

*Prepared by
Robert J. Golec
Hammond City Clerk*

MINUTES OF THE COMMON COUNCIL
MARCH 14, 2016

The regular meeting of the Hammond Common Council of the City of Hammond, Lake County, Indiana was held on March 14, 2016 in the Hammond City Council Chambers.

Council President Michael Opinker presided.

City Clerk Robert J. Golec facilitated.

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

ROLL CALL

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

ABSENT: None

TOTAL: 9

READING OF THE MINUTES

Councilman Spitale, supported by Councilman Emerson, moved to approve the minutes of February 22, 2016 and place on file.

AYES: ALL

APPROVAL OF CLAIMS

Councilman Markovich, supported by Councilman Higgs, moved to accept the claims from February 17, 2016 through March 9, 2016. Claim #1288 through claim #1637, inclusive.

ROLL CALL VOTE (claims)

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

NAYS: None

ABSENT: None

Motion carried

9/0/0

CLAIMS APPROVED

PUBLIC HEARINGS

None

COMMUNICATIONS

None

MINUTES OF THE COMMON COUNCIL cont.

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COMMITTEE REPORTS

Council as a Whole - Councilman Spitale - Brought out 16-12.

Community & Crime Watch Committee - Councilwoman Venecz announced upcoming meetings:
East Hammond Pullman C.W.; Tues., March 15; Ophelia Steen Center; 6:30 pm
Hessville C.W.; Jean Shepherd Center; Thur., March 17; 7:00 pm
Jefferson C.W.; Thur., March 17; Jefferson School; 6:30 pm
Lafayette N.W.; Wed., Mar. 16; Lafayette School; 6:30 pm
S. Hammond C.W.; Thur.; Mar. 17, Hammond Housing; 7:00 pm

ORDINANCE 3RD READING - FINAL PASSAGE

16-12 An Ordinance to Amend and Replace Flood Hazard Area Ord. 9117, by Establishing Provisions for Flood Hazards in Accordance with the State of Indiana Model Ordinance for Flood Hazard Areas

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

Councilman Spitale - This ordinance is about upgrading the language in the ordinance.

Don Novak, Zoning Administrator - Basically this ordinance is updating and replacing some of the language in the current language in the current ordinance that we've had for many years. It really does not materially affect any of the permitting requirements that we've have. It's basically the language that they've decided to bring up to more modern times, if you will. I've explained to you, basically, the ordinance is a continuation of the ordinance that we have. If you've read it, you know that it's not real interesting reading. But I do understand it and there really isn't any change that materially affects the way we've been permitting in any of the property that we have left in the city in the flood plain.

Councilman Markovich - Do you promise there won't be any more floods?

Mr. Novak - I'm sorry, I can't hear you. I don't know if that will affect what happens in nature. I don't have any control over that.

Councilman Markovich - I know everything is based on 100 years or whatever just like fires at refineries on tanks and everything but if it gets struck by lightning, there goes your 100 year thing or whatever.

Mr. Novak - Well, basically, this ordinance changed, like I indicated, what was the wording. They changed the terminology of the 100 year flood plan and they call it the 1% chance area now. You know, there's small things like that that they've changed which is basically just a sign of the times. People say things differently than they did twenty and thirty years ago. It's just an evolution of the ordinance in the regulations that the government has.

ORDINANCE 3RD READING - FINAL PASSAGE cont.

ROLL CALL VOTE (passage of 16-12)

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

NAYS: None

ABSENT: None

Motion carried

9/0/0

ORDINANCE NO. 9334 PASSED

INTRODUCTION OF ORDINANCES

None

RESOLUTIONS

None

NEW AND UNFINISHED BUSINESS

Councilman Kalwinski, supported by Councilman Spitale, moved to send a letter to the Ferro Corp. regarding its proposed groundwater closure plan at its formerly located facility at 3000 Sheffield Avenue in Hammond and to request that the Indiana Dept. of Environmental Mgt. provide the council with any past and future correspondence, sampling data, closure submittal, remediation work plans or any other information related to the Ferro Corp. ground water closure plan at 3000 Sheffield Avenue, Hammond, Indiana. AYES: ALL

LETTER SENT: MARCH 15, 2016

Councilman Higgs moved to send a letter to the Chief of Police and the Police Department thanking them for apprehending the suspect that was apprehended for allegedly robbing the 7-eleven on Hohman Avenue. I really appreciate the fact that they have been caught and those type of people don't deserve to be on the streets at all. AYES: ALL

LETTER SENT: MARCH 15, 2016

Councilman Markovich, supported by Councilman Higgs, moved to have a meeting on March 22 at 5:30 here in the caucus room about the appointment for boards. It's gonna be like a workshop or whatever. We're putting the notices out so for Tuesday, March 22nd at 5:30 here at the City Council Office. AYES: ALL

PUBLIC EXPRESSION

Robert Ochi - Relieved that the suspect was apprehended in the 7-eleven murder. What will happen with the building now? What are the responsibilities of the owner? The lights have all been shut off and that may be a problem. It is quite dark there. How does the city approach backfilling that building?

