

The regular meeting of the Hammond Common Council of the City of Hammond, Lake County, Indiana was held on December 12, 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.

Assistant Council Coordinator Darrell White facilitated.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE was recited by all.

A Moment of Silence was observed.

ROLL CALL

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

ELECTRONICALLY PRESENT PER ZOOM: None

ABSENT: None

TOTAL: 9

MAYOR'S ADDRESS

Mayor McDermott- Hi, thanks council. It's good to see you for my first address of December. I know you have 3rd and final reading on the heavy truck ordinance today. Uh, obviously, the city administration supports that ordinance and hopes for its passage. We are working on a process right now. I know the councils heard this before but just in case for the people that weren't paying attention to the last council meeting, a color-coded system to make it easier on the truck drivers that are driving through our city as well as on the police officers that are ticketing these truck drivers driving through our city to make it completely apparent when you're on the truck route and when you're no longer on the truck route. It's a color coded system. We're working on the signage right now. We're literally talking about thousands of signs. We're going to hang around throughout the City of Hammond to make it apparent when you're on the heavy truck route, when you're not on the heavy truck route. So, we're working on that and I appreciate the council for working together with the administration to help pass higher fines for the semi drivers that are off the route. Um, we think this ordinance goes part and parcel to what we're doing with the color coded system. So, thank you for considering that. I know also up on 3rd and final today is the city issued ID cards. This is another administration ordinance that we hope that you pass. Uh, we've seen these city issued ID cards in other cities across Indiana. They particularly help with non-documented parts of our population as well as seniors or kids that don't have drivers licenses. Anybody where it's harder to get a drivers license. This is a municipal issued ID that will help them in the city of Hammond. Uh, it could help anywhere else if they want to see a government ID. It doesn't have the power of the driver's license does. It doesn't have to give you the chance... the opportunity to drive a car but it can help you prove your residence. Uh, and people will take advantage of this. Uh, we've already talked to Clerk Golec and the Clerk's office is going to assume responsibility for this program. Uh, presuming that it's approved by the council. So, I know Clerk Golec was excited about it, we're excited about it as well and I anticipate the council's support for this also. Uh, it didn't seem like it was very controversial. When it went through 1st and 2nd reading. So, thank you for that. Um, also on ARP 2.0, you guys are going through ARP 2.0. Real quick, ARP 2.0 is

*Prepared by
Robert J. Golec
Hammond City Clerk*

MAYOR'S ADDRESS cont.

Mayor McDermott cont.- finishing the Robertsdale lead remediation project with another \$1.5 million. Uh, repurposing firehouse No.2 money from the use of ARP money. Uh, we're going to pay for fire house No.2, which is located in the Robertsdale part of our city, with another mechanism. Uh, sort of how we paid for the firehouse in Hessville. We want to do a proposal similar to what we did in Hessville and originally we plan to use ARP money to finish that. So, we backed that money out of the project. Uh, and we're going to pay for that another way. Downtown Hammond reconstruction, which is second in the 3rd District, \$1.6 million extra to finish that project. That's the infrastructure project going on in Downtown Hammond. \$1.8 million extra for the new Calumet Avenue Pedestrian Bridge. It's located between Munster and Hammond in our 4th District. \$1.3 million extra for the reconstruction of JF Mahoney Dr. Didn't we back that one out Councilman Woerpel?

Council President Woerpel- That was Oxbow.

