

The regular meeting of the Hammond Common Council of the City of Hammond, Lake County, Indiana was held on July 25, 2022 in the Hammond City Council Chambers and was available to be viewed at gohammond on Facebook, gohammond.tv live and per Zoom.

Council President Dave Woerpel presided.

Council Coordinator Carmen I. Balboa facilitated.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE was recited by all.

Invocation by Councilwoman Alexander

ROLL CALL

PHYSICALLY PRESENT: Alexander, Spitale, Venecz, Kalwinski, Torres, Emerson, Rakos, Woerpel

ELECTRONICALLY PRESENT PER ZOOM: Tyler

ABSENT: None

TOTAL: 9

MAYOR'S ADDRESS

Mayor McDermott - Great to see everybody. I want to give my report for this meeting. I wanted to talk a little bit about the Festival of the Lakes. We just finished it last week, actually a week and a half ago, eight days ago, excuse me. Just a real quick summery of how the Fest went. Wednesday night was Darrius Rucker, that was a great night. I think it proved that country can do well at the Festival of the Lakes. Which is nice. We did two years in a row with country acts on Wednesday night, they both drew well. Because of the new security system we implemented this year, if you guys noticed, if you went through the front gate you noticed that we had like airport screening security. It's the first year we used that. It was through partnership with the School City of Hammond. I want to thank Superintendent Miller for helping us with that equipment. It allowed us to quickly scan the audience to allow them through quickly. If you remember last year on Latin Night, the line going down the street. It was still going down the street on Saturday, it was a lot shorter and a lot quicker though, the trip through the line. So, I want to thank Scott Miller and the School City of Hammond for loaning us the equipment to screen quickly. One of the great things about that security system is that it also gives us estimates. Pretty accurate estimates on how many people attended the show. It could tell you how many people passed through there. So we had about 13K people that attended Darrius Rucker. Which was a great night for country night. Thursday, Counting Crows. It was interesting, as Mayor, on Wednesday night when we had country music super star, alternative music superstar, Darrius Rucker playing in the north part of our city, we also had the Thursday band, the Counting Crows, playing in the Civic Center in a jam session that night because they hadn't been together in months. They were playing on their back up equipment. Their primary equipment is in Europe right now. So they wanted to make sure they got together and the Park Department offered up the Civic Center. It was a really cool night though with Counting Crows playing down here at the Civic Center and Darrius Rucker playing up north. Counting Crows did well. Probably a smaller night. I think, actually, it was our smallest night of all the four. We had about 8K people attend that show. Friday with Lynard Skynard was the night we were dealing with weather. This was our top selling act at the time so we expected huge crowds. It was a big Rock and Roll Hall of Fame type of band. Friday night we were expecting big things. Then, of course, we were

*Prepared by
Robert J. Golec
Hammond City Clerk*

MAYOR'S ADDRESS cont.

