time that I've known him. You just got to take a man at his word, if he's not telling the truth, you know, it's on the record. We're on a t.v. camera. It's part of our contingency. I trust him. I don't think that's the case but if it is I think we had a solid reason to maybe withdraw support down the road. I trust him I have no reason not to trust him. So, I just wanted to come up here and point out it really hit me the other day when my dad was going through that ceremony because he took a beating to build the Hammond Marina and I think here we are twenty five years later and we look back and say thankfully Mayor McDermott Sr. was tough enough to take that beating. I know twenty years from now if we could do a sneak peek at what that area is going to look like it's be a lot easier decision. If

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Mayor McDermott cont. - twenty years from now it still looks like it does today then it was a bad decision probably. But if we knew that it was going to be a driving force of our city twenty, twenty five years from now. It'd be a lot easier decision for us right now and before I turn it over I want to say one last thing. This project's gonna happen. It's gonna happen. Regardless of how we vote. Do we want to be on the train or do we want to be on the sidelines complaining. I want to do the best I can for Hammond and if it's gonna happen I want the best deal for the city the Mayor of and that's why I negotiated tough, that's why we reached this deal that needs to be approved by you. This project's gonna happen guys. You can only sit on the sideline and complain for so long. It's gonna happen. Do we want to be on the train or do we want to watch it sail by?

Councilman Higgs - Mayor, you're saying .... of course I want to be on the train, I don't never want to be left behind but in God I trust. But certainly, I guess my question would be to you, if we as a council decide not to be a part of this what happens then?

Mayor McDermott - Thank you, Councilman, I think that's a great question. I think what we do is just send a big signal to Mike Nolan who needs to decide are you gonna engineer the Hammond alternative or are you gonna engineer the Illinois alternative. The Illinois alternative is cheaper. I knew by bringing the line into Hammond, I knew it was gonna be more expensive and so did NICTD. I think that's one of the reasons's it wasn't successful in 2008. The fact that we're talking about this is an amazing progress we've made. If we don't pass this resolution today what you're telling Mike Nolan is we're not interested Mike and they got to go back and they got to the Federal Government and they got to say this is our best option. If we say no, I can't speak for you guys, Phil, Mike, maybe you want to address this.

Mr. Hanna - The Mayor is right again, I mean all of these things have sore points to them but the high value opportunity is there and it's there right now. The window would close. There's an expectation down state in addition to the Federal part when we bring these monies up here that we're producing the best result for Indiana in the mix too. So, if we get left behind on this we're gonna be presenting something that's not what we want to do for this city. We really want to bolster out the urban corridors. We want to see redevelopment here and you know what, we've done studies, we've looked at it, we've been there, we've seen what's happening in Chicago, and Hammond is perfectly positioned right now to do some of the things you've seen next door. I keep thinking to myself why there and not here? I think the time is right now. All the work's been in place. The drive is there to get it done and I think Hammond is on the cutting edge of this whole effort. So, again, we implore you to support this and really help get this thing moving forward to benefit everybody here in Hammond.

Councilman Markovich - You know, we find out about this, I find out on a Saturday because I didn't open up

my packet but then I'm getting these phone calls from everybody. Here it is at the last minute, now we got a time frame everything has to be done but yet we're dropped on all of this all at once. I had a Council person ask about getting rid of a local newspaper for \$300 a year like it's nothing but then we want to spend \$27 million here and at the last minute, you know, it's getting rammed down our throats basically. I mean, Ms. Dunn out there, hell of a deal lady. I commend you all the information you had and everything and all of that. We don't even have that. It wasn't even brought to us but yet she took the wherewithal on her own because it something that she knows about, she works for the railroad and knows what's happening and she did all that on her own I

