

The regular meeting of the Hammond Common Council of the City of Hammond, Lake County, Indiana was held on May 8, 2023 in the Hammond City Council Chambers and was available to be viewed at gohammond on Facebook, gohammond.tv live and per Zoom.

Council President Scott Rakos presided.

City Clerk Robert J. Golec facilitated.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE was recited by all.

Invocation by Councilwoman Alexander.

ROLL CALL

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

ELECTRONICALLY PRESENT PER ZOOM: Kalwinski, Tyler

ABSENT: None

TOTAL: 9

MAYOR'S ADDRESS

Chief of Staff Phil Taillon - I wanted to start with talking about the letter that Mayor sent to all of you in regards to the Capital Improvements Board. Mayor Tom asking Button to put together a report listing the projects that had been done since the inception of the Board and the breakdown of the districts where they were performed. I know, as many of you know, the reason the Board was put together initially was to take on some of the higher cost projects and some of the projects that actually take multi years to get accomplished. As you saw on the map and list you received, the Board has expended over \$16 million to date. With projects that were done in every district in the city, which we certainly view as an accomplishment. But I also think it's important to note that this has not been a perfect process. I have spoken to many of you about thoughts and changes and things that you'd like to see happen, and I think we need to continuously work towards improvement until the Mayor and the Council are both 100% satisfied. But at least through this letter, we can definitely say that we have accomplished many projects throughout the city that may not have been possible without the creation of the CIB. Mayor and I, along with our administration, will continue to work with you on making sure we continuously work on the CIB's overall impact and success. So, looking forward to that. I believe I talked to the board previously, after the Gaming Advisory Commission completed this years grant process. But just as a recap, we gave out a little over \$520 thousand this year to not for profits that are located in the city of Hammond or that service the city of Hammond residents. But after we did a little research, we also realized that through Mayor Tom's administration we have, to date, we have given out over \$11 million to the not for profits that we just spoke of. So, we're very proud of that. We know how important these not for profits are and the impact they have on the city of Hammond and that without this commission, some of them wouldn't be able to function as well as they do. So, I just wanted to bring that up about the larger number that we're aware of. Also wanted to personally thank Council President Rakos, Councilwoman Alexander and Councilwoman Venecz for serving on this years Commission. You may have seen the article in the newspaper a couple days ago in regards to Memorial Park. This has been a project we've been working on for quite a while but we're excited that the Redevelopment Commission has issued an RFP for the project to move forward. We are potentially looking at

MAYOR'S ADDRESS cont.

Chief of Staff Phil Taillon cont.- two or three larger lots which could be used for a Senior Housing Project potentially some duplexes as well as thirty six single family lots so that if there are families looking to build new homes in this district, this will give them the opportunity to do so. We're very excited about it. Design is underway. So, obviously, we'll keep you posted as things progress. But I definitely wanted to bring that up to everybody today. Lastly, this Saturday, May 13th, we have two events that I wanted to bring up. The first is the MLK Park basketball courts reopening. Which is gonna be at 10:00 a.m. right here at MLK Park. This event has been rescheduled several times, as I'm sure you've seen in your emails. However, this Saturday, 10:00 a.m., rain or shine, it's gonna happen. So I hope some, if not all of you, can come out to help celebrate the reopening. We also have the Annual Flower Giveaway which is this Saturday, which will be at the Jean Shepherd Center from 9:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. Everybody who wants to come to get their free flowers will need to present some identification. And, of course, it's only good until supplies last. So that's my report. I'm happy to answer any questions that you may have.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Councilman Spitale, supported by Councilman Emerson, moved to approve the minutes of April 24, 2023 and place on file. AYES: ALL

APPROVAL OF CLAIMS

Councilwoman Venecz, supported by Councilman Woerpel, moved to approve the claims from April 19, 2023 through May 03, 2023. Claim #2625 through #2806, inclusive. In the amount of \$2,559,458.59

PUBLIC HEARING

23-11 An Ordinance Creating a New Fund (Fund #2476) and to Appropriate Funds within the City of Hammond for the Regional Economic Acceleration & Development Initiative (READI) Grant

No One Spoke

COMMUNICATIONS

Councilwoman Alexander- I would just like to say Happy Teacher's Appreciation Week to all the teachers throughout our city. Um, this week until Friday is Teacher Appreciation Week. If you know a teacher, see a teacher, just tell them thank you for the job that they're doing.

Council President Rakos- HC3 wanted to let everyone know that we had another successful Hessville cleanup. We had a lot of good participation from adults this time and concentrated on areas around bridges and got a lot of trash out of those empty lots around Michigan Avenue. So, thank you to all who participated.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Capital Improvement Board - Councilman Woerpel- Did not meet on May 1st. But I would like to submit the report that Phil gave out. Thank you.

Council as a Whole Committee - Councilwoman Venecz - Brought out 23-11.

Council as a Whole Committee - Councilman Kalwinski - Brought out 23-12.

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

- Community Watch at Mt. Zion Pleasant view Plaza; Will not meet until August.
- East Ham'd Pullman Crime Watch; Tues., May. 16th ; 6 p.m.; Ophelia Steen Center.
- Edison Community Watch; Edison School; Will not meet until September.
- Tues, June 06th ;Harrison Park Crime Watch; VFW; 6;00pm
- Hessville C.W.; Thur. May. 18th ; 6 p.m.; Jean Shepherd Center
- Irving Community Watch; Will not meet until September.
- South Hohman Neighborhood Watch; Will not meet until October.
- Whiting-Robertsdale C.W.; Thur., May. 11th ; 6:30 p.m.; Calumet College

Councilwoman Venecz- There is a police memorial on May 25, 2023 at 2 pm. At the police station. Uh, please come and honor those who have given their life in service for our safety.