Mayor McDermott cont. - dealing with weather that day. If you remember, that Friday was rainy pretty much all day. Then it started to slow up as we got closer to the show. Then another side of me starts coming out because we take out insurance policies at the Fest that would refund us significant amounts of money if it rains more than a quarter inch between 6 and 10 p.m. So I was probably the only person in the park, maybe me, Kevin and Megan, who were rooting for rain that night. A little bit more rain, we had .15 inches of rain. So, we were just a little bit short and it would have been a big recovery had it rained one tenth of an inch more, but it did not. Which was good news for the crowd because they got the show in. The crowd turned out to be significant. However, we don't feel that we got 100% of what we were gonna get in ideal circumstances. But, when you have outdoor shows, that's what you take a chance with. Still, we had around 13-14K people attend that show, which was a great show, by the way. I'm not complaining. Saturday was Rick Ross, on Saturday I was warned by our ticket agent that Saturday's concert started selling like crazy on Saturday. Like crazy. Rick Ross, on Saturday, passed up Lynard Skynard and then continued selling tickets on top of that in what became the biggest seller of the Festival of the Lakes 2022, Rick Ross. So we were starting to anticipate the type of turn out we hoped to get the night before. I think by all projections, most people were surprised with Saturday night. It was the biggest crowd by far. I compare it to last year's Latin night, that big. It was jam packed. I took a video that was viewed, excuse me, Marissa's watching, Marissa took a video from the upper deck on the VIP area that I borrowed and shared and 50K people viewed that video. It was a pretty awesome display. We had 20K+ in the park that night. Many of them you know, keep in mind that if they go through Hammond Police Security they could go in the carnival and never go on the venue, so we're estimating. But, I'd say, most of them were in the venue that night. It was packed. I think that might have been one of our biggest nights ever. We did well that night. We sold a lot of booze. We had very few incidents. It was a great night. Weather was perfect. It went really well. Saturday, Los Originales de San Juan, that was probably our smallest, well, it was bigger than Counting Crows. It wasn't as big as last year. Still was a good time. Sunday is always a family night. There was a lot of families there. It was wonderful. Very few incidents. We had 10K+ for that night. Overall, Festival of the Lakes went great. A lot of hard work done by a lot of people, including your Council President who was out there volunteering his time by the way. I appreciate that Council President Woerpel. Hundreds of hours put in. I think the staff is becoming very proficient at this. It was Aileen Ibarra's first time as Special Events Coordinator. I think she did great. So, I want to thank Eileen, and the Park Department, and the Port Authority, and everybody that worked so hard. My office staff, Kevin, Eva, Sharon, Alex, Megan and her staff, there's so many people that worked so hard to put the Festival of the Lakes on. I just want to say thank you to everybody that helped. I think most people had a great time. This year I got a lot of real positive comments. Now, on to business. I'm sure you all read, in the newspaper, about in the early morning hours last Saturday the Hammond Police and Fire Department were involved, near 80/94 and Harris Avenue underpass looking for a naked, intoxicated female who jumped from the Interstate down into the weeds. This was eastbound. She jumped off over the edge of the highway, a fifteen foot drop into the weeds near River Dr. and Harrison. Fire Department using the approved blocking technique was on the highway looking for this woman, as well as Engine No. 7 protecting the scene while State Troopers and Hammond Police Department look for the woman in the weeds between the Interstate and River Dr., basically. Basically the haunted house building area over there. A Dodge Charger that was coming eastbound believed ... there was a State Trooper who was coming from Torrence eastbound to the scene with lights and sirens activated. The trooper was coming at about 110 miles an hour towards the scene, also at that same time, coincidentally, was a Dodge Charger doing approximately 130 miles an hour eastbound coming towards the scene. The person in the Charger sees the State Trooper, believing the State Trooper was chasing him. He wasn't, he was

*Prepared by
Robert J. Golec
Hammond City Clerk*

MAYOR'S ADDRESS cont.

