

The regular meeting of the Hammond Common Council of the City of Hammond, Lake County, Indiana was held on February 10, 2020 in the Hammond City Council Chambers.

Council President Dave Woerpel presided.

City Clerk Robert J. Golec facilitated.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE was recited by all.  
Moment of Silence was held.

ROLL CALL

PRESENT: Alexander, Spitale, Venecz, Kalwinski, Torres, Tyler, Emerson, Rakos, Woerpel

ABSENT: None

TOTAL: 9

READING OF THE MINUTES

Councilman Spitale, supported by Councilman Emerson, moved to accept the minutes of January 27, 2020 and place on file. AYES: ALL

APPROVAL OF CLAIMS

Councilman Rakos, supported by Councilwoman Venecz, moved to accept the claims from January 22, 2020 through February 5, 2020. Claim #543 through Claim #791, inclusive.

ROLL CALL

AYES: Alexander, Spitale, Venecz, Kalwinski, Torres, Tyler, Emerson, Rakos, Woerpel

NAYS: None

ABSENT: None

Motion carried 9/0/0 CLAIMS APPROVED

PUBLIC HEARINGS

None

COMMUNICATIONS

Councilman Tyler- I would like to announce that the Hammond City Council is providing fifteen (15) \$1,000.00 scholarships to Hammond, Indiana high school seniors graduating in May or June of 2020. Applications can be picked up now and need to be completed by March 31<sup>st</sup>, 2020.

Councilman Tyler - 219 Day is taking place this Saturday from 6 p.m. to 11 p.m. at the Hammond Civic Center. Hope to see everyone come out and have a good time.

Councilwoman Alexander - Alpha Kappa Alpha Inc. is having a sixty (60) year anniversary on Saturday, February 22<sup>nd</sup> at the Chateau and ticket prices are \$ 60.00.

*Prepared by  
Robert J. Golec  
Hammond City Clerk*

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Council President Woerpel- Most of us all know we have 3 standing Committees and they will be reporting out at every Council Meeting, and being the Chairman of the Finance Committee, I don't have a report for this meeting. But I will be moving forward. The other two (2) will be the City Plan Commission, which Councilman Spitale is your appointee to, and the Economic Development Dept., which Councilman Tyler is the Chairman of. So, we will be giving bi weekly reports.

Councilman Torres- The Police and Fire Committee met today February 10, at 4:45 p.m., and our topic of discussion was the... in August of 2021, there's going to be a new Hammond High School across the street, and we're just concerned about the possible transition of the students coming in from new neighborhoods, and we wanna make sure that the Hammond City, and School City are prepared for whatever may occur. Hopefully, as far as we know, and the Mayor informed me that there hasn't been any problems in the Schools. But there are various factors in these neighborhoods, and we just want to make sure it's a smooth transition. So, we're asking the Police Dept. and other agencies and the School City to have meetings to make sure that there is a smooth transition among these kids. And be prepared, of course, with Counselors, and Psychiatrist if need be just for them to have a plan together to make sure there is a smooth transition. I'm calling for another Police and Fire Meeting on March 9, 2020 which is the meeting after our next meeting. And in that meeting we're going to invite the Police Chief to send representative to inform us of anything that is pertinent that we might have to know. So, there will be another Committee Meeting on March 9, 2020 at 5 p.m.

Mayor McDermott - I'm a little confused. Is there a Resolution or an Ordinance, cause my Police are supposed to appear before the Council Committee and get grilled? What's the purpose here, they have an important job.

Councilman Torres- The purpose, Mayor, is just to get information as part of the Committee of Police and Fire, we just want to know what's the plan, hopefully nothing will transpire. When East Chicago Washington and Roosevelt Schools, I know we're talking about different Cities, when they merged into one School they did have problems and we just want to make sure that's avoided, and we have plenty of time we have over 15 months to put something together just to make sure everyone is on the same page and ready for anything that might happen, and hopefully nothing will happen.

Councilwoman Venecz- My question is, where is the School City in this discussion. I understand our concern from a City perspective for the safety of our children, but I would think that the School City would have top priority in these discussions.

Councilman Torres- We're going to invite them out also so we can talk to the Police Dept. first then invite the School City out in the following meeting is our plan. Then eventually bring them both together to make sure there is a plan proposed.

Councilwoman Venecz- So, has the School City been invited in on this conversation up to this point?

Councilman Torres- No, they haven't. But we're going to send them a letter advising them of this to make sure they're informed.

COMMITTEE REPORTS cont.

Mayor McDermott - The Schools have a Schools Resource Officer, he's like the Police Chief for the Schools, and even though Hammond Police Officers are working in the schools, that's there side gig. When they work the side gigs, they're working for the School City of Hammond and usually making overtime money to do it, and we appreciate having our officers in the Schools. But when a kid walks into the building it becomes the School City issue at that point. When the kids leaves the building, it becomes our issue, and that's when Hammond Police get involved. I appreciate the Councilman's concern. I think this is more a School city issue than it is the Police Chiefs issue.