ORDINANCE 3RD READING FINAL PASSAGE-

23-11 An Ordinance Creating a New Fund (Fund #2476) and to Appropriate Funds within the City of Hammond for the Regional Economic Acceleration & Development Initiative (READI) Grant

Councilwoman Venecz, supported by Councilman Woerpel, moved for passage.

Councilwoman Venecz- This is a grant of \$500 million of ARP money that was given to the State of Indiana. The City of Hammond is among 60 other municipalities who will share in this grant. The appropriation will be \$2,720,000 for our downtown station. And \$100,000 for contractual and professional services related to the downtown station. Thank you.

ROLL CALL VOTE (23-11)

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

NAYS: None

ABSENT: None

Motion carried

9/0/0

ORDINANCE NO. 9600 PASSED

*Prepared by
Robert J. Golec
Hammond City Clerk*

ORDINANCE 3RD READING - FINAL PASSAGE cont.

23-12 An Ordinance Reclassifying Certain Lands in the City of Hammond for Zoning Purposes and Amending Ordinance No. 8514 (An Ordinance Establishing a Zoning Plan for the City of Hammond including the Regulations and Maps to Administer the Zoning Plan in Order to Provide for Orderly Growth and Development Within the City, all in Accordance with the Comprehensive/Land Use Plan, as Amended) for Property commonly known as: 2201 Calumet Avenue

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

Councilman Kalwinski- This ordinance has to do with rezoning the Clark Athletic Complex from S2 Institutional District to R1 Single Family Residential District in order to allow the construction to 37 single-family homes.

ROLL CALL VOTE (23-12)

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

NAYS: None

ABSENT: None

Motion carried

9/0/0

ORDINANCE NO. 9601 PASSED

INTRODUCTION OF ORDINANCES

None

RESOLUTIONS

None

NEW AND UNFINISHED BUSINESS

Councilman Woerpel, supported by Councilwoman Venecz, moved to reschedule the Common Council meetings set for May 22, 2023 to May 23, 2023. Because of the possibility that three of us won't be able to make that meeting.

AYES: ALL

PUBLIC EXPRESSION

Ken Rosek- I just want you to know I feel great. Um, what did we learn from the INDOT public hearing? We learned that the underpass at Grand Avenue Crossing would cost less than the bridge. That is not what the administration has been saying for years. They were way off by millions of dollars. The underpass is cheaper than the bridge and solves the whole problem without the collateral damage. This hearing revealed this project does nothing to solve the public safety hazard of kids getting to school. It was revealed by the media and the residents. You guys ignored it you all ignored it. We showed you videos, photos, maps. You would still be acting like it didn't matter if it wasn't for the headlines. We had a School City of Hammond Board Member get up there and blame the children and parents. They were once again not included in the public notice area. Just like we saw on the city survey. Anything east of Grand Avenue was excluded. There is no reason for that,

*Prepared by
Robert J. Golec
Hammond City Clerk*

PUBLIC EXPRESSION cont.

Ken Rosek cont. - especially when the number one justification for this bridge was to solve their problem. Now trying to salvage this boondoggle make them walk up 50 steps up and down both sides. During winter and whatever but this is the token solution you come up to salvage this boondoggle bridge. The vast majority of kids directly affected by this project are minorities. Did council members do anything to ensure their voices were heard? No. Nothing. We need a proper solution in Hessville.

Tj Gaertig- Since the last council meeting, the people have spoken, and the consensus is clear. Um, anyone attended the INDOT public hearing? The underpass is proven to be the only valuable solution. Kenny Edwards from the Smart Transportation Union came out to say that there are ways our community can stop the problem of block crossings altogether. The US Secretary of Transportation Pete Buttigieg, has pledged his support to us and assuring safe passage across Hammond rail Crossings. On April 27, the Federal Railroad Administration issued a formal safety advisory calling on railroads to review their operation of long trains and their effects on communities regarding blocked crossings. A new bill that is moving through Congress called the Railway Safety Act 2023 will replace new restrictions on train length. Since the public hearing, there has only been one parked train in Hessville. And it was not even long enough to block any crossings. We need a community wide push with federal government and the media's help to reign in the problem of blocked crossings. The only viable solution is an underpass, not a bridge. Thank you.

Councilwoman Alexander, supported by Councilman Woerpel, moved to adjourn.

AYES: ALL

2023 HAMMOND COMMON COUNCIL ATTENDANCE RECORD OF
ELECTRONIC AND PHYSICAL PRESENCE

	Jan		Feb		Mar		Apr		May		Jun		Jul		Aug		Sep		Oct		Nov		Dec	
	9	23	13	27	13	27	10	24	8	23	12	26	10	24	14	28	11	25		23	13	27	4	
Katrina Alexander	E	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P															
Dan Spitale	E	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P															
Janet Venecz	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P															
Mark Kalwinski	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	E	P															
Pete Torres	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P															
Barry Tyler	E	P	P	E	P	P	E	E	P															
Bill Emerson	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P															
Dave Woerpel	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P															
Scott Rakos	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P															
Initials	RJG	RJG	RJG	RJG	RJG	RJG	RJG	RJG	RJG															

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.

Barry Tyler, Vice President
Hammond Common Council

ATTEST:

Robert J. Golec, City Clerk

Time: 6:30 P.M.
cb/dw

*Prepared by
Robert J. Golec
Hammond City Clerk*