

*Prepared by
Robert J. Golec
Hammond City Clerk*

MINUTES OF THE COMMON COUNCIL
MAY 9, 2016

The regular meeting of the Hammond Common Council of the City of Hammond, Lake County, Indiana was held on May 9, 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, Higgs, Rakos, Opinker

ABSENT: Torres, Emerson

TOTAL: 7

DISTRIBUTION OF COUNCIL SCHOLARSHIP AWARDS

Clark H.S.

Presented by Rob Wilson, Principal

Pedro Alvarado Winner

Esmeralda Ceballos Winner

Jaslyn Perez Winner

Presented by Dr. Sean Eagon, Principal

Gavit H.S.

Presented by Michelle Ondas, Principal

Benjamin Turpin Winner

Jada Stephens Winner

Winner

Hammond H.S.

Presented by Dr. Johnny Goodlow, Principal

Destiny Flores Winner

Brian Bawaza Winner

Dashae Brown Winner

Bishop Noll H.S.

Presented by Michelle Arnold, Guidance Counselor

Amber Williams Winner

H.A.S.T.

Victor Lopez Winner

Morton H.S.

Presented by Greg Easton, Principal

Justin Meyers

Haley Delgado Winner

Maurice Weldon Winner

Aviance Roberts Winner

Bertha Andradeneda Winner

Councilman Torres is now present.

READING OF THE MINUTES

Councilman Spitale, supported by Councilman Higgs, moved to accept the minutes from April 25, 2016 and place on file.

AYES: ALL

MINUTES OF THE COMMON COUNCIL cont.

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APPROVAL OF CLAIMS

Councilman Markovich, supported by Councilman Higgs, moved to accept the claims from April 20, 2016 through May 4, 2016. Claim #2607 through claim #2887, inclusive.

ROLL CALL VOTE (claims)

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

NAYS: None

ABSENT: Emerson

Motion carried

8/0/1

CLAIMS APPROVED

PUBLIC HEARINGS

None

COMMUNICATIONS

Councilman Higgs read correspondence from the Hammond Animal Control confirming the receipt of the letter by Councilman Higgs regarding cats and responding. No cats were seen and cat traps were left with the resident in issue.

Councilwoman Venecz announced that May 14th will be the City's Annual Flower Giveaway for anyone presenting I.D. showing their Hammond address.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Council as a Whole - Councilman Kalwinski - Brought out 16-13.

Community and Crime Watch Committee - Councilwoman Venecz - Announced the upcoming meetings:

Tues., May 17; E. Hammond Pullman C.W.; 6:30 p.m.; Ophelia Steen Center

Thur., May 19; Hessville C.W.; Jean Shepherd Center; 7:00 p.m.

Wed., May 17; Lafayette Neighborhood Watch; Lafayette School; 6:30 p.m.

Thur., May 12; Whiting Robertsdale C.W.; Calumet College; 6:30 p.m.

South Hammond C.W. - The director is in the hospital and we don't know what is going to happen to that meeting. If interested you can contact Sgt. John Muta at 852-6374.

The 2016 Security Light Program is coming up again. Qualified applicants will receive a free security light. You must own and reside in your Hammond home. You must provide proof of ownership, valid driver's license or state I.D. Applications in person only between June 6 and June 10 at City Hall on the 1st floor in room 115. Quantities are limited.

ORDINANCE 3RD READING - FINAL PASSAGE

16-13 An Ordinance to Amend Ord. 3890, 4934, 6009, 7972, 8172, 8328 and 8750, also known as Chapter 76, Schedule VII of the Hammond Municipal Code as it relates to Through Truck Route Streets in the First District of Hammond

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

Councilman Kalwinski, supported by Councilman Higgs, moved to amend in 16-13A in its entirety.