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Councilman Markovich cont. - don't even have a copy of the houses that they're gonna take. I don't know anything about red X's on houses or anything like that or whatever yet I'm expected to vote on something like that tonight. Why wasn't all that information brought to us? You know, and it wasn't and it still hasn't, you know. I can just go by what a district councilman wants. That's my district. I have to worry about that. So do the other two councilmen at large. I commend the Mayor. I know when this thing started out, you know, a year and a half to two years ago we were getting nothing or whatever. It's gonna happen regardless and he's trying to get something in return. Whether that's cast in stone or not, I don't know because things always change and it can possibly change too in that respect. But you know, this rush to commit, it's brought to us on a Thursday and now we should have a public hearing maybe September 12th and let more people come forth. Let more people know about it. There's gonna be an article in the newspaper. People, 80 thousand people, are gonna find out through the news media that hey this is going on, why didn't I know about it? Why wasn't I notified? What's the rush? What's another month gonna do? Right now we have eight councilmen here. We're missing a district councilman. That councilman, whoever it's going to be, should be on the council at the time and be voting on it. Because that's gonna affect his district, his money, and what's gonna happen in the future. It would be unfair to whoever that 5th District Councilman's gonna be that he didn't have a part of this. I'm sure he or she would want to go ahead and have part of that in this. You know what, okay, maybe I was a little bit misinformed because I thought about the Erie Lackawana yards, growing up as a kid, knowing about it, but it's the Monon Trail, so this environmental impact study, we don't know for sure if it's gonna be dirty sand or not or whatever. God forbid if we start going through all of this stuff, spend all this money and then got a West Calumet section again. Just like they go in East Chicago, you know. Work study sessions, we probably should have had. I mean, Phil Taillon mentioned about the 3rd largest economy. What economy are we talking about? We talking about a train to services Briar Ridge and Munster people when I got to worry about the people here in Hammond. Our legacy, yeah, what's gonna be our legacy, and I, again, Mayor McDermott Sr., yeah, he did take a lot of hits for that back then. But that generated something that brought I don't know how many millions of dollars to the city of Hammond. Twenty five year anniversary, we used to get \$30 to \$50 million a year from that riverboat, well that river boat's only been here fifteen years, or what twenty years, that's brought us money. Now it's cut back. God forbid if Chicago ever gets gaming because more money's gonna be cut back in that respect also in that respect. But that project there at the marina, I can remember we had thousands and thousands of signatures from Chicago people, boaters, that they wanted marina they would come here. We built the thing, did they come, not right away. It didn't happen. And it's like anything else when we have a recession the first thing people get rid of is their boat. That's what happened. We shut the marina down for a year and a half so Horseshoe could expand their operations there. Most of the people went to East Chicago. They went to Portage for their slip rental. Most of them sold their boats. They never came back. They don't want to come back. You know, they like it where it's at. I mean, that's where it is. It's a tough decision and I can commend the Mayor for trying to get something out of the deal. It's gonna happen with or without us. That's what it is. But you, can you say right now, I mean, what's the deadline that you know we can't wait another month or anything like that or whatever?

Mr. Hanna - I appreciate your comments, Councilman. In the conversation in general by the way, this is how this whole thing started. We started off with a much different product than we have right now and conversations just like this with concerns just like this. We talked about Briar Ridge versus the north. I got to tell you I want to see all these communities get up and get going and this is the best option we have right now. The Mayor's right the Gateway Station puts it in a whole different position. So you're not just talking about people coming from there. When we talk about TOD planning we're talking about housing opportunities, new commercial

