

The regular meeting of the Hammond Common Council of the City of Hammond, Lake County, Indiana was held on February 12, 2018 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 Councilwoman Venecz.

ROLL CALL

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

ABSENT: Kalwinski

TOTAL: 8

READING OF THE MINUTES

Councilman Spitale, supported by Councilman Emerson, moved to accept the minutes of January 22, 2018 and place on file. AYES: ALL

APPROVAL OF CLAIMS

Councilman Markovich, supported by Councilman Higgs, moved to approve the claims from January 17, 2018 through February 7, 2018. Claim #530 through claim #1007, inclusive.

Councilman Higgs requested copies of claims #820 through 824 all for We Care from the Heart.

ROLL CALL VOTE (claims)

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

NAYS: None

ABSENT: Kalwinski

Motion carried 8/0/1 CLAIMS APPROVED

PUBLIC HEARINGS

None

COMMUNICATIONS

Councilman Higgs - I would like to personally thank those individuals who helped in me celebrating my first greetings besides their grand opening for Silver Birch, who happens to be a senior housing development at 5620 Sohl Avenue in Hammond. I had the opportunity this past week to go there with my seniors and do some registration and give them some refreshments and food and one of our County Councilmen was very instrumental in that and he's here. Smith, Bizzell & Warner Funeral Home with Oak Street Health was very

*Prepared by  
Robert J. Golec  
Hammond City Clerk*

COMMUNICATIONS cont.

Councilman Higgs cont. - instrumental as well as Councilman Dave Hamm. So I certainly appreciate your efforts, and Councilwoman Venecz attended as well so I really appreciate your efforts in being concerned about my district.

Councilwoman Venecz - It was a very nice event, Councilman.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Council as a Whole Committee - Councilman Woerpel - Brought out 18-01 & 18-02.

Community & Crime Watch Committee - Councilwoman Venecz - Upcoming meetings:  
Community Watch; Mt. Zion Pleasant View Plaza; Wed., Feb. 14; 2 p.m.  
Edison Community Watch on the Road; Fri., Feb. 16; 1 p.m.; Golden Manor Senior Apartments  
Hessville Crime Watch; Thur., Feb. 15; 7 p.m.; Jean Shepherd Center  
Lafayette Neighborhood Watch; Wed., Feb. 21; Lafayette School; 6:30 p.m.  
South Hammond Crime Watch; Thur., Feb. 15; Old Hammond Housing Building/Legal Aid

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

18-01 Amending Ord. 6066 and Ord. 8435 also known as Section 150.070 of the Hammond Municipal Code as it pertains to Emergency Board Ups in Hammond

Councilman Woerpel, supported by Councilman Higgs, moved for passage.

ROLL CALL VOTE (passage)

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

NAYS: None

ABSENT: Kalwinski

Motion carried 8/0/1 ORDINANCE NO. 9401 PASSED

18-02 Creating a New Section of Title III, Chapter 32, pertaining to the Use of Confidential Funds by the Hammond Police Department

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

Councilman Spitale - This is a separate fund. The money is in the police department's budget but the State Board of Accounts said the ordinance should be passed allowing the type of program.

ROLL CALL VOTE (passage)

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

NAYS: None

ABSENT: Kalwinski

Motion carried 8/0/1 ORDINANCE NO. 9402 PASSED

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Hammond City Clerk*



INTRODUCTION OF ORDINANCES cont.

Councilman Higgs, supported by Councilman Rakos, moved for passage.

ROLL CALL VOTE (passage)

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

NAYS: None

ABSENT: Kalwinski

Motion carried

8/0/1

ORDINANCE NO. 9403 PASSED

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

AYES: ALL

RESOLUTIONS

18R-05 In Support of Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) Legislation

Clerk Golec reads the proposed resolution in its entirety.

Councilman Higgs moved for adoption.

Motion dies for lack of a second.