Councilman Torres- The reason it's going to involve the School City, because even though schools do hire police officers, but if there's any problems the City's Police Dept will be called in of course. Hopefully nothing evolves from this. But I just feel that we have to be prepared for the worst and hopefully there will be no worse.

Mayor McDermott - I'm just uncomfortable with the assumption that there are going to be problems because two schools are merging together. I don't look for public high schools... I can't even tell you... I think the last time I got involved in a School City issue, meaning it was bad, was a fight we had that got outside the School, and Hammond Police were involved. I looked at the body cams, and that was a bad scene, wasn't very far from City Hall. But that was a couple of years ago, our Schools are pretty quiet. The biggest problem I have with the kids is jay-walking. I get it we just have to tread lightly. I don't want people to think that we are worried about the situation with the two school merging. I am personally not worried, I think its great for the kids. I know what that school looks like and its going to be gorgeous. I feel happy for them going to a brand new school with technological capabilities. I don't want the wrong idea getting out there like we're really concerned about going down two high schools, I don't like the implications of that. I think it's very dangerous.

Councilman Torres - My experience is with the Police Dept. I've been retired going on 20 years. At that time we had gang factions in the North Hammond area, basically the Latin Kings, which were opponents of the disciples which were in South Hammond, the Gavit area, they were clashing. We had Robertsdale people at that time, hopefully things have changed, I know the demographics have changed, we had skin heads in that area when these factions come together in one school there might be clashing. Gangs are territorial, and that is my fear, just to talk about it and devise some kind of plan and be prepared for it. In my opinion, there isn't any harm in it.

Mayor McDermott - I agree, I don't think there is harm in it, but I would rather just talk about it between us instead of talking about it on the Council Floor blasting it out there for the public that we're concerned about gangs and stuff like that because I'm not, to be honest with you Councilman, I'm not. I don't know if the Police Dept. is either, they have bigger fish to fry and quite frankly this is a School City issue. You and I talked back there and you said, "Hey, you want to talk about this?" I said, "I will talk about anything, Councilmen", but to come out here and talk about it on the floor, I have a problem with that because I'm not that worried about it. The Police Dept. has a very, very busy job. So, I just want you to know that we will show up to your meeting, and.... this is the first I've heard of this issue, maybe I'm wrong, maybe I'm totally out to lunch.

Councilman Torres- Well hopefully nothing will happen. I just want to prepare for it and be ready for it.

COMMITTEE REPORTS cont.

Community & Crime Watch Committee - Councilwoman Venecz - Announced upcoming meetings:

Wed., Feb. 12<sup>th</sup>; Community Watch MT. Zion Pleasant View Plaza ; 2:00p.m.

Tues., Feb. 18<sup>th</sup>; East Hammond Pullman at Ophelia Steen Center; 6:30 p.m.

Thur., Feb. 20<sup>th</sup> ; Hessville C.W.; Jean Shepherd Center; 7 p.m.

Thur., Feb. 20<sup>th</sup>; South Hammond Crime Watch will meet at Hammond Housing Authority; 7p.m.

Thur., Feb. 13<sup>th</sup>; Whiting Robertsdale Crime Watch Calumet College; 6:30 p.m.

Council President Woerpel- Councilman Torres, I'm a little confused on that what you just asked. Are you asking for them to be present at the meeting or are you putting together questions for them to answer?

Councilman Torres- I would like a representative present at the meeting.

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

None

INTRODUCTION OF ORDINANCES

20-02 An Ordinance to Appropriate Funds from the Operating Balance for the Hammond Park Dept.

Councilwoman Venecz, supported by Councilman Rakos, moved the proposed Ordinance to 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> reading with a public hearing on February 24<sup>th</sup>, 2020. AYES: ALL

Councilwoman Venecz- This Ordinance is to appropriate \$ 327,000 from the Operating Balance to various different events throughout the City. Special Events, Key and Cleanup refunds, the Holiday Parade, Veterans Day Parade, Region Riot, and so on.

20-03 An Ordinance to Appropriate Funds in the Hotel/Motel InnKeepers Tax Fund for the Hammond Park Dept.

Councilwoman Venecz, supported by Councilman Spitale, moved the proposed Ordinance to 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> reading with a public hearing on February 24<sup>th</sup>, 2020. AYES: ALL

Councilwoman Venecz- This Ordinance is to appropriate \$ 16,444.65 from the Innkeepers Tax to the Hotel/Motel Fund, which is used primarily for advertising of our Special Events.