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Mr. Hanna cont. - opportunities and really being a strong competitor with your peer communities in Illinois. Being the place to be. So we're talking about growth for residents here today. Access to things. We're talking about opportunities. But it comes to a point where we've gotten through these negotiations and we do believe this is a great product. It really is. Then we having to start pulling the trigger on things. We start spending money to move forward, otherwise we stall the project. You have to understand too, and I know you do, we're in a National competition for these dollars. These Federal dollars are up for everybody else. Illinois has an aggressive plan right now. Chicago has a funding plan right now to continue to expand their rail opportunities to feed their communities jobs that we would like to have. Things I'd like to see in Hammond, Gary and East Chicago, Portage and all these communities across existing lines, put NW Indiana on that map. But is we hesitate much longer we'll lose the window with what's been provided in the Fast Act in the Federal process you want to be first at the table for those Federal dollars. Those are our dollars we want to get them back here as fast as we can. The opportunity starts to close. Our funding cycle with the state government and what happens down there. We fought really hard to make these dollars available and we feel like this is the great kind of product that we go to them now and say you have to support it. Look at this. This is gonna be a great thing. That window starts to close. My fear is, as the Mayor said, you know, we look ahead twenty, thirty years from now and we think man that was the time and things didn't happen the way we wanted them to happen. I want this to be a place for my kids and your kids and everybody else to want to be. The place of choice in Chicago and I think all the elements are here but this is one that will put us over the top. This is the access that we need and the Gateway Station puts Hammond at the very center of the benefit. Not only in the future but just in raw dollars today. You get half the dollars put back in. So every community that's investing in this, including the state government, half of the dollars is going into this community and we support that because we think, again, proximity, again, you guys are close. You have the housing stock. You have the programs. Better yet, you have the leadership and the will to do these things and you have the track record of success that makes groups like ours want to do this. I mean we look around the city and it's hard to deny. That we talk about renaissance and I agree with you. You're absolutely right. We've seen it in Chicago. But it's been unfolding in Hammond for a while. So here's a chance to really light this whole thing up. Get over the hump. Make us the place to be. The first choice. That's why we're so urgent about moving this forward. We do not want to miss this opportunity.

Councilman Higgs - I totally understand your sentiments in speaking in regards to the project. I understand you want the project and you know, but you haven't given him and answer to his question. His question was simply as to how long or what would it take, would a month put the project at risk or not.

Mr. Hanna - In terms of hard deadlines, I have a meeting in front of the General Assembly September 15th. That's a hard grade deadline for us. They're gonna ask me at that time to present a plan. I'm gonna have to convince them to allow me to spend between \$20 and \$50 million on planning for this project about half of which is being geared toward the Hammond portion. At the same time what I'd like to tell them is we have an agreement in place with the city. So we can go forward in good faith, we're all on the same page. It's not risky for us to spend this money because they're on board. That becomes a real problem if it doesn't exist. Then as far as the engineering goes, NICTD right now has an RFP out on the street to go ahead and start to try to engineer

because we want to stay within this competitive time frame and at some point very quickly here early in September, I should let Mike speak to that, they're gonna have to make a decision about that too. So, we would

## RESOLUTIONS cont.

Mr. Hanna cont. - have to fund it, they have to select a firm, otherwise we start to lose time. We've already been in the process for the study and things start to go backwards, that's when you get that critical point of going, "Can we do it with the Gateway Station or not?" Because we still have to meet these thresholds and I'm saying I just think it's imperative that the Gateway Station is in this.

Councilman Markovich - We mention about Mayor McDermott, Sr., where he had the foresight and everything and we've reaped something from that marina. It's brought us money. It's brought us millions of dollars for streets and so forth and all that to do. Now it's being cut back. Now that's something that nobody knew what it was gonna do and how much money it was gonna bring in. But is this train gonna bring in more money into Hammond? Nobody knows for sure unless it's twenty, thirty years down the road. But, one question is if we didn't have the county income tax we would not be talking about a South Shore because the funding would not be there anywhere from anybody to fund this thing. So let's just say we don't have a county income tax, would you still be pushing this project and where would you be getting the money from for it?

Mr. Hanna - I appreciate the question. I would just simply tell you this. The answer is yes we'd be pursuing it and we'd be doing it just like we did with the General Assembly before. \$180 million of these dollars are coming out of the states general fund. As far as I know, that's unprecedented. It's always like CEDIT or a local tax or it's Major Moves off the toll road. We went down there and fought to get our own General Fund monies put back into a project that's gonna be good for NW Indiana. That's the first time I can .... I don't know if anybody else can remember a different time. So, yeah, I mean, we would have pursued other funds. We have pursued other funds. So we have many people at the table. I would tell you that the project is good enough and strong enough that somebody needs to help pay for it and I'd be down at the General Assembly saying the same thing.