18R-06 Authorizing Approval of Development Agreement

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

Councilman Rakos - This is the resolution that is required for us to pass regarding an agreement made with the city of Hammond Redevelopment Commission, Hammond Economic Development Commission, with ATG Real Estate Development who under this agreement will acquire real estate located in the Gateway Economic Area in the city of Hammond. Basically, it is a 4.4 acre lot. The last one at Oxbow Landing. It'll be developed by ATG Real Estate Development LLC who also built the other class A office building at 2929 Carlson Drive. Their investment is \$8 million with a \$1.7 million incentive from the city. It's approximately a 36 thousand square foot office building to mirror the one at 2929 Carlson Drive with four outlets totaling approximately 12-18 thousand square foot of restaurant or retail space. This should be substantially completed by July 1, 2019 with construction to begin in May of this year.

Councilman Higgs - I'd just like to say that that particular development area is very nice and it's one of the areas that's been redeveloped in the Hessville section there in that particular area there off the expressway and certainly I would hope that other areas in the city, particular where Walmart is and Stardust has been vacant for a number of years, if we could get some development over there, rehab, or something. It would be greatly appreciated. That's all I have to say.

RESOLUTIONS cont.

ROLL CALL VOTE (adoption)

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

NAYS: None

ABSENT: Kalwinski

Motion carried

8/0/1

RESOLUTION NO. R06 ADOPTED

18R-07 Appointing Bonnie Henry to Serve as a Member of the Hammond Community Corporation, Inc.

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

ROLL CALL VOTE (adoption)

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

NAYS: None

ABSENT: Kalwinski

Motion carried

8/0/1

RESOLUTION NO. R07 ADOPTED

18R-08 Appointing Sean Medrano to Serve as a Member of the Hammond Community Corporation, Inc.

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

ROLL CALL VOTE (adoption)

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

NAYS: None

ABSENT: Kalwinski

Motion carried

8/0/1

RESOLUTION NO. R08 ADOPTED

18R-09 Appointing Amy Radolak to Serve as a Member of the Hammond Community Corporation, Inc.

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

ROLL CALL VOTE (adoption)

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

NAYS: None

ABSENT: Kalwinski

Motion carried

8/0/1

RESOLUTION NO. R09 ADOPTED

NEW AND UNFINISHED BUSINESS

Councilman Higgs, supported by Councilman Torres, moved to send a letter to the Chief of police asking for increased police presence for the Family Dollar on Sohl Avenue.

LETTER SENT: FEBRUARY 13, 2018

Councilman Emerson - I would like to thank the Street Department during our recent sprinkling of snow the last four days or so. It was nice to see neighbors working together. I did get a few calls regarding, you know, the plows plowing in driveways. Hammond's an old city and not everyone has driveways, so if you leave your car there it's likely to get plowed in. But, I think, by and large, people worked real well and we hope that's the end of the snow for the year.

Council President Venecz - I would like to remind everybody that Saturday night is 219 Day at the Hammond Civic Center. Come out and enjoy our celebration of our area code 219.

PUBLIC EXPRESSION

David Turpin Jr. - Firstly, he was disappointed that the council smothered the proposed DACA resolution. That was a shameful thing to happen. Secondly, in regards to the Hammond High Pool, he offered to work with the city to gather resources be it either technical support which he could provide or as a liaison with Arcelor Mittal to ask for a donation of cash.

Sean Medrano - Concerned with the appearance of the 3<sup>rd</sup> District going down Calumet Avenue and Columbia Avenue. There are spots that are an eyesore to travelers. One being the area at Columbia and Highland, there is an area there that looks like abandoned buildings there and weeds everywhere. Is there anyone addressing the issue? At Kenwood and Calumet there is an engine sitting in the parking lot.

Arlene Mitchell Pearson - President of Gary Delta Sigma Theta Sorority - Delta Sigma Theta Sorority is a not for profit Greek letter sorority of college educated women dedicated to public service with an emphasis on programs that target the African American Community.