20-04 An Ordinance Appropriating the Proceeds of the Annual Action Plan and Dealing with other Matters Pertaining to the Expenditure of Plan Proceeds for the Program Year 2020.

Councilman Spitale, supported by Councilman Emerson, moved the proposed Ordinance to 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> reading with a public hearing on February 24<sup>th</sup>, 2020. AYES: ALL

*Prepared by  
Robert J. Golec  
Hammond City Clerk*

INTRODUCTION OF ORDINANCES cont.

Councilman Spitale- This Ordinance is for CBDG and HOME and ESG budget.

Councilman Tyler - I would like to be added as a Co-Sponsor for this Ordinance.

20-05            An Ordinance Amending Ord. 7685, 8200, 8564, 8630, 8645, 8718, 8754, 8755, 8854,8930,  
-            9017, 9061, 9194, 9252, 9359, 9375 also known as Section 36.005 (B) (1) of the Hammond  
                 Municipal Code as it Pertains to Approved uses for Public Safety.

Councilman Rakos, supported by Councilman Spitale, moved the proposed ordinance to 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> reading and referred it to the Council as a Whole Committee with a meeting on February 20, 2020 at 5:00p.m. and a Public Hearing on February 24, 2020. AYES: ALL

Councilman Rakos- This Ordinance is specifically to help Hammond residents to afford the cost of EMT School in order to become a Hammond Firefighter.

Mayor McDermott - Over the years we've made strides in city employees, as far as demographically reflecting our city, employees look like what our cities demographics look like. And the Police and Fire Dept., when I took over, they were lacking minority representation on both dept.'s, lacking in female representation in both dept.'s, and through a program we created through the Hammond Council, and Mayor's Office called Academy Bound, that sponsored Hammond young men and women, sent them to the Academy, and if they graduated successfully from the Police Academy we brought them in as Hammond Police Officers. And this tool has allowed us to greatly diversify the Hammond Police Dept. Where our numbers aren't perfect yet, we're not where we want to be, but when you look at our Police Dept., the rank and file, it looks a lot more like the City of Hammond then it did when I took over. I think with continued use of this program we will be there in a few years. However, in the Fire Dept. it has been a lot harder and we suggest and recommend this program to help achieve more diversity so that we're bringing in more African American firemen, more Hispanic firemen, and more female firemen. Three categories in which we're doing much better in the Hammond Police Dept. I think this is a great program. It picks young Hammond men and women that want to be Firemen, gives them \$ 6,000 to pay for the academy. Requires that they live here for 3 years before and 3 years after. If they move out before that time they have to pay that money. If we're serious about diversifying the Fire Dept. we have to attack more directly, in my opinion, and that's why we came up with this program. That's why we came up with the Academy Bound Program in the Police Dept., it helps, and I think that this will help also. I'm here to answer any questions.

Councilman Tyler - I would like to be added as a Co- Sponsor for this Ordinance.

Council President Woerpel- Just as a reminder, that meeting is scheduled for 5 p.m. on February 20, 2020. We will also be Caucusing that night, our regular Caucus that we have before our Meetings will actually follow the Council as a Whole Meeting on this issue.

RESOLUTIONS

20R-06 Resolution of the City Council of the City of Hammond Authorizing the Filing of an Annual Action Plan Application and Designating Signatories for Payment Voucher on Letters of Credit for the 2020 Annual Action Plan Programs

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

Councilman Spitale- This is Authorizing the filing of the Annual Action Plan Application which refers to the Ordinance 20-04.

ROLL CALL (adoption)

AYES: Alexander, Spitale, Venecz, Kalwinski, Torres, Tyler, Emerson, Rakos, Woerpel

NAYS: None

ABSENT: None

Motion carried

RESOLUTION NO. R06 ADOPTED

NEW AND UNFINISHED BUSINESS

20-06 BZA- Z-20-02 Petition of the New Community Baptist Church for Variance of use from Zoning Ordinance to Allow a Parking Lot for a Commercial Facility in an R-1U Single Family Urban Residential District Located at 706 Cherry St. within the City of Hammond Lake County, Indiana

Councilman Emerson- Basically the Church is growing by leaps and bounds, and I think the issue is parking. Long story short, they're parking in the residential community. The church is doing so well that... it's relatively new last year, I believe, in the 4<sup>th</sup> District. And they're kinda spilling over occasionally into the neighborhoods so there trying to utilize more parking facilities at Madison and 169<sup>th</sup> and Cherry, is the North street where the church is located.

Council President Woerpel- This is just a Council's recommendation on a yes or no on the BZA right?

Councilman Emerson- That's what I have. I've had this, I think, since last meeting. But that's basically what it is. It's a new church relatively very popular.