David Hamm - What I'd like to point out is one thing, this isn't new. This has been discussed for a couple of years. I've had dialogue with many members that I see sitting in front of me. A lot of the people that are sitting in back of me are opposed to this. They're my friends, that's okay. That's what we do, we sometimes disagree. But we don't have to be bitter about it. The County voted that County Council and the Board of Commissioners to give \$2.1 million annually to this project. We've already made 2 payments. Mike and Mr. Hanna will confirm that. Because we believe in it. More than half of that money is coming into Hammond. Now think about that, the entire county is contributing and more than half of that money is coming in to just Hammond for this project. That's how strongly the County Council and the County Commissioners believe in this project. If I didn't believe in it I wouldn't have voted for it. I supported it, I supported it strongly. I think it's a good project. I would hate to see the track coming from the South going into Hegewisch or Kensington Station, I'm not sure which. I'd love to see it in Hammond. I want to see it in Lake County. I want the investment in Lake County. I support this resolution. When it comes to, the young lady had talked about re-assessments. There's not going to be new re-assessments. On a County level 25% of the houses are re-assessed every year over a four year period. There is nothing new that is going to happen over this. I hope my house gets re-assessed. I live in South Hammond. I hope my house gets re-assessed and the property values go up. That's what I would anticipate happening. So, I support this resolution and if it hadn't been for people, as Councilman Markovich brought up,

## RESOLUTIONS cont.

Mr. Hamm cont. - Mayor McDermott, Sr., this is the next marina. We took a chance at that time, we need to take a chance again. We can't build a second marina. That won't work. This is the next marina.

Alvin Cheeks - I remember the casino days. Partial 1111 through 1104 Indpls. Blvd. where properties that I owned at that time. It's a heartache when you lose properties to economic development. It's like bitter sweet because economic development helps our area so I didn't hear any conversation in regards to minority contractors, minority law firms, minority accounting firms, benefitting from the economic development that exists. I remember the S.S. Clipper. I remember the CSX Railroad moving three feet onto our property and we lost five businesses from just CSX moving five feet at that time. I remember when Mike ? lost \$13 million in one year. So, economic development is tough. But what is our be4nefit? And are they gonna put that in the plan that Hammond benefits in terms of dollars. When they created Section 508 of the casino law Hammond benefitted. I remember a time that even the birds got paid in the city of Hammond under Section 504. They received \$2 million. What do we receive in terms of true economic development and what do we receive in terms of the minority and disadvantaged businesses benefitting for the economic portion in the beginning portion of the ? and the Form 96's? What do we benefit form that? In terms of the Federal dollars, how many minority firms have been hired now? Those are the key questions being that the 2nd District is a highly populated minority district. What are we benefitting? If we're not benefitting anything then the economic development makes no sense. During the casino process they made sure disadvantaged minority businesses benefitted on the front of that, you know, in each city. So what are we getting in the front end. None of those documents and some of those X's they fall in interesting places. So, I'd just like to see that and what's the time line put into the combination. We all know that the railroads, they have more power than anybody else to create eminent ? powers so it will be interesting to see where is the documents that show the actual properties in regards to that.

Mayor McDermott - What's the benefits, Mr. Cheeks just asked. \$300 million in return for a \$27 million investment. Okay, Councilman Markovich asked the same thing. I mean, if nothing else happens, if we don't get one extra job, nobody gets hired, we get \$300 million in investment in our city. That's for sure if we go along with this. If nothing else happens, that's the benefit. City Controller sent me an interesting fact and I wanted to read it out to you that, \$900 thousand, to put it into perspective for you, is less than 1% of the total 2016 budget.

Council President Venecz - Mr. Mayor, would you please explain the difference between a resolution and an ordinance.

Mayor McDermott - We're gonna have to come back. If we approve this and we go forward and our contingencies are met, which I think if we do this today I think within a certain amount of time Mr. Nolan's gonna come back and say, " Mayor, here's the final route, here's where the stations are going. We need to start zoning. We need to start planning. We need to start doing this. We need our money." And then we're gonna have to come back to you for an appropriating ordinance. Then you're gonna have to vote on that. At that point we'll probably go through all this again. But this is a resolution that gives Mr. Nolan and Mr. Hannah a silver bullet in their back pocket that says Hammond's on board, read it. That's what we're doing. This isn't about money right now this is about they have to spend millions of dollars extra in engineering if this is gonna be the route. I wouldn't spend millions of dollars of extra money if I didn't know that the city wasn't even open

## RESOLUTIONS cont.

Mayor McDermott cont. - minded to the route. So, we're saying, "Yes, we're open minded. We want to build this route. We support it." If you do this, we do this. But we will have to come back, Councilwoman.