Tamara Young King - Social Action and Political Action Chair of Gary Delta Sigma Theta - Here within Northwest Indiana we manage and maintain our outreach and public service to Lake, Porter and LaPorte Counties. An example of what we do, last year in gearing up for the election cycle, from spring to fall, we registered over 1,026 high school students within Lake, Porter and LaPorte Counties. That included Bishop Noll, Hammond High, Hammond Morton, so we were active in your community and will continue to do so. We are presenting ourselves today as an advocate and assistance to the city of Hammond. We just want the electorate to know that we are a resource. It is important that voters are registered and also educated. We work tirelessly to make sure your constituency is educated, alert and aware and that they use their rights to activate their voice.

PUBLIC EXPRESSION cont.

Anthony Haymon - Regarding snow removal, it was a good job but I think it could be a better job. The main streets were very clear but the side streets and the residential streets were awful. It was awful due to the fact that a lot of people weren't aware of when the snow plows were going to come. I have a plan that would make it easier for the plow drivers to do their job. My plan is they put up barricades the day or evening before the plows are coming out so that the residents could move their vehicles to one side of the street, then the plows can easily come down the street and move the snow. Once one side is clear then everybody can move their cars to the opposite side of the street and the signs can be placed on the opposite side and the plow can do that side.

J.D. Richmond - Reiterating what his neighbor said. He would like some notification when the plow was coming so that he could be a good neighbor and move his car for the plow.

George Stoya - Has complained for years to the street department about the plows plowing people in. Has been told by the Mayor and others that the blade on the plow can be adjusted to not leave these large wakes behind your car. They can also find better places to dump the snow too.

Council President Venecz - Public Expression is closed.

Councilman Higgs, supported by Councilman Torres, moved to go back to the regular order of business.

ROLL CALL VOTE

AYES: Markovich, Spitale, Torres, Higgs, Emerson, Woerpel, Venecz

NAYS: Rakos

ABSENT: Kalwinski

Motion carried

7/1/1

MOTION CARRIED

Councilman Higgs - First and foremost I want to thank the sorority sisters for coming out. I happen to be the only African American Elected Official in the City of Hammond. This is my 4<sup>th</sup> term and I do what I can, when I can, for all of the citizens of this great city One of the events that I currently do is the 3 on 3 Tournament where I give away bicycles to any kid that comes to the park. They ride out. Also we do a Back to School every summer where we give the kids school supplies. Then I do something with my seniors, it's a Thanksgiving Dinner annually. So, certainly if you guys want to participate and be actively involved in it you are more than welcome to do so. Secondly, just to respond to the gentleman in the vehicles and the abandoned properties, that's something that I stay on top of constantly and there were two vehicles on the property at Kenwood and Calumet. The two cars that were parked there, the police department did remove them. Now there is a engine sitting on that property. I think someone lives in the building, I have no idea. But I don't work for Code Enforcement. All I can do is refer these complaints to them. It's a constant thing. There are properties that are abandoned where there's weeds. Whatever it is, abandoned vehicles that sit for two and three months or six months up to a year. I report it all. I constantly ride through my district, spring, summer and fall, looking for issues to address. I submit them on a regular basis. I think my colleagues can attest to that. I send letters. Thirdly, to my neighbors, thank you for coming out this evening and certainly I understand and sympathize with you in regards to this snow removal. Not only your vehicles were shoveled in but there were a number of vehicles as well but I tried to assist as well as I could in regards to addressing those concerns.

*Prepared by  
Robert J. Golec  
Hammond City Clerk*

NEW AND UNFINISHED BUSINESS cont.

