

BOARD OF PUBLIC WORKS AND SAFETY MINUTES OF NOVEMBER 30, 2023

The regularly scheduled meeting of the Board of Public Works and Safety convened at 9:01 a.m. on Thursday, November 30, 2023, in the Council Chambers of Hammond City Hall. A roll call was taken: Mr. Long – absent; Ms. Greenwell – present; Mr. Kalina – present.

Due to the absence of Mr. Long, normal rules of procedure are suspended.

Recommendation by Mr. Kalina to approve the Minutes of the meeting of November 9, 2023; concurred by Ms. Greenwell.

Under Correspondence, correspondence received from William Short, Chief of Police, requesting approval for Officer Ronald Davidson to receive ET Specialty Pay effective November 17, 2023 and approving the termination of Correctional Officer Austin Crocker effective November 19, 2023. Recommendation by Mr. Kalina to approve; concurred by Ms. Greenwell. (Ins. No. 23-992)

Correspondence received from Dean Button requesting \$87,700.00 of CIB Funding to be allocated for professional services and corresponding Agreement with Lochmueller Group submitted for approval. Recommendation by Mr. Kalina to approve; concurred by Ms. Greenwell. (Ins. No. 23-993)

Correspondence received from Dean Button requesting the approval of Change Order No. 1 in the amount of \$19,078.00 from Blue River Environmental and Restoration for the Robertsdale Lead Remediation Phase 3 Project. Recommendation by Mr. Kalina to approve; concurred by Ms. Greenwell. (Ins. No. 23-994)

Correspondence received from Milestone Contractors offering an extension on the current pricing for work to be completed in 2024. Recommendation by Mr. Kalina to approve; concurred by Ms. Greenwell. (Ins. No. 23-995)

Correspondence received from Rieth-Riley Construction requesting the approval of the Hohman Avenue Reconstruction Winter 2023 Traffic Pattern starting December 6, 2023 until March 11, 2024. Recommendation by Mr. Kalina to approve; concurred by Ms. Greenwell. (Ins. No. 23-996)

Under New Business, Funding Allocation Request requesting \$17,965.00 of the 2nd District Gaming Fund to be allocated for the Alley Fence Project at 1100 block of 150th Street. Recommendation by Mr. Kalina to approve; concurred by Ms. Greenwell. (Ins. No. 23-997)

Orders to Rescind and Release Orders to Demolish for properties located at 6530 Carolina St., 54 Detroit St. 1116 Moss Ave. and 19-21 Mason St. submitted for approval.

Recommendation by Mr. Kalina to approve; concurred by Ms. Greenwell. (Ins. No. 23-998)

First Extension of Agreement to Rehabilitate for property located at 2314 Indianapolis Blvd. submitted for approval. Recommendation by Mr. Kalina to approve; concurred by Ms. Greenwell. (Ins. No. 23-999)

Acknowledgement of Notice to Affected Owners for property located at 6529 Columbia Ave. No action. (Ins. No. 23-999A)

SeeClickFix – request for signage for one or two lanes on Columbia from 169th to St. John Bosco and signage on Hohman Avenue and Harrison. Recommendation by Mr. Kalina to refer to Engineering; concurred by Ms. Greenwell. (Ins. No. 23-1000)

SeeClickFix – Requesting “no parking” signs at the intersection of Johnson and 143rd and addressing the issue of the business trucks parking on the street obstructing the intersection. Recommendation by Mr. Kalina to refer to Engineering; concurred by Ms. Greenwell. (Ins. No. 23-1000)

SeeClickFix – requesting “wrong way” signs in 7000 block alley between Indianapolis and Magoun Avenue. Councilman Woerpel wants to include the 6900 block and requests multiple signs. Recommendation by Mr. Kalina to refer to Engineering; concurred by Ms. Greenwell. (Ins. No. 23-1000)

Notice of Violation hearing for property located at 1315 170th Street. Inspector Jason requests a continuance until December 28, 2023. Recommendation by Mr. Kalina to set for status on December 28, 2023; concurred by Ms. Greenwell. (Ins. No. 23-1001)

Notice of Violation hearing for property located at 4112 Wabash Ave. Inspector Pajdzik advises there is an illegal 2nd floor apartment which had no permits issued to do the work. Owner is cooperative and Inspector is requesting the approval to remove the apartment. Recommendation by Mr. Kalina to approve the removal; concurred by Ms. Greenwell. (Ins. No. 23-1002)

Deed of Dedication for portion of property located at 4712 Hohman Avenue submitted for approval. Recommendation by Mr. Kalina to approve; concurred by Ms. Greenwell. (Ins. No. 23-1003)

Right of Way Permits (8) received from Engineering submitted for approval. Recommendation by Mr. Kalina to approve; concurred by Ms. Greenwell. (Ins. No. 23-1004)

Request for a “no semi” sign in the alley between 165th and Jackson Ave. Recommendation by Mr. Kalina to refer to Engineering; concurred by Ms. Greenwell. (Ins. No. 23-1005)

Under Old Business, status - 941 Reese Ave. Mr. Smith states the rehab has expired and requests a 90-day extension. Recommendation by Mr. Kalina to set for status on March 7, 2024; concurred by Ms. Greenwell.