Councilman Higgs - Basically, what the Mayor is saying is that even though this is a resolution all it does is simply say that Hammond is on board. Any money that's appropriated through this council in the city of Hammond has to be approved by the entire council. So basically what he's saying is that by approving this resolution it saying that Hammond has a great interest of expanding the South Shore train station.

Mayor McDermott - It's like a meeting of the minds, Councilman. This is what we're thinking, NICTD's like this is what we're thinking. It's the first part of a contract. It's like a general agreement.

Councilman Rakos, supported by Councilman Higgs, moved to return to the regular order of business.

ROLL CALL VOTE (back to the regular order of business)

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

NAYS: None

ABSENT: None

Motion carried 8/0/0 MOTION CARRIED

ROLL CALL VOTE (amendment)

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

NAYS: None

ABSENT: None

Motion carried 8/0/0 AMENDMENT ADOPTED

Councilman Markovich - Like I stated earlier, now this is a tough decision and it's a tough decision for the Mayor and all of us. The only thing I remiss about is we have a missing councilperson and we should wait until that person's able to be on board to go along with this. I can understand that it's a tough decision to make. Like they said, \$27 million investment to get \$300 million, I guess in a way that's a no brainer for anybody to make that decision. It's tough and it's not easy. I'm just kinda remiss that we don't have the time to do a work session, a study session, and so forth. And like Ms. Dunn she did her homework. She had all that information. I am a little bit ticked that NICTD and all those guys by not providing us all this other information that a regular resident could get on their own for us to make a decision. If this thing goes further I would hope that they would bring us and let us know what's going on and not just give it to us with a three day notice that we got to vote on something like this. I don't care if you had discussions with the Mayor's administration or economic development or anything else, but we're the ones that make the final decisions here. We're the ones that are responsible for all the finances. In that case I am remiss in that respect. I'm not happy about it . I don't think these other councilmen feel the same way but I would have to go with it in this respect just to see because it's only a resolution. They're gonna have to come back. But if things don't change they're not gonna have my vote in the future or anything in that respect.

RESOLUTIONS cont.

Mayor McDermott - I appreciate Councilman Markovich's perspective about having an absent councilmember. It's through no fault of our own that Councilman Opinker was knocked off the city council and we're in the process of cauc-ing(?) in the new council person to replace him. I'd like to point out that the U.S. Supreme Court has only eight members on it and they still hear cases and they still operate just fine. I think if the U.S.

Supreme Court could hear these top legal cases with eight people I think the Hammond City Council can make this decision. I have confidence in you. That's A. B, I don't think NICTD is hiding anything and quite frankly it's not difficult to figure out where there's gonna be eminent domain that takes place because we know where the current line is and we know the new line's gonna come. I think the young lady that came up here and spoke is just a real smart lady and she probably went out of her way and just figured it out. It's not hard to figure out what we are talking about. I don't think that was anything that prepared by NICTD and I don't think NICTD is hiding the ball from you. I think that the young lady happens to know a lot about the railroads because she works for a railroad and she's smart enough to do the math for herself. So, I don't think it's really wise to tell NICTD that we think you're hiding the ball from us. Because I don't think that's the case. Because Mr. Nolan been straight up honest with me since the day I met him. So, I just though that was important to point out.

Councilman Higgs - From being on the council from the beginning of the inception of this project, certainly I applaud the Mayor's effort in terms of holding out and trying to get a fair deal in respect to Hammond. Again, this is only a resolution.

Councilman Higgs asked to be added as a sponsor of resolution 16R-23.