Mayor McDermott- I'm sorry you're right. \$1.3 million extra for the reconstruction of JF Mahoney Dr. \$400,000 extra for the local match for the new Hessville Bridge to get residents over the constantly stopped rail traffic that's located in the 5th & 6th District. \$1.5 million extra for Kennedy Avenue reconstruction in Downtown Hessville the project is occurring between basically Freddy's Steakhouse and 169th. I'm very happy to say \$2.1 million for the Memorial Park infrastructure. We've worked with Councilman Barry on including that as well. And I'm happy to report, Councilman Woerpel, that we got \$1 million dollars from INDOT funding through the Community Crossing Match Grant, which is 50% State, 50% Hammond funds, and we're going to use that money to reconstruct and resurface a 177th Street. Which is east of Carlson Drive, Buffalo Wild Wings. Um, so anyway, that's an update from there. Just to give you an idea of what we've been doing on the city side over the last couple of weeks since we last spoke. We're in the process of going through a reorganization in the Public Works Department. As the council is aware, Gary Gleason, Johnny Perez, the top two in the Public Works Department along with three of the District Supervisors took the buyout. I appreciate Councilwoman Katrina for recognizing Clyde Stout who tragically passed away last week after accepting the buyout and finally retiring from the City of Hammond. He was a veteran, a marine. He worked for our city for the better part of three decades and tragically died last week. He's been battling cancer, which is why he wanted to retire. Uh, it's very, very sad. But to get back to the larger point, we are going through a major change in leadership in public works. Uh, the top two spots, Gary Gleason, Johnny Perez, we've decided to replace. First off, the process we went through before we made any decisions, besides the knowledge I had to be Mayor for the last 20 years, besides the knowledge Phil Tallion's had as being Chief of Staff. We talked to Gary Gleason and Johnny Perez obviously, the outgoing bosses about who they thought should take over for him and we talked to every employee in public works and we took their advice and compiled all those notes and we came up with Felix Gonzales, who's an excellent young man. Uh, he has an opportunity if he does his job the right way to be in there a long time. He's excellent. He's in supervision already. We've agreed to tap him to be our new public work supervisor. And then number two in public works is going to be Rhonda Dowd, who is obviously a female. It's very unusual to have a female in this position. It's something I'm very proud of. Rhonda has been an excellent office manager in public works. So much so that she actually got her CDL and started driving routes. Actually, I don't think she has a CDL but she drives routes and plows snow she does it in the smaller truck so she doesn't have to do with the CDL. She's been doing this for years and she's an asset as far as on the streets as well. Uh, she knows so much about Public Works we thought it was appropriate for her.

*Prepared by
Robert J. Golec
Hammond City Clerk*

MAYOR'S ADDRESS cont.

Mayor McDermott- I thought she was going to end up in a district and as it turns out based on all of our interviews, she ended up taking over as number two. So, we have a young man, a 33 year old man, right around, and a young woman running public works. I think that's pretty cool. Both Hammond residents obviously. We still have three open supervisors spots. Now that we have our leadership team assembled, we're going to start filling the leadership spots very shortly. Obviously, I'll be in contact with the District Councilmen about your spots that are open. Right now, 3, 4, and 6 are open. So, we gave the other current supervisors the opportunity to change districts if they wanted to. I think they all wanted to stay put. So, we'll be filling 3, 4, and 6. I'll be in touch down the road on that. Also, I had a community meeting at Clark High School. Excuse me, in Robertsdale regarding the Clark High School Fields, the housing development project that we're holding. Uh, the meeting was around 100 people or so. It's around a 2- hour meeting. It was very productive. Uh, I thought it was really one of the best meetings we've had in a long time. I walked in and I felt one way, and we weren't set in stone, which is why we wanted to meet with the community. I walked in thinking I wanted one version. I walked out and all of us were convinced that there was another version that was better. It was literally, I thought it was a really productive meeting. So, we're moving forward with that project. We got the money set aside for that and ARP. We're excited about that. Uh, there's going to be a lot of green space and a lot of nice houses. If you're interested in building a new house, I'd suggest you hold off and look at what we're doing in Robertsdale right across from the Festival of Lakes Ground. Uh, we held our holiday party and our holiday parade. Um, things went really well at the Holiday Parade. I appreciate the council and my special events team for putting it together. The holiday party was excellent. I know a lot of the councilmen were there. The only thing that conflicted with our holiday parade was the US vs. Netherlands games. We still had a decent crowd, even though it was a big game happening simultaneously. Um, and last but not least. I'm sure you're aware that there was a large verdict entered against the City of Hammond from a case that emanated from a 1981 crime that occurred in our city. Uh, obviously, we're very aware of what's going on with this case. I've been talking to a lot of lawyers lately. Um, I want to remind the council that we had a case similar to this years ago where there was a large verdict entered against the city and we ended up negotiating for a much smaller amount. I'd like the council to know that we have excellent attorneys representing the city. Uh, we don't agree with the verdict against the city. We're going to appeal this verdict and I will keep you informed. If you want to get into the real details, obviously, I can keep you in the loop. Kevin and I can meet with you but we can't do it on the record as we're doing right now. Um, it's a large verdict that was entered against the city. If you have noticed, it was right around the \$25 million dollar verdict. That's obviously very large. Uh, something we don't agree with and we are appealing and doing everything that we can to defend the city. I want to point out that I was 11 years old when this occurred. Obviously, that was a long time ago for all of us. Some of us might not... some of us weren't even born at that time and we're defending a case that happened a long time ago but we have great lawyers representing the city and we're going to get great lawyers representing us on the appeal as well. It's a very serious matter and we're taking it very seriously and you know, obviously, you all know I'm an attorney. I think this is when it pays to have an attorney for a mayor because this is a very serious matter. So, I'm sorry for the long report but we've been very busy as you can imagine. If you have any questions, I'm more than happy to answer.