Status – 30 Warren. Mr. Smith states the rehab has expired and requests a 90-day extension. Recommendation by Mr. Kalina to set for status on March 7, 2024; concurred by Ms. Greenwell.

Status – 5235 State Line. Mr. Soto appears, owner does not appear. Mr. Smith states the rehab has expired. Mr. Soto states there are plumber issues but they are working on it. The bottom will be commercial and the upstairs residential. Mr. Lewter states he received a call from the plumber and requests a status date. Mr. Soto was advised to have the owner appear for the status. Recommendation by Mr. Kalina to set for status on January 4, 2024; concurred by Ms. Greenwell.

Correspondence received from City Engineer Dean Button requesting the installation of stop signs at all four approaches to the intersection of Alexander, Martha and Nickle Plate. Recommendation by Mr. Kalina to approve and forward to Public Works; concurred by Ms. Greenwell. (Ins. No. 23-1006)

Under Gas Station Exception Hearings, 6318 Calumet Ave. Proper notice has been confirmed. Vadar Saleh and Vadar Ali appear and are sworn in. Mr. Ali states that closing the station would affect the workers, would not be able to afford rent. Doesn't know how to go about closing. If they were to close, there are safety concerns, can't afford a security guard after midnight, it is the only station open on Calumet Avenue. Traffic in this time frame varies.

Mr. Smith asks questions. Mr. Ali states 30% of revenue is from 12-5, disagrees that there is not a highway near and believes I-80 is near. Mr. Smith asks is there any other reason besides financial that you want to remain open? Mr. Ali states the majority of customers are highway customers which they are in need of getting gas and the station depends a lot on these highway customers all day long. They have been closed and have figured out how to close since November 1 but keep one person inside for safety reasons which they can barely afford. They have not fixed any possible ordinance violations.

Councilman Tyler sworn in. Mr. Tyler wants to share some information. Mr. Smith highlighted some of the questions and concerns that he had. He believes there are concerns with signage at the location, no changes have been made, doesn't seem they qualify with the ordinance terms such as the location to the interstate, other stations open from the highway and believes there are other alternatives. Appreciate concerns with owner on issues with revenue, doesn't see that much traffic but is not always out during those times. Doesn't seem like a likely candidate to stay open and to consider the call log.

Mr. Smith presents Exhibit 1 – call log. Lt. Christopher Gootee sworn in. Lt. Gootee states the station has bullet proof glass and has residential camera system that is half working. This system is close to last as to the quality of this system compared with others, you need to climb a ladder to access it, very old, some cameras work, some don't. An appointment was set up for FUSUS but they were not there to accept the connection. They have not ordered it. There is adequate lighting in parking lot, small older store inside. Mr. Gootee states they are not on FUSUS, there are fire hazards, electrical conditions the city found, shooting inside gas station. The station is open, they have checked on this and you can get gas after hours, they are in violation.

Mr. Tom Novak sworn in. Exhibit 2. Mr. Novak prepared the November 9, 2023 report with photos taken on November 7, 2023. Mr. Novak has safety concerns, windows are covered more than 25%, graffiti on pumps, roof fascia, electrical concerns, dead and alive wiring, and open face plate. There are also signage violations.

Exhibit 3 and 3A. Mr. Farrell's report and City Controller printout. Mia Mart, Inc. is owned by Yousef Muthana from Bridgeview, Mr. Catra is the owner of the property. Business license from 2002 through June 30, fees are owed for 2023 and 2024, previous business licenses were issued to Mia Mart which is not an entity registered with Secretary of State. If Board considers exception, that would have to be rectified immediately.

Mr. Ali's request is if he's not able to open 24 hours if the hours can be extended, closing at 1:00 a.m. and open at 4:00 a.m. for consideration.

Mr. Smith's states the criminal acts and police calls indicates a shooting, multiple police calls overnight, which is a factor for community safety. They are not on FUSUS, mostly all previous stations have either FUSUS installed or on board to install. Regarding security, cameras are not a good system, some don't work and the need to get up on a ladder. Calumet Avenue is commercial and residential behind the station and a school is across the street. Mr. Smith doesn't believe this is near an interstate, not easily accessible by interstate travelers and confused as to Mr. Ali's claim it is near the interstate. There are city ordinance violations, nothing has been done regarding the signs, was given the report of Mr. Novak on the 9th and nothing has been changed. There is adequate lighting, properly licensed with the city but a year behind and will need to address the issue with the Secretary of State. Mr. Smith believes the station doesn't meet the requirements of the ordinance and his request is that the petition be denied. (Ins. No. 23-2007)

The Board will take this matter under advisement.