ROLL CALL VOTE (amending in 16-13A)

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

NAYS: None

ABSENT: Emerson

Motion carried 8/0/1 AMENDMENT ADOPTED

ROLL CALL VOTE (as amended)

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

NAYS: None

ABSENT: Emerson

Motion carried 8/0/1 ORDINANCE NO. 9343 PASSED
(as amended)

INTRODUCTION OF ORDINANCES

None

RESOLUTIONS

None

NEW AND UNFINISHED BUSINESS

Councilman Higgs, supported by Councilwoman Venecz, moved to send a letter to Home Depot thanking them for their generosity and giving back to the community with providing bags and gloves to be distributed throughout my district. I thank them so much for clean up week. Unfortunately there is only a limited supply but certainly if I can get any more bags I will continue to distribute them through the district. AYES: ALL

LETTER SENT: MAY 10, 2016

Councilman Torres, supported by Councilman Higgs, moved to send a letter to the Department of Public Works requesting a list of the trees that are to be cut in the city of Hammond, especially in the 2nd District.

AYES: ALL

LETTER SENT: MAY 10, 2016

NEW AND UNFINISHED BUSINESS cont.

Councilman Torres - There seems to be, at least I think there is, a problem with trees in the city. There's a waiting list of two to three years that people have to wait for trees in the parkways and on easements to be cut. I need some advise on how to find a way to talk to the administration and the council and see if there's a way we can expedite this process. Right now I know there's some problems before but this is a new era and maybe we can find some ways to speed up that process. I was thinking two or three weeks is a long time to wait not along two and three years. I don't know if takes a meeting, a special meeting, whatever you suggest.

Councilman Higgs - Just for some clarity as it relates to trees. In my particular district I personally paid a service to do some of the trees. Unfortunately, I don't know what the problem is. We have an ordinance on the book that I have brought up, introduced, it was second by this council, as it relates to trees and debris on property. Even with the property on 164th, I got a letter in regards to that responding back to it the trees being removed, to this day it hasn't been cut. When the demolition company comes and demo's the property it should be their responsibility to take the trees out as well. For whatever reason it's not happening in my district. There are a number of properties that are either on tax sales, that's throughout the city, either they're on tax sales or either they're just people that walked away from their property and left it there and the county owns the property now and the trees are just sitting there. Something needs to be done. A mechanism needs to be put in place an ordinance needs to be put on the books where immediately, you know, these people are fined or given a citation for not cleaning up the property. If they own it, put a lien on the property. I mean that's the proper procedure. Put a lien on the property and make them responsible for cleaning up the dead trees. It's ridiculous, right across the street on Sohl Avenue, which is your district, Councilman, there's a tree been sitting there at least two years. Right across the street from the Post Office. It's so embarrassing. We need to find a ordinance and make it enforceable so that these trees are cleaned up throughout the entire city. Whatever needs to be done, I'm willing to help you 110%. I've been crying out for having these trees removed off vacant lots for quite some time. So, that's one way you could address it and hopefully we had one ordinance on the book and you could research it with Berger and try to come up with additional ordinances in addressing it. That's the only way I can see it happening and if you want to request the Mayor maybe give some casino funding and assist with the project, maybe that could happen.

Councilman Torres - I agree with Councilman Higgs because I have a few lots in the 2nd District that also need some cleaning up, not only with debris but fallen trees and dead trees and so forth. If we can talk to the administration with the Mayor that's fine. If it takes additional money or I don't know what the solution is but something needs to be done because we shouldn't have to wait two or three years.

Councilwoman Venecz - Councilman Higgs when is your clean up?

Councilman Higgs - We had clean up this weekend. I distributed bags and you're more than welcome, Councilwoman Venecz, to donate bags some bags so I can distribute them throughout the district.

Councilwoman Venecz - So it's this weekend.

NEW AND UNFINISHED BUSINESS cont.

Councilman Higgs - This past weekend and all week long. If we get additional bags I'll distribute them but there

are a number of places throughout the district that needs cleaning up. So I'm looking for volunteers, anyone who's willing to help out, I'll appreciate it.

PUBLIC EXPRESSION

None

Councilman Higgs, supported by Councilman Spitale, moved to adjourn.

AYES: ALL

Janet Venecz, Vice President /s/
Hammond Common Council
ATTEST:

Robert J. Golec, City Clerk /s/

Time: 6:35 pm

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Minutes approved at the Hammond Common Council meeting on May 23, 2016.