*Prepared by
Robert J. Golec
Hammond City Clerk*

MAYOR'S ADDRESS cont.

Councilman Kalwinski- Mayor, on the Municipal ID Card, are there any age restrictions to it or can parents bring their children in to get an ID also?

Mayor McDermott- This is an excellent question. I don't see why there would be age restrictions.

Councilman Kalwinski- Some kids have school ID. But some kids may not be in school.

Mayor McDermott- Because it's not a drivers license, so I don't see why there would be age restrictions. That's a great question. I don't see why we would have age restriction.

Councilman Kalwinski- Because it doesn't state that in the ordinance.

Mayor McDermott- As far as I'm concerned. Anybody, as long as you can prove this kid is actually who that person is, and that's where they live. So thank you. Great question.

Mayor McDermott- Corporate Counsel do you read it the same way?

Corporate Counsel Kevin Smith- I agree.

Mayor McDermott- Thanks.

Council President Woerpel- Any more questions?

Mayor McDermott- Thank you everybody, thanks for what you're doing and I'll be here if you need anything. Thanks.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Councilman Spitale, supported by Councilman Emerson, moved to accept the minutes of November 28, 2022 and place on file. AYES: ALL

APPROVAL OF CLAIMS

Councilman Rakos, supported by Councilwoman Venecz, moved to approve claims dated 11/22/22 and ending with claims dated 12/07/22. Claim #7165 through claim #7390, in the amount of \$2,776,467.75

ROLL CALL VOTE (claims)

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

NAYS: None

ABSENT:

Motion carried

9/0/0

CLAIMS APPROVED

PUBLIC HEARINGS

22-49 An Ordinance to Further Appropriate from the ARPA Coronavirus Local Fiscal Recovery Fund for Purposes that Fulfill the Intent of the American Rescue Plan Act

22-50 An Ordinance to Appropriate Unspent Monies into the 2022 American Rescue Plan Fund 2410 from 2021 Previously Appropriated American Rescue Plan Funds

No One Spoke.

COMMUNICATIONS

Councilman Tyler- I just want to extend my condolences to the family of Mr. Leroy Harwell as well. Uh, he passed away over the weekend or end of last week and there will be a memorial service tomorrow, not tomorrow, sorry. Uh. Wednesday evening at New Hope Too. Mr. Harwell was a longtime educator and coach in our city. So, I know he impacted a ton of lives. People across the entire city. There is more information on Facebook if you'd like to attend the memorial. Thanks.

Councilman Emerson- The mayor alluded to this earlier in his report. Clyde Stout was the 4th District Supervisor and we I knew him and we talked and he also was a combat engineer, like myself, we had that in common. Um, and he will be missed. Um, and he was always riding around the 4th, and the city for that matter. But we will miss him. And condolences to his family.

Councilman Tyler- Just one last thing. We're still collecting toys for our giveaway, which will take place on Thursday, from 6 to 8 pm. at the Hammond Civic Center. Anybody watching or in the room would like to make a donation, you can still do so. You can drop those off here at City Hall, at the Civic Center, or at any fire station within our city. Um, and at either Hammond Morton, or Hammond Central as well. Thank you.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Council as a Whole Committee - Councilman Torres - Brought out 22-53, 22-54.

Council as a Whole Committee - Councilwoman Venecz- Brought out 22-49, 22-50, 22-51 and 22-52.

Capital Improvement Board - Councilwoman Venecz - Meeting was cancelled. Next meeting is December 19, 2022. Work study at 4:30 p.m. and the meeting beginning at 5:00 p.m.

Community and Crime Watch Committee - Councilwoman Venecz -Councilwoman Venecz- No more meetings in December. But on behalf of the Community and Crime Watch groups, I'd like to wish everyone a very happy and safe holiday. Uh, the meetings will resume in January. That will be the Hessville Crime Watch on January 19th, beginning at 6 pm. Uh, that is at the Jean Shepherd Center. The rest of the meetings will resume in February or March. So I will announce those at every meeting. As usual, if you see anything suspicious, please be sure to call 911. And just be safe this holiday season. Because community is not just about me. It's about us. Thank you.

