



MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE  
CITY OF HAMMOND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION  
held on February 05, 2024

The Hammond Economic Development Commission held a meeting on Monday, February 5, 2024 at 9:00 a.m. The meeting was held Hammond City Council Chamber Room 209 and via Zoom on link <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/89240793278?pwd=UEVoL3Q4eU9XK1hIU0RpaExZaE5HZz09> with telephonic option at 312 626 6799 Meeting ID: 892 4079 3278

**1) Call Meeting to Order**

The meeting was called to order by President Vezmar at 9:01 a.m.

President Vezmar turned the floor over to Economic Development Director Juan J. Moreno for updates.

Juan J. Moreno, Director of Economic Development informed the Commission of the personnel changes since the last board meeting:

- Anne Taylor is the new Executive Director of Planning and Development
- Juan J. Moreno is the new Economic Development Director
- Melissa A. Campbell is the new TIF Program Coordinator and recording secretary
- Susan Stevens is a new commission member, taking over the open spot vacated from Victor Franco, who retired at the end of last year.

Director Moreno gave a wonderful introduction of each person.

**2) Pledge of Allegiance**

**3) Roll Call**

**Members Present**

- John Vezmar, President
- Monica Rubio, Vice President
- Alexius D. Barber, Secretary
- Bonnie Henry, Commissioner
- Susan Stevens, Commissioner

**Absent**

None

There was a quorum.



**Others Present**

- Anne Taylor, Executive Director of Planning and Development
- Juan J. Moreno, Director, Economic Development
- David W. Westland, Attorney for Economic Development Commission (Westland & Bennett PC)
- Melissa A. Campbell, Recording Secretary
  
- Aubrey Fullerton, Citizen, via Zoom
- Al Salinas, 2<sup>nd</sup> District Councilman, via Zoom

**4) Declaration of Conflict of Interest**

There were no conflicts of interest declared.

**5) Communications**

There were no communications.

**6) Approval of Minutes**

Commissioner Stevens made a motion to approve the minutes as submitted from meeting held on January 9, 2023, Commissioner Barber seconded the motion.

<b>Roll Call:</b>	Commissioner Stevens	Yes
	Commissioner Henry	Yes
	Secretary Barber	Yes
	Vice President Rubio	Yes
	President Vezmar	Yes

Yeas: 5  
Nays: 0  
Abs: 0

**Motion carried**

**7) Old Business**

There was no old business.

**8) New Business**

a. Election of Officers:

President Vezmar opened nominations for; President, Vice President, and Secretary. Commissioner Henry made a motion to nominate the current officers to the same position they are currently serving, seconded by Commissioner Stevens. There were no other nominations.

- President- Commissioner John Vezmar.
- Vice President- Commissioner Monica Rubio.
- Secretary- Commissioner Alexius D. Barber.

<b>Roll Call:</b>	Commissioner Stevens	Yes
	Commissioner Henry	Yes
	Secretary Barber	Yes
	Vice President Rubio	Yes
	President Vezmar	Yes



Yeas: 5  
Nays: 0  
Abs: 0

**Motion carried**

b. Economic Development Updates:

Director Moreno gave the following Economic Development updates:

- **Kennedy Avenue Redesign, Hessville** - utilizing what the City learned from the Downtown Master Plan, \$4.5M from ARPA (American Recovery Plan Act) construction— from 169<sup>th</sup> to north of 165<sup>th</sup> St., Phase II: 169th to 173<sup>rd</sup>, road is open north and south bound
- **Kube Sports Complex** – Ninja Kidz Action Park – opened in October 2023 – had ribbon cutting ceremony. Hockey rink is active and busy.
- **New YMCA at former Carson’s site** – \$70M investment for a 100,000sf building – great economic driver for the Woodmar area/Hammond; Phase I - expected to be open to the public in December 2024. Phase II - outdoor waterpark will be breaking ground in 2025. Completion date in 2026.
- **Huhtamaki Expansion** – \$100M investment, 250,000sf of new construction, about 100 additional new jobs.
- **United Hospital Services, at West Point** – Open house on 3/1/23, well attended. Approx. 150 employees, added 20 new since ribbon cutting.
- **Unifirst, Calumet Ave and 141<sup>st</sup> St.** – outgrew old location on Calumet Avenue, City worked with them to remain in Hammond, \$18M investment, 64,000sf brand new facility, 80 current jobs
- **Meats by Linz** – \$35M investment – building on former Queen Anne Candy site at 628 Hoffman St., will bring over 300+ jobs from IL and creating more with this relocation. Ribbon cutting will be in mid-summer 2024.
- **Marina District** - 5 below department store opened in early February 2024, by Horseshoe and Walmart
- **Townplace Suites**
  - 920 Marina Drive
    - 850 Indy
  - 5 Story hotel; 15,840 sqft - 102 rooms
  - 15-20 new employees - full / part time
  - \$5m investment
- **4712 Hohman Ave.**
  - Mechanic Shop vacant
  - Was on demo list but now removed
  - Removed interest in repurpose / develop into Art living space
  - RFP went out on 12/8 and is due 1/16/24



- **Tri-State Automation**
  - 710 Michigan St.
  - Tri-State Industries, Inc (4923 Columbia Ave)
  - Expansion
  - 2 building: 9,000 sqft & 30k sqft
  - Create 25 new job
  - \$15m investment
  
- **SBW Financial Assistance for Marketing Grant (for-profit)**
  - 5th year, since commencement of this program, it has assisted over 70 business, totaling up to \$200k in grant assistance
  - Helps the business strengthen their business presents
  
- **READI 2.0**
  - Applied for 2 sites
    - Merc Building- Food Hall / Outside Seating
      - 5243-51 Hohman Ave.
    - Spohn School 5012 Calumet Ave.
      - 16 ac for future development

Hope to hear back sometime in late March / early April 2024
  
- **Downtown Revitalization:**  
Redesign of Hohman Avenue, Phase One
  - to slow down traffic and create a plaza-like urban core
  - Sibley to Russell Street, straightening of Rimbach St.
  - 5M project funded with ARPA (American Rescue Plan Act)
  - South bound lane open only
  - Projected to be completed June 2024
  
- **Madison Lofts – NE corner of Sibley & Hohman:**
  - 15M investment
  - 54-70 units, 5 stories, 8700sf retail space
  - 20 permanent jobs
  - Breaking ground Summer 2024
  
- **Bank Calumet Building (The Banc):**
  - 24M investment
  - Adaptive reuse, 100+ units, 7000sf retail space
  - 25 permanent jobs
  - Accepting applications starting early this spring
  
- **Residential:**  
New single-family home developments being planned and happening in Central Hammond:
  - Millennium Estates
    - up to 10 new homes – homes still being built
  
  - Hessville area
    - Florida Ave – 11 homes
  
  - New York Avenue
    - near golf course – 3 homes



- Clark Fields
  - 37 lots, all lots sold
  - Breaking ground this year
- Memorial Park Development:
  - Total Lots – 37 lots:
    - 28 Residential
    - 8 R-3 Duplex
    - 1 Senior Home R4
- Jacob Square
  - RFP went out for 19 sites
  - Response for 11 sites
  - 51 total lots
- Upcoming events:
  - March 27 - Mayor's Night Out at Irving School
  - February 15th – Walkable USA documentary showing in the City Council Chambers, already shown at the Towle Theater in December 2023 and shown on local Lakeshore PBS channel
  - Feb 17 – 219 Day, 6pm to 11pm, 21 years and older event
  - 20<sup>th</sup> Annual Job Fair - will be held on 9/19- 11a-3p Civic Center

Secretary Barber asked what is the average amount awarded to participants in the Small Business Workshop marketing grant.

Director Moreno stated that the average grant award amount is between \$2,000 to \$3,000 but cannot exceed \$3,000.

Secretary Barber asked what type of homes will be built in the Jacob Square development.