7306 Indianapolis Blvd. Proper notice was provided. Two witnesses sworn in. Satwinder Singh and Manpal Singh, partners are sworn in.

Mr. Singh states they were open 24 hours, have a lot of night time traffic, have lost about 35% of business, have a 24 hour public restrooms, there is good lighting, upgraded fuel pumps. They have an employee staying there and it difficult for them. FUSUS was installed over a month ago.

Mr. Smith confirms the business name as Rara Sahbi, Inc. and they are the two partners and owners since 2009. The other gas stations they are are located at 8317 Kennedy Ave., Highland and 9285 Wicker Ave., St. John. Highland is opened 24 hours. The bathrooms are opened 24 hours and the carwash is open 24 hours. Mr. Satwinder states there was a complaint about 3 months ago. They have closed the doors now. They would agree to keep the car wash closed overnight and are in the process of remodeling and the car wash will be gone. They are increasing the size of the convenience store. There is bullet proof windows, a switch in the back, after 10:00 p.m. there is only one employee.

Councilman Woerpel states he has tried several times to contact owner. The last time he was in and asked who the owner was, it was a different gentleman who said he was. There have been several complaints about the signage in the windows and fences. The residents in the neighborhood have strongly begged to stop the car wash from buzzing. The complaints have fallen on deaf ears, was told there was no bathroom.

Leslie Gillham presents the buzzing noise from the carwash on her phone. She states this was all summer long, all day and all night. The noise wakes her up at night, in the morning and has asked many times to do something about the buzzer. Nothing has been done. The public restroom is in the alley, no fence that keeps people walking from the gas station to the alley where they relieve themselves. She believes it's a safety issue that people are in the alley at night and should not have to live with the buzzer constantly going off. Thank you.

Ms. Gillham has lived there 30 years, she would like to see the carwash gone, they work on it in the middle of the night, photos showing the lack of fence. Exhibit A – People walk through the guardrail and relieve themselves. If fencing was there it would decrease this issue.

Mr. Smith presents Exhibit 1 – call log. Lt. Christopher Gootee states there is good lighting, upgraded lighting and pumps. Does not have an upgraded camera system but is intergraded with FUSUS. Some images are low resolution but if they are rebuilding, they would ask to consult with police department to get better images of the customers if there was a problem or to check on the safety of the clerk. Lt. Gootee recommends they upgrade when they build the new building. No violent activity at this location.

Exhibits 2 and 3. Tom Novak's report and photos. Mr. Novak states they have preliminary plans for a rebuild and remove the carwash which may fix some issues. Would like the signage in the windows uncovered as they are covered more than 25%, ADA parking and path into the store, fence replaced in the alley to secure the alley, gate for dumpster enclosure closed when not in use. The address need to be larger to see, the outside ice boxes are plugged

into non GFCI outlets which is a fire hazard and noise violations.

Mr. Smith states as to Exhibit 3, the business license, they need to register their assumed business with the State of Indiana and record a copy.

Mr. Satwinder states the carwash has been there since 2013 and he has taken care of the noise violation and has been fixed. They are willing to close it overnight and will be gone pretty soon.

Mr. Smith asks if he would be willing to correct the sound fencing and upgrade the camera system. Mr. Satwinder states they will fix whatever is needed now and will upgrade the camera system with the new build and understands the issue with the signage in the windows.

Mr. Smith states Lt. Gootee testified there that have not any incidents of violent acts, is part of the FUSUS system, camera system should be upgraded, there is adequate security presence with bullet proof glass and maglocks. It is in a commercial area with residents behind them and easily accessible to interstate travelers. The concerning issue is the signage that needs to be corrected and the other things Mr. Novak pointed out. Regarding the car wash, appreciate the owner willing to work with the city and limit the hours of the car wash now or request to be shut down. The fencing is a security issue and requests this be fixed. There is adequate lighting and the business license needs to be fixed with the State of Indiana. The factors do favor to remain open and if granted, would request to mandate the matters that could impact security be remedied as quickly as possible. (Ins. No. 23-1008)

The Board takes this matter under advisement.

There being no further business to come before the Board, recommendation by Mr. Kalina to adjourn; concurred by Ms. Greenwell. The regularly scheduled meeting adjourned at 10:25 a.m.

APPROVED:

BY:


Tinisha Greenwell, Vice President

ATTEST:


Linda Norville-Moles, Board Secretary