*Prepared by
Robert J. Golec
Hammond City Clerk*

ORDINANCE 3RD READING- FINAL PASSAGE

22-49 An Ordinance to Further Appropriate from the ARPA Coronavirus Local Fiscal Recovery Fund for Purposes that Fulfill the Intent of the American Rescue Plan Act

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

Councilman Spitale- ARPA funds necessary for both finalized versions number 1 projects and move forward for version number 2, the plan projects.

ROLL CALL VOTE (passage of 22-49)

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

NAYS: None

ABSENT: None

Motion carried

9/0/0

ORDINANCE NO. 9580 PASSED

22-50 An Ordinance to Appropriate Unspent Monies into the 2022 American Rescue Plan Fund 2410 from 2021 Previously Appropriated American Rescue Plan Funds

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

Councilwoman Venecz- This is basically a housekeeping ordinance to move funding from 2021 to 2022 for the projects that remain unfunded just yet.

ROLL CALL VOTE (passage of 22-50)

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

NAYS: None

ABSENT: None

Motion carried

9/0/0

ORDINANCE NO. 9581 PASSED

22-51 An Ordinance Creating A New Fund (Fund #2472) for Justice Assistance Grant (JAG) Program Funds Awarded to the City of Hammond Police Department

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

Councilman Spitale- Funds from this Justice Assistant Grant goes for personnel, equipment, supplies, and training for the police. Thank you.

ROLL CALL VOTE (passage of 22-51)

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

NAYS: None

ABSENT: None

Motion carried

9/0/0

ORDINANCE NO. 9582 PASSED

*Prepared by
Robert J. Golec
Hammond City Clerk*

ORDINANCE 3RD READING- FINAL PASSAGE cont

22-52 An Ordinance to Amend Ordinance 3890, 4934, 6009, 7972, 8172, 8328, 8750, and 9343 also known as Chapter 73 Section 99 of Title VIII of the Hammond Municipal Code as it Pertains to Penalties for Violating the Uniform Operation of Truck Traffic within the City

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

Councilman Rakos, supported by Councilman Kalwinski, moved to Amend in 22-52A in it's entirety.

Councilman Rakos- This is an amendment that we missed a ordinance that needed... that's only in the title, ordinance number 8261, needed to be added to the title of this ordinance. Therefore, you have the amendment of 22-52A.

ROLL CALL VOTE (amendment)

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

NAYS: None

ABSENT: None

Motion carried 9/0/0 AMENDMENT ADOPTED

ROLL CALL VOTE (passage of 22-52A)

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

NAYS: None

ABSENT: None

Motion carried 9/0/0 ORDINANCE NO. 9583 PASSED (as amended)

22-53 Ordinance Amending Ordinance No. 9511 of the Hammond Common Council Authorizing the City of Hammond, Indiana, to Issue one or more Series of its Economic Development Revenue Bonds and Approving and Authorizing other Actions in respect Thereto (415 Sibley - 3 Corners Project) (Bank Calumet - NWI Project)

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

Councilman Torres- This ordinance is regarding the Bank Calumet at 415 Sibley Street. Which we all know is being converted from an old bank to an apartment building. It is to update the financing of issuing bonds.

ROLL CALL VOTE (passage of 22-53)

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

NAYS: None

ABSENT: None

Motion carried 9/0/0 ORDINANCE NO. 9584 PASSED

ORDINANCE 3RD READING- FINAL PASSAGE cont

22-54 An Ordinance Creating a New Section Known as Section __ of the Hammond Municipal Code Establishing Municipal Identification Cards

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

Councilman Torres- This ordinance establishes municipal identification cards for immigrants who choose to live in Hammond. The municipal ID card should be accepted and recognized by City Department Heads, especially the Police Department for public safety issues, that's it.

ROLL CALL VOTE (passage of 22-54)

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

NAYS: None

ABSENT: None

Motion carried

9/0/0

ORDINANCE NO. 9585 PASSED

INTRODUCTION OF ORDINANCES

22-55 An Ordinance Fixing the Salaries for Elected City Officials for the City of Hammond Indiana Commencing January 1, 2023 be it Ordained by the Common Council of the City of Hammond, Indiana

Councilwoman Venecz, supported by Councilman Spitale, moved the proposed ordinance to 1st and 2nd reading and referred it to the Council as a Whole Committee with a meeting on December 27, 2022 at 5:15p.m.
AYES: ALL

22-56 An Ordinance Authorizing the City Controller to Transfer Funds from One Line Item to another within Various City 2022 Budgets

Councilwoman Venecz, supported by Councilwoman Alexander, moved the proposed ordinance to 1st and 2nd reading and referred it to the Council as a Whole Committee with a meeting on December 27, 2022 at 5:15p.m.
AYES: ALL

Councilwoman Venecz- Yes, this is simply moving funding that was... savings that we realized and moving to the energy savings line item to be used for bonds and leases. Thank you.