Director Moreno stated there will be single family homes and duplexes built in that development.

c. Potash update

i. **Authorization to resolve tax dispute:**

Attorney Dave Westland explained that in 2011, the city, HRC and EDC entered into a development agreement with Potash, who has since been sold to an entity called PCS Hammond. There was a \$90 million-dollar storage facility that was invested by Potash.

As part of the DA, city issued bonds in the amount \$10 million dollars, as an economic incentive. The bonds were paid from property taxes that were generated from Potash along with the Central TIF.

In 2017, the Indiana legislation decided that it was good environmental policy to allow businesses to store fertilizer indoors in a facility, and therefore, the facility would receive a full 100% real estate property tax reduction.

In 2018, Potash applied for the fertilizer deduction. This is a problem because Potash received it in 2021 but it was retroactive to the application date in 2018, which means the property taxes they paid for the facility during that time had to be refunded and going



forward would not have to pay property taxes on the facility. Those property taxes fund the TIF and allow the bonds to be paid. The DA stated that the developer would not put the bond holders in financial strain, or make them think they would not receive payment.

Therefore; in 2018, a claim was made immediately indicating that Potash was in violation of the DA when they took the deduction. When the DA was made in 2011, there was no way to know that the State Legislation would enact this statute that would allow Potash to take this huge deduction. With the deduction, the money does not go into the TIF and Potash is saving about \$3.4 million dollars. Therefore, the city negotiated with PCS Hammond and developed an agreement for PCS Hammond to pay \$3.1 million dollars over the same period of time.

Secretary Barber asked is it correct to say that the loss would be around \$300,000 but the city could accrue other types of fees if it went to court and there is no guarantee that the city would win for the full \$3.4 million dollars.

Attorney Westland stated that is correct. This is a good faith dispute. Potash has been a good corporate citizen and they want to keep being a good corporate citizen.

Vice President Rubio made a motion to give authorization to resolve tax dispute, seconded by Secretary Barber.

<b>Roll Call:</b>	Commissioner Stevens	Yes
	Commissioner Henry	Yes
	Secretary Barber	Yes
	Vice President Rubio	Yes
	President Vezmar	Yes

Yeas: 5

Nays: 0

Abs: 0

**Motion carried**

**9) Public Expression**

Melissa A. Campbell explained and handed out W-4 forms to Commissioners asking them to fill it out and return to her as soon as possible.

Councilman Salinas asked what was the amount received from Potash from 2011 to 2018.

Attorney Westland indicated he did not have that number off the top of his head.

**10) Call for Adjournment**

Secretary Barber made a motion to adjourn, seconded by Vice President Rubio.

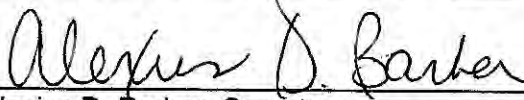
<b>Roll Call:</b>	Commissioner Stevens	Yes
	Commissioner Henry	Yes
	Secretary Barber	Yes
	Vice President Rubio	Yes
	President Vezmar	Yes

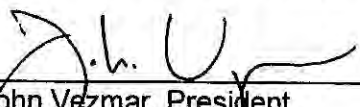


Yeas: 5  
 Nays: 0  
 Abs: 0  
**Motion carried**

The Economic Development Commission meeting was adjourned at 9:38 a.m.

Approved and signed this 1<sup>st</sup> day of April, 2024.

  
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 Alexis D. Barber, Secretary

  
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 John Vezmar, President

  
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 Melissa A. Campbell, Recording Secretary

2024 Hammond Economic Development Commission attendance record of Electronic and Physical Presence.

Commissioner	02/05/24			
John Vezmar	P			
Monica Rubio	P			
Alexius D. Barber	P			
Susan Stevens	P			
Bonnie Henry	P			
Initials				

E- Electronic  
 P- Present  
 A- Absent

If the Commissioner qualifies for an exemption from "Consecutive 50" requirements draw a circle around the E for that meeting / member. Reference to Economic Development Commission Resolution No. 2021-2