Mayor McDermott cont. - going to the scene to find the naked woman who had jumped off the bridge. Then, unfortunately, impact at basically on 80/94 hit the Hammond Fire Truck Engine No. 7 so hard that debris flew from the eastbound lanes into the westbound lanes. Went through somebody's windshield. Upon impact the Charger crashed into the Fire Engine and also ran into another car on the side of the road, pinning a State Trooper between them causing a leg injury to the State Trooper. All Hammond Fire Department personnel were inside the Engine at point of impact, including the driver who was stepping out, saw the lights coming, and hopped quickly back in just before impact. That could have saved his life, quite frankly. Nobody was killed, thank God. Nobody was injured, thank God. If not for the Hammond Fire Department, Engine No. 7, using a trained blocking technique, angled on the highway, the Charger would have driven into the Indiana State Police personnel at the scene and who knows what could have happened. I imagine that would have been a really bad situation. Thankfully, everybody's safe. A couple minor injuries. Bad news for the City of Hammond, Engine No. 7's been totaled. The frame has bent. It's a \$600K fire engine, insured by the City of Hammond. So, we lost an engine that day in the line of duty. Moving on, if you have any question I'm free to take any. If you want to wait until the end, that's fine also. I want to thank the Council for the last meeting for suspending the rules and passing the Noah Inman gun ordinance. That increases civil penalties and allows the city to pursue civil nuisance actions against persons who needlessly and recklessly discharge firearms within the city limits. I want to thank Noah's mother for coming out the last meeting and being here for the passage of the ordinance and thank you to the Council for passing it in one meeting. Since it's passage ... oh, one point that got a lot of real positive publicity across the state of Indiana, we've been contacted by numerous municipalities across the region requesting a copy of the ordinance and they plan on doing something similar in their own cities and towns. So, thank you for cooperating with the administration and getting that passed. Since the last meeting, unfortunately, we have a couple situations that came up and I'm gonna go ahead and detail right now, and I'm gonna pursue, on behalf of the City of Hammond, civil nuisance actions against a couple of situations. 241 173rd, a man who was mad at his wife fired a gun into the air for no reason. Officers found evidence that the gun was fired in the air at 241 173rd St. and we plan to file a civil action against the owner of that house for violating that civil ordinance. 935 Drackert St., a complaining witness indicated people were shooting outside near 935 Drackert. Eight casings were found on the scene. Investigation is ongoing to determine who and from what home the people are involved. Once it's been determined a suit will be filed in this case. I know there's a lot of people watching right now, I want to let everybody know, because since this Noah Inman law has been passed by this Council and signed by the Mayor, I want to put everybody on notice now that not only will you potentially face civil reckless felony charges but also civil penalties and money judgements against anybody found to have violated this ordinance. So, I thank you for passing it and we're following the rules of the ordinance and proceeding on a couple cases right now. I want to give a quick update, I had lunch with Council members today. I was asked to give a quick update on the YMCA project. It's still being negotiated. This project has taken on a much larger magnitude than when we first talked to the public about and when we first talked to you. We're still, we, the City of Hammond, still we pegged \$10 million in total for this project, which will end up being probably 1/6th or 1/7th of the total project costs. So, the project right now is north of \$50 million, north of \$60 million, it's a big project. It's sort of a holistic approach we're looking at over there, including the old Walmart, obviously the sports center and the parking situation there, along with the outlots with like the Subway and the Dominos in that area over there. We're taking a holistic approach at the whole are because the parking is going to be in such demand once we're done with this project. We're shooting for an October 15th deadline. Subject to market issues. We're currently working on traffic signal, water retention, parking layout, etc. We'll be the largest YMCA in the Midwest when completed, including a nice

*Prepared by
Robert J. Golec
Hammond City Clerk*

MAYOR’S ADDRESS cont.

Mayor McDermott cont. - outdoor water park. So, that’s an update on that project. In the last meeting I talked about the overruns, I promised Councilman Rakos I’d get him a copy of that. I have it on my computer. I tried to text it to you, it didn’t work. I’m available for any questions you have. Thank you, I’m sorry for the long report.

Council President Woerpel - Just to reiterate something you said, after that last Council meeting. I heard from Council Presidents in five communities in Lake County that wanted that ordinance so they can mirror it like you said, too.

Mayor McDermott - I appreciate that. That idea for that ordinance came from our Law Department. Si I want to thank Kevin, our Corporate Counsel, Kristen Cantrell, and everybody in the Law Department for bringing good ideas forward, and we ran with it. Obviously, the Council thought it was a good idea as well because you passed it in one meeting, so thank you, I appreciate it. Any other question? Thank you everybody.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Councilman Spitale, supported by Councilman Emerson, moved to approve the minutes of July 11, 2022.

ROLL CALL VOTE (minutes)

AYES: Alexander, Spitale, Venecz, Kalwinski, Torres, Tyler, Emerson, Rakos, Woerpel

NAYS: None

ABSENT: None

Motion carried 9/0/0 MINUTES APPROVED

Councilman Rakos, supported by Councilwoman Venecz, moved to approve the claims from July 6, 2022 through July 20, 2022. Claim #4302 through claim #4564, in the amount of \$32,642,960.37.