RESOLUTIONS

Councilwoman Venecz, supported by Councilman Tyler, moved to adopt the following resolutions: 22R-21, 22R-22, 22R-23, 22R-24 & 22R-25 & 22R-26, 22R-27, all are re-appointments to the Historic Preservation Commission.

22R-21 A Resolution Confirming the Reappointment of Amanda L. Aguilera as a Commissioner of the Hammond Historic Preservation Commission of the City of Hammond, Indiana

22R-22 A Resolution Confirming the Reappointment of Anne T. Anderson as a Commissioner of the Hammond Historic Preservation Commission of the City of Hammond, Indiana

22R-23 A Resolution Confirming the Reappointment of Debbie McGough as a Commissioner of the Hammond Historic Preservation Commission of the City of Hammond, Indiana

22R-24 A Resolution Confirming the Reappointment of Patrick Swibes as a Commissioner of the Hammond Historic Preservation Commission of the City of Hammond, Indiana

22R-25 A Resolution Confirming the Reappointment of Gladys L. Hilliard as a Commissioner of the Hammond Human Relations Commission of the City of Hammond, Indiana

22R-26 A Resolution Confirming the Reappointment of Ronald Mullins as a Commissioner of the Hammond Human Relations Commission of the City of Hammond, Indiana

22R-27 A Resolution Confirming the Reappointment of Gary Wilson as a Commissioner of the Hammond Human Relations Commission of the City of Hammond, Indiana

Councilwoman Venecz, supported by Councilman Tyler, moved to adopt the following resolutions: 22R-21, 22R-22, 22R-23, 22R-24 & 22R-25 & 22R-26, 22R-27. All of which were introduced today. AYES: ALL

ROLL CALL VOTE (adoption of 22R-21 thru 22R-27)

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

NAYS: None

ABSENT: None

Motion carried

9/0/0

RESOLUTIONS PASSED

NEW AND UNFINISHED BUSINESS

Councilman Kalwinski, supported by Councilman Spitale, moved to confirm the reappointment of Miriam Soto-Presley to the Hammond Redevelopment Commission.

Council Attorney Robert Berger- It isn't a confirmation. That's an appointment. The confirmations for when the Mayor made the appointment, but the council has appointments to the Port Authority.

Councilman Kalwinski, supported by Councilman Spitale, I'll just take out the word "confirm". So, I'll make a motion to reappoint Miriam Soto Presley as a Commissioner of the Hammond Redevelopment Commission.

Councilman Kalwinski- Ms. Presley has been a valuable participant commissioner and also (unclear) ...

ROLL CALL VOTE (reappointment)

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

NAYS: None

ABSENT: None

Motion carried

9/0/0

MOTION CARRIED

Councilman Torres- I just wanted to thank the Mayor for pushing ordinance 22-54. He actually... him and the City Attorney actually wrote it. I just sponsored it. He brought it to my attention when I told him about the resolution for the states ID cards. So, it's a good idea. So, thank you.

Councilman Spitale, supported by Councilwoman Venecz, moved to suspend the rules to consider 22-57.

ROLL CALL VOTE (suspend rules)

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

NAYS: None

ABSENT: None

Motion carried

9/0/0

RULES SUSPENDED

22-57 An Ordinance to Amend and Replace Flood Hazard Area Ordinance 9344 by Establishing Provisions for Flood Damage Prevention in Accordance with the State of Indiana Model Ordinance for Flood Damage Protection

Councilman Spitale, supported by Councilman Emerson, moved the proposed ordinance to 1st and 2nd reading and referred it to the Council as a Whole Committee, with a meeting on December 27, 2022 at 5:15p.m.

Director of Planning- Brian Poland- This is an ordinance to update and amend the existing floodplain ordinance to be compliant with the model floodplain ordinance set by the state and adopt the incoming maps that are going to be effective in January.

Councilman Kalwinski- Mr. Poland did you ... (unclear)

*Prepared by
Robert J. Golec
Hammond City Clerk*

NEW AND UNFINISHED BUSINESS cont.