Councilman Markovich, supported by Councilman Higgs, moved to return to the regular order of business. AYES: ALL

NEW AND UNFINISHED BUSINESS cont.

Councilman Higgs - Just to elaborate on some of your questions and concerns. Since I've been on the council I have been very adamant about making sure new businesses come, not only on Hohman Avenue, but also on Columbia Avenue. That lot on Columbia Avenue has been vacant for a number of years where Dad's Liquor store used to be, New Community Church and Effeny's Store as well. So, not just that, also Woodmar. At one time there was a pending law suit with the developer trying to get that developed. So, Economic Development is responsible for trying to attract new businesses to our city. Certainly there are workshops, Chicago, I've tried to reach out. I've even asked one of my closest friends to try to establish a business. It doesn't look good when you ride down Columbia Avenue, the old KFC building is closed. A beautiful building. For some reason or another they closed. I don't know if the kids were hanging out too much or doing too much in there or they weren't making enough money. Again, you know, they're doing an environmental study on Columbia Avenue currently to try to see if the soil is contaminated to the point to where they can build or not build on that. Woodmar still needs to be completed. Then you have another vacant building, Walmart. It was a great store in the 3rd District. Now it's off Indianapolis Blvd. off 80/94. So, I would hope that the Mayor's Office and Economic Development, Africa, would try to attract new businesses, especially in the 3rd District. Because a lot of them have left and gone and closed and there was just a number of stores just here. As a kid it used to be the barber shop. Recently they just tore all that down. I remember it was a store there. It was three or four stores could be placed right there in that one location. So, not just in one location, now, 7-eleven is gone because some idiot wants to go over there and shoot an innocent man which is totally ridiculous to rob 7-eleven, really. I mean, just sad. It's been there all my entire life, 7-eleven has been there. It's devastating to the entire community and city. The fact of knowing that I can't go to 7-eleven at 1 or 2 o'clock in the morning no more because some idiot wants to come over here and pull a gun and kill a innocent man. Any fool in their right mind should know that if you work at 7-eleven they don't have money. The money goes in a little safe. They get \$20, they put it in the safe. So, what's your point? It's just ridiculous. But, to make a long story short, I am working extremely hard to try to attract businesses here and they have a work shop coming up again in May and I'm gonna try to attend that and try to get some potential businesses to maybe come to Hammond. That's all I can do. I'm working extremely hard trying to get them to, you know, we would have loved to have a 3W Wings over here in the 3rd District. It's convenient. I mean, the fact of the matter is I hate going all the way to River Oaks to spend my money. It's no profits to Hammond. Or Southlake Mall. All the businesses that could possibly bring additional revenue are not here. So, that's all I could say. But I'm willing to work with you and do whatever we can to attract new businesses.

Councilwoman Venecz - I do believe the Public Expression question was with regard to 7-eleven on Hohman Avenue and also the old Cadillac dealership that is closed up and now they are dark, both on Hohman Avenue. Africa Tarver is our Economic Development Director and she is under the direction of Phil Taillon. I don't know for sure, but I would certainly think that if the neighborhood did get together with a petition and send it to corporate 7-eleven and ask them for the well being and safety of our neighborhood to please turn on the lights over there, I think that might go a long way. I don't know that to be for sure. But, if there is any way that any one of us in the city can help in the neighborhood, please don't hesitate to ask. I certainly can appreciate your concerns. It was a horrible, devastating crime that was committed over there and as U.S. Attorney David Capp said that it just shook the neighborhood. It was a brazen crime that was committed in a residential area. So, I certainly understand your concerns and any way that I can help. Thank you very much.

NEW AND UNFINISHED BUSINESS cont.

Councilman Higgs - Just for a point of clarity, in regards to the lighting, I doubt seriously if 7-eleven is gonna do it. Unfortunately, when they took off, they don't want nothing else to do with it. That's usually how businesses operate. Once they leave, the responsibility falls on the city. There are a number of businesses that constantly leave and then there's debris and all kinds of things. I deal with it on a day to day basis. So, unfortunately, I mean, there's nothing we can do with the lighting because I can't go on private property. I do have money available, casino funding, to be utilized for lighting but you can't go on private property and put it on there. So, other than street lights, that's it.

Councilwoman Venecz - Don't know unless we ask.

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

AYES: ALL

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

AYES: ALL

Michael Opinker, President
Hammond Common Council
ATTEST:

Robert J. Golec, City Clerk

Approved at the Common Council meeting of March 28, 2016.

Time: 6:25 pm
cb