Councilman Rakos, supported by Councilwoman Venecz, moved to amend in claim:

#4565 School City of Hammond Common Council \$1,500.00

ROLL CALL VOTE (amendment)

AYES: Alexander, Spitale, Venecz, Kalwinski, Torres, Tyler, Emerson, Rakos, Woerpel

NAYS: None

ABSENT: None

Motion carried 9/0/0 CLAIMS AMENDED

ROLL CALL VOTE (as amended)

AYES: Alexander, Spitale, Venecz, Kalwinski, Torres, Tyler, Emerson, Rakos, Woerpel

NAYS: None

ABSENT: None

Motion carried 9/0/0 CLAIMS APPROVED (as amended)

*Prepared by
Robert J. Golec
Hammond City Clerk*

PUBLIC HEARINGS

None

COMMUNICATIONS

Councilman Kalwinski- Just one announcement. I got a notice from Pulaski Park Neighborhood Association. They will conduct a meeting tomorrow at 6:30 pm at the Hammond Mohawks at 141st Calumet Avenue. Thank you.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Capital Improvement Board - Councilwoman Venecz - Met on Monday, July 18th, we approved \$30,000 for various pavement markings through First Group Engineering. We also approved \$57,058 for Hohman Avenue Phase One for additional sewer work. The next meeting will be held August 1st. The work study session will be held at 4:30 and the meeting will follow at 5:00 pm. Thank you.

Community and Crime Watch Committee - Councilwoman Venecz - Upcoming meetings:

Wed., August 10th ; Community Watch at Mt. Zion Pleasant View Plaza; 1:00 p.m.

Thur., August 18th; Hessville Crime Watch; Jean Shepard; 6:00 p.m.

Thur., August 11th; Whiting Robertsdale; Mascot Hall of Fame; 6:30pm

Councilwoman Venecz- Uh, coming up on August 2nd, when Councilman Tyler would have had his meeting, is National Night Out here in the City of Hammond. Uh, it's from 5 to 8pm Tuesday, August 2nd, at the Wolf Lake Splash Pad. The event is a national event, obviously. It's designed to heighten crime and drug prevention awareness, generate support for, and participation in, local crime efforts, and sends a message to criminals letting them know neighborhoods are organized and fighting back. This is a great opportunity to come out and meet some of your fellow residents and some of your neighbors, even perhaps. This year, we are collecting bleach, laundry soap, dog, and cat treats, and fabric softeners for the City of Hammond Animal Control. And with that donation, you will receive a free hot dog, chips, and pop. So, again, that's National Night Out on Tuesday, August 2nd from 5 to 8pm at the Wolf Lake Splash Pad. Thank you.

Councilwoman Alexander- Myself and Councilman Tyler have been meeting with the School City regularly and we want to encourage the residents that have students in the school city to participate in the Back-to-School celebration on August 2nd from 11 to 3pm where they'll be giving out school supplies. Um, they'll have games, haircuts, immunizations. They'll have vendors and so much more. So we as a council, we've been working with them and submitted donations to be able to do more and be more in unity with the School City this year. So, thank you for you guys donations.

ORDINANCE 3RD READING- FINAL PASSAGE

None

INTRODUCTION OF ORDINANCES

None

RESOLUTION

None

*Prepared by
Robert J. Golec
Hammond City Clerk*

NEW AND UNFINISHED BUSINESS

None

PUBLIC EXPRESSION

Ruth Mores- A week or so ago, Pete Torres contacted me after his friend, Ken Rosek, mentioned to him that he was concerned about how the Hessville Railroad Bridge might cut in and destroy the ancient Tolston Dunes. Pete knows I'm a part of the Hammond Historical Society and asked for my input. I contacted Professor Kenneth Schoon from Indiana University, who has presented programs for the Historical Society about his books over many years. I have passed out the map which is inside the book, which shows everything. And his email back to me requesting his thoughts on the railroad bridge on Parrish Avenue and how it might affect the surrounding area. Professor Schoon has offered to be an impartial consultant for this project.