Brian Poland- It's a model ordinance presented to us by the state. It was reviewed by our floodplain consultant for technical corrections. It's really technical corrections and the only thing we adding is the "V" and the VE zones for the costal zone Lake Michigan shoreline.

Councilman Kalwinski- It's a very dry read.

Brian Poland - It's very technical, yes. But it's not going to affect anybody's flood insurance or any of the areas that have already been removed from the floodplain . It's more administrative functions, but it does keep us in compliance with the state program that allows us to have local jurisdiction.

Councilman Kalwinski- (unclear)

Brian Poland- Well, it would take us out of the program, the management program.

Council President Woerpel - On the motion, Ayes? Nays? AYES: ALL

Councilwoman Alexander, supported by Councilman Spitale, moved to return to regular order of business.

ROLL CALL (regular order)

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- I just want to take the time to wish our residents a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year. Because Christmas is coming up before our next meeting and I just hope they have a happy Holiday. And praying that they have not only a happy holiday but those that are going through trials and tribulation, that they find peace during this holiday season.

Councilman Rakos- Yes, I'd like to express gratitude to the volunteers who came out to the area of 171st and Maryland to help clean up an area that was vandalized and people have taken advantage of this area that they got, we were able to get a lot of garbage that accumulated over many years from people that were, basically, in an area that had no business to be in, mattresses and things like that. I appreciate they came out and... Bishop Noll students were involved, I understand, I'd like you to know HC3 and myself have been doing cleanups in Hessville for about 4, or 5 years and we have the next ones that will be coming up in May and October. So, maybe we can get together on that situation for Hessville. Thank you.

PUBLIC EXPRESSION

Tj Gaertig- I'm an electrician, local 697. Um, I've been coming to these to get more involved in the community and see what's going on. I've really been enjoying it so far. I've met a couple of you. So, I'd like to speak today in favor of preserving the Briar East Woodland Dunes. Councilman Rakos just mentioned it. I was at the cleanup

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Hammond City Clerk*

as well. I think it's an extremely valuable asset to Hammond. Parks and nature preserves are crucial for livable cities, green spaces provide free recreation for residents. And I don't think it should be developed.

Sashi Sekhar- I came all the way down Calumet Avenue to come to Hammond. I came here because of the Dunes. I actually grew up in Hammond. I was here until I was in the third grade. And some of my fondest memories are exploring and playing in Briar East Woods. Not having a lot of money and resources being in those woods was our playground. I was a professor at Purdue University for over 25 years. I'm currently working for Lincoln Park Zoo in Environmental Education and Animal Welfare Research. So, all in all, I want to say, what brought me back to Hammond was the woods.

Ken Rosek- Mr. Rakos stole my thunder a little. We organized the cleanup behind the town homes and the place was neglected for decades. We had a coalition of four different community organizations that worked on this project. It was Hammond Community Garden, it was the Poor People's Campaign, it was Bishop Noll High School and the Hessville Dune Dusters. We collected 27 bags of garbage and a ton of other objects. I don't know how else to put it. You've got 22 individuals who are volunteering their time coming out there and taking care of this area because they care. We can take care of all that grass for you, Mr. Rakos, that's around the lake. We have experts now that work with us cleaning and rejuvenating the forest. I was a little upset that we won't have a Mayor's Night Out in 2022. In 2020, when Mayor was running for Congress, Hessville Mayor Night Out was changed three separate occasions until we got passed the election day. We used to have them in August but they didn't mess around this year. Now, we won't get any at all in 2022. The calendar on the Gohammond website simply stated canceled. Not until numerous residents called and complained it was changed with the rescheduled date on January 4, at the Jean Shepherd Center. Has anyone seen the flyer that came with your water bill? Uh, that normally has these dates. Uh, there is no mention of the rescheduling on this on the flyer. The only thing I see that is transparent here is the deception. We are not being allowed to have a public vetting in our district.

Jack Smith- I just want to give you a little insight about myself. March 30, 2021, as I was leaving Omni Gym, I was having a heart attack, driving home. If I were to take my route home, the way I usually come, I would of turned right on 173rd to make a left on Parrish. If there was a train there, I'd been stuck behind that train and I would not be here today to tell you what was going on. As I went down Kennedy Avenue and went to 169th, I turned right to go to my house, and, well, guess what? There was a train sitting on those railroad tracks. I am in favor of the bridge to be built. Thank you.