Councilman Woerpel - I want to address a couple of issues that I heard during Public Expression and number one was, the word shameful was used over a resolution that says we're against something that everybody on this council agrees with, which is DACA. If you look at your claims, I see 67 CDBG payments we're making, which are federal dollars. We asked in caucus of the attorneys, "Could the federal government withhold our money?" and the response was, "Who knows what the federal government's gonna do." What I find shameful is for me to do the easy thing and say, "Yes, I'll second that." and I'll grandstand and I'll vote for that. I'm glad the sorority is here because I've been City Chairman for eight years and for eight years I have tried, and tried, and tried, and tried, to register voters. And our voter turn out is shameful. That's what's shameful. We can sit here and we can send a resolution somewhere that says, "Yes, we're against this too. What's shameful is not voting. As far as the snow plows go. I know of one that got hit yesterday, punched. I know where there were snow shovels thrown at snow plows. You ain't living until you're in a 200 lb. post office truck and you're stuck in a parkway, talk about frustration in trying to drive in this. My question is, "Where is the snow gonna go?" "Where are they gonna put it?" I get what everybody's saying. It's a little bit different when it snows during the week and people are at work and the cars are off the street. It's easy to plow snow that way. But when we have snows on the weekend, everybody's patience are gonna be worn thin. Everybody is gonna be frustrated and you're gonna go out there and you're gonna dig your car out and the plow is gonna come down the street because those cars are there because the snow storm happens to fall on a weekend. But when I hear stories of snow shovels being thrown at snow plows and one guy getting punched. They're just doing their job. Whether we have a better plan or whatever, that can be discussed for later but I think those guys did the best they could with the circumstances they had to work with. That's all I got to say.

Councilman Higgs - I mean, that could be a two fold, Councilman Woerpel, in regards to saying it's shameful because sitting on this council I have been addressed in some ways that I didn't agree with neither that appreciate. I truly, truly, was offended by some of the actions. But how a person feels, that's under their own discretion and, you know, only God will judge in the end. But the reality of it is I'm for all people and the human rights of , equal rights, of every individual. I don't care if you're white, purple, blue or green. Everybody should be treated equally in that respect. So, that was the purpose of supporting this particular resolution and I will continue to fight as long as I have the ability and God gives me strength to fight for what's right and it's up to each and every one of you to do what's right. I can't force you, neither make you vote on anything. All I can do is address my concerns to the citizens in which I represent in the 3<sup>rd</sup> and the citizens of this great city and move forward. I'm for what's right. Thank you Lord for giving me guidance and direction. That's all I have to say.

Councilman Woerpel - I agree with him, but when I look at 67 federal grants on just this claim form alone, and our attorneys tell us who knows what this guy might do if we pass this. I think it's my responsibility to protect the taxpayer dollars in that situation is all I'm saying. I'm not disrespecting what the councilman's resolution or whatever. But I don't know how many more times I got to say it, the only thing they're gonna understand in Washington is when people start voting. That's all I got to say.

Councilman Higgs - When it comes to voting, I can guarantee you I've probably registered more citizens than the average precinct committeeman throughout the whole Lake County and I have copies to attest to that. And

NEW AND UNFINISHED BUSINESS cont.

Councilman Higgs cont. - it's a constant thing. Not just at election time. I'm out there 365 days registering. If you move in or someone moves into my district, whether it's a senior high rise or wherever throughout the city that I can be available or assistance in terms of getting residents registered, I do it, and I have copies to attest to that. So, it's not a story I am making up. But the reality of it is, it is very important that you execute and educate the community on the issues and it's very important that you get out and vote. Because if you don't vote, you have no voice. That's it.

Councilman Higgs - And that particular resolution was passed through the County Council that was introduced to this council and passed. So, it's not like it's not familiar with Lake County. It's been passed by the County Council and one of our County Council members is here. And also what was discussed in the caucus was that there was no intentions of trying to jeopardize our federal funding and I don't think in any way possible that our funding would be touched if this particular resolution is passed. If so, I would think that we have attorneys that are capable of filing a law suit and stopping any partisanship in regards to the president or anyone in D.C. saying, "Hey, we're gonna start snatching money from cities and towns because they support a particular resolution. It makes no sense. All you're simply saying is that, "I believe that this is what's right and that's why I'm voting for it." Simple.

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

AYES: ALL

Councilman Spitale, supported by Councilman Woerpel, 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: 7:00 p.m.  
cb

Minutes approved at the Common Council Meeting of February 26, 2018.

*Prepared by  
Robert J. Golec  
Hammond City Clerk*