Ken Rosek- Hessville has been known as a neighborhood nestled in the center of the industrial heartland. Yet at the same time, immersed in nature. Hessville has two remaining natural laries left. One is the ecosystem known as the Gibson Woods. The city administration thinks the Gibson Woods is enough nature for us and has said as much on various occasions. The second area in Hessville, the last unprotected remnant of the last remnant of the High Tolleston Dunes and shoreline known as Briar East Dune Woodlands. We have various options to get over those train tracks, but only one was explored by the city.

George Stoya- In response to that guy's last question, who thinks that it will do this and do that? I think it's an open question. What I don't like about some of the advocates of the opposition to that bridge, is that they're so sure of themselves, and I don't think anything is that certain one way or the other. I was stunned to hear the mayor a few minutes ago talk about a project that was earmarked I guess for one of a better term or 10 million and now is going to go upwards of maybe 70 million are we that rich I mean is that 70 million price to us if it is what's the cost when we get into bonding interest rates yada, yada, yada. Do we have that kind of money, is there any way to get this stuff on a referendum? I don't have enough information really to argue about it

Mayor McDermott- In response to Mr. Stoya stating incorrect facts. It was the city's responsibility in a \$70 million dollar project, is \$10 million dollars. The project keeps going higher in cost. That's money donated to the City of Hammond that keeps going higher. Our commitment remains the same. I want to make sure the Council and the public that heard George Stoya is aware that he was spouting untruthful facts. So, I just want to point that out. Thank you.

Cathy Perry- Read the letter into the record. Attached to minutes.

Councilman Torres, supported by Councilman Tyler, moved to suspend the rules.

ROLL CALL (suspend rules)

AYES: Alexander, Spitale, Venecz, Kalwinski, Torres, Tyler, Emerson, Rakos, Woerpel

NAYS: None

ABSENT: None

Motion carried

9/0/0

RULES SUSPENDED

*Prepared by
Robert J. Golec
Hammond City Clerk*

PUBLIC EXPRESSION cont.

Councilman Torres- You mentioned that a professor from Indiana University is an expert on this dunes subject... Ms. Mores, yes, if you please. Is an expert on the dunes, so called Tolleston Dunes, that run through a 169th ...

Ruth Mores- Yes, that's what those maps show.

Councilman Torres- Okay, and he's willing to give us advice on whether that area still has any historical significance?

Ruth Mores- Yes.

Councilman Torres- In the process of saving it. So, he's going to offer his expertise to this council. You know, we voted on that in 2020, I believe, a couple of years back, and of course, it went through the council. I don't know if it's going to come up again in front of the Council. I became familiar with this when Mr. Rosek kept appearing before the Council and brought it up. That's when I became interested in it. But how is he going to do this? Is he going to appear before the council or?

Ruth Mores- Well, it kind of depends, and that's why I attached his letter to what I passed out stating he is willing to be an independent consultant. So, that would be assuming that the council wants to hear different things or pose questions to him. We haven't got that far yet. It's there that he said that he will do it because he is the expert of this area, being the professor of what he's talking about the dunes and how it's been worked, how it's been saved, how it's already been torn down in Gary, and different things. And if there could be a comprise, that's actually, again, what he's saying. So, I haven't posed him with anything, but I'm sure that we could bring something up.

Councilman Torres- Okay, and you also told me he's going to be in the Hammond Public Library on September 10th?

Ruth Mores- Yes, September 10th. He is going to be doing another one of his programs for his brand new book, which is about the Pullman area, and it's about Pullman, the Man, the Railroad, and the area but he's going to be available there. He does sell his other books when he does his presentation. So, if anybody is interested in meeting him or buying some of his books, he would be available at the Hammond Public Library in the historical program on September 10th at 10am.

Councilman Torres- Okay, and he'll probably be available to answer any questions?

Ruth Mores- Oh, sure yes. He always stays after his presentation. If you have any questions formed directly, then, that would be a good time to get a hold of him.