Mayor McDermott- Under Hammond City Ordinance, for those that aren't aware, I have the ability to intervene, and I just want to clarify something that was said by Ken that I think was unfair. Uh, first off, Mayor's Night Out is scheduled a year in advance. We assume when I schedule 6 meetings across the city, first off, in Indiana, I bet there are two mayors that do Mayor's Night Out. I'm one of them, okay? I've been doing it for 20 years. I used to do 12 a year, then we cut it back to 6 a year. Sometimes stuff comes up and I have to reschedule. I was at the last council meeting and something came up. By the way, around the same time I announced this to the council, I didn't want to get into details, but we just had a \$25 million dollar verdict entered against the city at that time and I needed to talk to people about what was going on. I felt like Mayor's Night Out could be bounced back to January. So, in 2023, we're gonna do two Mayor's Nights Out in the 6th District. We're going to do the leftover one from 2022 and then we're going to come back around for the regularly scheduled 2023 one. I want to make that clear, okay? So, to the residents of Hessville, I love you. I drive through Hessville every single day of my life. I live right next to it and I care a lot about Hessville. So, I don't want anybody in Hessville thinking we're canceling Mayor's Night Out because we don't care for them. It's not true at all. Secondly, the reason I

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PUBLIC EXPRESSION cont.

Mayor McDermott cont. - support the Bridge Project is not because I hate Mother Nature. I don't hate the Dunes. I don't hate going on hikes all the time. I'm outdoors more than almost anybody I know. So, I pulled up, funny enough, I was on Apple Maps just flipping through and I was hearing people talk bad about me and I said, oh, I'm going to pull up Parrish Avenue because I want to look overhead at the area we're talking about where the bridge is going to go and as I pulled it up on Apple Maps, you can pull it up yourself. I got the latest version. I pulled in on Parrish Avenue, funny enough, on Apple Maps, the satellite shot of Parrish Avenue has a stopped freaking train. Sitting there blocking Parrish Avenue. That wasn't moving, that was parked there. That's what happens. To the residents that don't live in Hessville. These trains are part...it was only blocking Parrish here. But it usually blocks Parrish and everything east of Parrish. And we'll sit there for 4 or 5 hours, not even moving. That's what this is about. This isn't about Mother Nature. This isn't about hating the dunes. This is about the number one problem in the City of Hammond is blocked trains, in my opinion. Well, crime is a close second and reciprocity but we have a lot of problems. I get constant complaints about trains, especially from the residents of Hessville. If I have an opportunity to pay for a bridge that gets us over this perpetual problem, at somebody else's cost, which is what we're doing. The state is paying for 75% of this bridge. I would be negligent as your Mayor if I didn't take advantage of that. So, that's what this is about. This is not hating on Mother Nature. This is not we hate Hessville. This is about being a busy mayor, doing my job. This is about taking advantage of a State that wants to pay for a bridge and get us over this problem so that people like Jack Smith don't have heart attack and die in their houses because there's a stopped train blocking all the exits to a hospital. So, thank you.

Councilwoman Venecz- Mayor, when is Mayor's Night Out in Hessville?

Mayor McDermott- It got rescheduled to January 4th. It got bounced back 2 weeks.

Councilwoman Venecz- Exactly.

Mayor McDermott- Between what's going on with our hospital, what's going on with the lawsuit that stemmed from 1981. I have a couple things going on besides normal holidays. So, we felt like, hey, let's just bounce this back 2 weeks. If people want to protest, they can protest on January 4th, just effectively as they could have protested this week. So, I love the residents of Hessville. Always have, always will. Thank you.

Kelly Mickey- Good evening, everyone. Uh, first forgive me. I'm a little nervous to talk. It's not something that I generally do. However, I'm very active in the community. I'm always watching on Gohammond. It's very frustrating to hear negative things about the City all the time. I understand the passion and the commitment to the area that everybody is feeling upset that's being destroyed. I get that. I get it. However, I've been a Hammond resident for 49 years. I've been a Hammond employee for 24. I've lived in Hessville for 15 years. I would have never ever understood the train issue had I not worked car 6, or car 7 and 8. When somebody calls for help and you can't get to them because there's a train, it's difficult. It's difficult on your spirit. It's difficult on your soul. Then, when you get there and people don't understand why you took so long to get there, while their loved one was injured either in a car accident or their father is dying of brain cancer and he's become violent and he's torn up the house and injured people, it's frustrating. I see a simple solution to build the bridge.

*Prepared by
Robert J. Golec
Hammond City Clerk*

PUBLIC EXPRESSION cont.