ROLL CALL VOTE (passage)

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

NAYS: Emerson

ABSENT: None

Motion carried

7/1/0

RESOLUTION NO. R23 ADOPTED

(as amended)

NEW AND UNFINISHED BUSINESS

Mayor McDermott - I want to thank all of the Council Members for a great discussion. I understand why some people voted against it and I appreciate the ones that for it. But, thank you very much Council.

Councilman Higgs, supported by Councilman Rakos, moved to send a letter to Code Enforcement in regards to the property at 5853 Wallace Road in terms of getting it demo'd. It's been on the demo list for quite some time. I'd like to know the status.

AYES: ALL

LETTER SENT: AUGUST 9, 2016

Councilman Spitale - I have a couple items I'd just like to bring up. WHAM midnight bike ride is back for 2016. Mayor McDermott, Jr. and the Port Authority are proud to announce the return of WHAM after midnight bike ride. Bring out your two wheelers, tricycles, unicycles and enjoy the ride through Hammond, Whiting,

NEW AND UNFINISHED BUSINESS cont.

Councilman Spitale cont. - Highland, Munster, beautiful neighborhoods, bike paths. WHAM is scheduled to roll Saturday, Aug. 13 into Sunday, Aug. 14. Some will enjoy a long thirty mile run, also some will enjoy a ten mile short scenic route. Also the ride begins and ends both at the Hammond Wolf Lake Pavilion. Also first hand Hammond, Whiting, Munster and Highland, you can see their parks, their neighborhoods, also you have a beautiful ride down historic Downtown Whiting and Hammond. Also, a water station will be set up at 173rd and Lyman sponsored by Spitale and Venecz. You're welcome to join the party and pass out water around midnight. Also, Aug. 20 at Memorial Park at 3 o'clock, free admission, Melvin Clay's Urban Cowboy, Inc. of Chicago partners with East Side Community Council to expose Hammond kids to a new and exciting sport. It is

fun and physical. They'll also learn how to ride and care about horses. Melvin has seen evidence of this sport keeps kids off the streets as they begin excitement about becoming experts on riding horses and traveling out of state to shows and competition. This their third time. There have been about three or four hundred people there in their last two events.

Councilman Markovich, supported by Councilman Emerson, moved to have a letter sent to NICTD and RDA asking for a listing of the properties that are cited for demolition. AYES: ALL

LETTER SENT: AUGUST 9, 2016

#### PUBLIC EXPRESSION

Mary Ellen Slazyk - People get paid assessed valuation for their property when it's taken and they give you some moving costs. I had a friend back several years ago and she didn't get enough money to buy another house. The jobs in Chicago are going away. My brother lost his job. If people choose to live far from their jobs then that is their choice.

Tommy Dorsey - Speaking on behalf of the ESCC. Thanked Mark McLaughlin, Janet Venecz, Chief Doughty, Andy Short and the other police officers that came to the thank you banquet for their help.

Donna Dunn - When new rail is built throughout the country, it's not done by local people. They have traveling rail gangs that build and upgrade the rail. They say that there will be economic development such as new condos by the new station, we have a station in Hammond, where are the condos?

Patrice Griggs - Something needs to be done about the South Shore schedule. The schedule is not a constant schedule. There are a lot of delays.

George Stoya - In regards to the woman that spoke regarding the railroad. This thing is coming whether we put a dime in or we put ten thousand dollars, it's coming. Do you want to be an incidental beneficiary or do you want in on the action and take a risk? We can talk about condos or whatever but we're gonna invest \$27 million and the claim is that at least \$270 million is going into this. Wherever the railroad gang comes from, there are ripple effects with such an investment. I believe Alvin's comment about minority contractors should be looked into.

#### PUBLIC EXPRESSION cont.

Alvin Cheeks - I stand out on 900 Merrill Street is because of all the shootings. Me and the residents do not tolerate people who don't live in our neighborhood shooting at old lady's houses and throwing beer bottles. I invite HPD to come out with us.

Councilman Spitale, supported by Councilman Torres, moved to adjourn. AYES: ALL

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Janet Venecz, President  
Hammond Common Council  
ATTEST:

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Robert J. Golec, City Clerk

Time: 8:15 pm

cb

Minutes approved at the Common Council meeting on August 22, 2016.