Councilman Torres - The church was located in my District, and unfortunately they had structure problems and they had to get an emergency building to move. They've been without a building about 6 months, meeting in the Boy's Club. But fortunately they found a building in the 4<sup>th</sup> District. They're a good church. Pastor Gillis is a heck of a good pastor, and they have a good congregation. We should vote this in cause it helps them out with additional parking. And the congregation is still growing. So, we should support this.

Council President Woerpel- Basically, what we're doing is either approving the petition as submitted or denying the petition as submitted, is there any further discussion?

*Prepared by  
Robert J. Golec  
Hammond City Clerk*

NEW AND UNFINISHED BUSINESS cont.

La’Kisha Girder, Assistant City Planner- I just wanted to clarify, the BZA gave a favorable recommendation for this Variance of Use Petition and we are asking the Council to act on it tonight.

Councilman Kalwinski- And am I clear when we were talking in Caucus, that they’re short twenty four (24) or so spaces right now?

Assistant City Planner Girder- They’re short spaces and this is due to existing conditions. But they’re coming before you all for a Variance of Use because since they’re improving the parking lot, this will help them get closer to compliance, which right now they would be approximately almost 30 spaces short then what they are. And so, even though they don’t have enough spaces, this is due to the fact there isn’t much vacant land in the area. And they are going to comply with our landscaping and fencing requirements since this is in a residential area.

Councilman Kalwinski- So, after changes in the parking they will still be short about 24 spaces?

Assistant City Planner Girder- Yes, they still will be short, but I mean at this point, I know it’s not a long term solution, but it is correcting the immediate problems that they had because they just been there for less than six (6) months.

Councilman Tyler- I believe we have a long term member of the church here that would like to say a few words if possible.

Council President Woerpel- Basically, what we’re doing is either approving the petition as submitted or denying the petition as submitted. So, we need to make a Motion and a Second on it.

Councilman Tyler - Are we still in discussion phase? Correct?

Council President Woerpel- Yes, I’m sorry sir, we don’t allow Public Expression right now. You’d have to wait until its Public Expression time to speak.

Councilman Tyler, supported by Councilwoman Alexander, moved for passage.

ROLL CALL (passage)

AYES: Alexander, Spitale, Venecz, Kalwinski, Torres, Tyler, Emerson, Rakos, Woerpel

NAYS: None

ABSENT: None

Motion carried

9/0/0

VARIANCE OF USE Z-20-02 APPROVED

Councilwoman Alexander - In honor of African American History Month, we would like to honor the Divine 9 sorority and fraternities with a Resolution at the next Council Meeting on February 24<sup>th</sup>, 2020 sponsored by myself and Councilman Tyler. Thanking them for their service to the City of Hammond and the Nation abroad. So, we want to invite them out for that.

*Prepared by  
Robert J. Golec  
Hammond City Clerk*

NEW AND UNFINISHED BUSINESS cont.

Councilman Torres- I would like a letter sent to the Police Department inviting the Chief or his representative to attend the next Police and Fire Committee Meeting on March 9, 2020 at 5 p.m.

Councilwoman Venecz, supported by Councilman Spitale, moved to accept the committee assignments.

AYES: ALL

Councilman Tyler, supported by Councilwoman Venecz, moved to reappoint Sean Medrano to the Hammond Community Corporation Board.

ROLL CALL (motion carried)

AYES: Alexander, Spitale, Venecz, Kalwinski, Torres, Tyler, Emerson, Rakos, Woerpel

NAYS: None

ABSENT: None

Motion carried

9/0/0

MOTION CARRIED

PUBLIC EXPRESSION

Otis Moore- I'm here representing New Community Church and I would like to thank you all for passing the BZA.

John Cossyleon- I've been coming here since 2003. I've been having problems with Councilman Kalwinski. I own a Banquet Hall, I rent to the South Shore, for parking. I'm in fear for my life I've been beat up robbed, and I don't know what to do.

George Stoya- I want to thank you, Councilman Torres, for you raising the issue of the schools. Have you any social statistics to assist you with your gathering of evidence to develop a plan to manage some of the conflicts.

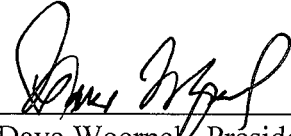
Sameka Coaxum- I'm trying to rent a Banquet Hall, but I'm having problems trying to get in it. Is there anyway we can re-zone it back from residential to commercial?



PUBLIC EXPRESSION cont.

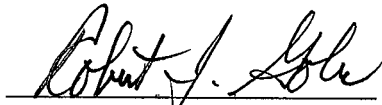
Councilwoman Venecz, supported by Councilman Spitale, moved to adjourn.

AYES: ALL



\_\_\_\_\_  
Dave Woerpel, President  
Hammond Common Council

ATTEST:



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Robert J. Golec, City Clerk

Time: 6:55 p.m.

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