Michelle Mickey- Good evening, everyone. That's a tough act to follow but proud to say that's my wife. I wanted to.. I'm an environmental scientist, and I wanted to shed some light on some of the environmental regulations that surround this whole project that have yet to be brought up. I've heard Ken speak numerous times and his whole posse of accusing everyone of hating nature, but there are federal funds involved in this project. There are state funds involved in this project and therefore, there's a whole lot of things that have to be vetted. Endangered species study, environmental impact statement, a wetland delineation, a jurisdictional determination from the US Army Corps of Engineers, and if it is in fact a regulated wetland, then they have to have a permit and then they have to discuss wetland mitigation, which is generally a one for one proposal and wetland mitigation is about \$40,000 to \$80,000 an acre. The city will have to do that. It's not negotiable. These are the federal and state regulations that are required for this project. No one hates Mother Nature, we just have to be practical. Build the bridge.

Linda Anguiano- I spent a lot of my childhood in the woods that were cut down to build Morton. There is a big impact on the environment. I have had to rush my parents to the hospital for different appointments and I have been inconvenienced with trains. But there was not any kind of public meeting, public hearing. I didn't hear Scott Rakos campaigning on this issue when he was running last time. I think that there can be a win-win situation. Right here next door in Munster, there's an underpass. This particular plan makes it a hardship for kids who are walking from Morton or walking from Scott Middle School. It is not a win-win situation right now. I think that's it great we were for the federal funding but we weren't asked about this beforehand. I think you're going to have more people getting vocal about this issue if you don't take into account their feelings. I think we should go back to the drawing board, and make everyone happy. Thank you and happy holidays.

Mayor McDermott- Just so we're on the same page about if we went back to the drawing board, and we went back and we wanted to make a tunnel. It's not going to be cheaper. It's going to be more expensive. We will go back to the very beginning, if we get approved for the federal funds. It'll be a decade added to the project. A decade of stopped trains, a decade of phone calls, a decade of inaction. That's what we're talking about. If we punt on this, Munster or Dyer or one of neighbors will gobble that money up and laugh in our face. And be happy about it. And they're not going to be sad that Hammond passed up free money. They're going to be happy that Hammond passed up free money. And we'll go back to the beginning of the drawing board and we'll and say hey we want to have a tunnel instead. And they'll say get the hell out of our office. We'll talk to you in a decade. That's what will happen. And then I'll have to face the voters. Councilman Rakos, will have to face the voters, and explain why we had a bridge completely funded, and we said, nope, sorry. We wanted a tunnel. I'm running on this. This is my issue. If the residents of Hessville, vote me out. God Bless them. They can kill this deal, okay? This is so such a no-brainer. I'm going to campaign on it and I'm going to give everybody their opportunity to vote me out on this issue because this is a no-brainer and if we're going to start,... if I have to talk to 81,000 residents every time I have to make a difficult decision, Hammond will never ever, ever move forward. If I have to talk to 81,000 people before I can make a tough decision, this job is impossible and by the way, the council, you've already dealt with this issue as I have. We've already voted. This is a state job. This is in the state ball court right now unless we pull the plug. We can pull the plug. We pull the plug. This project is dead. Congratulations, Hessville, stopped trains for a decade. That's what we're talking about.

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

AYES: ALL

*Prepared by
Robert J. Golec
Hammond City Clerk*

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	E	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P
Dan Spitale	E	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P
Janet Venecz	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	E	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P
Mark Kalwinski	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	E	P	P	P	P	P	E	P	P	P	P	E	P	P	P	P
Pete Torres	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P
Barry Tyler	E	P	P	P	E	E	E	P	P	P	E	P	E	E	E	P	P	P	P	E	P	P	P	P
Bill Emerson	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P
Scott Rakos	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	E	P	E	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	E	P	P	P	P
Dave Woerpel	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P
Initials	RJG	RJG	RJG	RJG	RJG	RJG	RJG	RJG	RJG	RJG	RJG	RJG	RJG	RJG	RJG	RJG	RJG	RJG	RJG	RJG	RJG	RJG	RJG	RJG

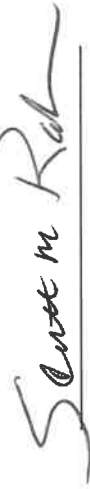
E=ELECTRONIC

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.



Scott Rakos, Vice President

ATTEST:



Robert J. Golec, City Clerk

Time: 7:10

dw

Prepared by
Robert J. Golec
Hammond City Clerk