Councilman Torres- Okay, thank you so much.

Ruth Mores- Sure, and I can send you the information about that meeting that he's going to be attending.

Councilman Torres- Thank you.

PUBLIC EXPRESSION cont.

Councilwoman Venecz, supported by Councilman Rakos, moved to return to regular order of business.

ROLL CALL (motion carried)

AYES: Alexander, Spitale, Venecz, Kalwinski, Torres, Tyler, Emerson, Rakos, Woerpel

NAYS: None

ABSENT: None

Motion carried

9/0/0

RETURN TO REGULAR ORDER
OF BUSINESS

Councilwoman Alexander, supported by Councilwoman Venecz, moved to adjourn.

ROLL CALL VOTE (adjourn meeting)

AYES: Alexander, Spitale, Venecz, Kalwinski, Torres, Tyler, Emerson, Rakos, Woerpel

NAYS: None

ABSENT: None

Motion carried

9/0/0

MEETING ADJOURNED

2022 HAMMOND COMMON COUNCIL ATTENDANCE RECORD OF
ELECTRONIC AND PHYSICAL PRESENCE

	Jan		Feb		Mar		Apr		May		Jun		Jul		Aug		Sep		Oct		Nov		Dec	
	10	24	14	28	14	28	11	25	9	23	13	27	11	25	8	22	12	26	10	24	14	28	12	26
Katrina Alexander	E	P	P	P	P	E	P	P	P	P	P	P	P											
Dan Spitale	E	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P											
Janet Venecz	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	E	P	P	P	P											
Mark Kalwinski	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	E	P	P	P	P											
Pete Torres	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P											
Barry Tyler	E	P	P	P	E	E	E	P	E	P	P	E	P											
Bill Emerson	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P											
Scott Rakos	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	E	P	P	E	P	P											
Dave Woerpel	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P											
Initials	R/JG	R/JG	R/JG	R/JG	R/JG	R/JG	R/JG	R/JG	R/JG	R/JG	R/JG	R/JG	R/JG											

E=ELECTRONIC

P=PHYSICALLY

PRESENT

A=ABSENT

If the member qualifies for an exemption from the "Consecutive - 50" requirements, draw a circle around the E for that meeting/ member.

ATTEST:

Robert J. Golec

Robert J. Golec, City Clerk

Time: 6:40

cb/dw

Dave Woerpel
Dave Woerpel, President
Hammond Common Council

Prepared by
Robert J. Golec
Hammond City Clerk

December 5, 2021

Dear Mayor McDermott and the Common Council,

Gibson Woods Wild Ones is a local chapter of national not-for-profit organization. Our chapter is based out of Gibson Woods Nature Preserve. Our mission is to promote environmentally friendly, sound landscaping to preserve biodiversity through the preservation, restoration, and establishment of native plant communities.

Although the Briar East Dune Woodland is degraded, it still provides so many benefits. The native plants provide vital habitat for native and migratory species. This area mitigates noise and air pollution from 80/94. These woodlands sequester carbon and absorb large amounts of rainwater. If this area is paved, this water will have to go somewhere else, probably into someone's basement.

These woods are a small oasis of nature in an urban environment. Every day, we walk and work surrounded by pavement and buildings, by roads and traffic. It would be wonderful if we could protect this small area of trees and sand, birds and butterflies and native plants that is surrounded by apartments and businesses. Besides the practical and important realities of sequestering carbon and mitigating flooding, people just need more nature in their lives.

The trains are an annoyance, but there is an alternate, more pragmatic, route for the bridge that would not entail leveling the woods and dune, which would be a win-win for the city and its residents. There are many sites where additional houses could be built which would not destroy habitat.

Preserving the Briar East Dune Woodlands could be part of your legacy of protecting the environment, mitigating climate change, saving wildlife and offering citizens a welcome walk in the woods.

Sincerely,

Kim Moor
Gibson Woods Wild Ones President

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Sincerely,

Kim Moor
Gibson Woods Wild Ones President