

Hammond City Council Members

Councilman Kip Andrews- President
Councilman Sam DiVittorio- Vice President
Councilman Devon Wells
Councilwoman Carlee Gonzales
Councilman Steve Leon

City Council Clerk, Lisa Cockerham
City Attorney, Andre Coudrain



**HAMMOND CITY COUNCIL
MEETING MINUTES
312 EAST CHARLES STREET
HAMMOND, LOUISIANA
March 8, 2022**

I. CALL TO ORDER: President Kip Andrews

II. ROLL CALL: Councilman Andrews (P), Councilman DiVittorio (P), Councilwoman Gonzales (P), Councilman Leon (P), Councilman Wells (P)

III. PUBLIC HEARING:

1. An Ordinance to amend the budget for Fiscal Year 2021 - 2022. (Laura Hammett)

Laura Hammett, stated that they were amending the beginning fund balance based on actual numbers and not just estimates, and once the audit from last year is completed they have final numbers and generally come before the council in March. She stated that anything that changes more than 5% must come before the City Council. She discussed the actual line items to be amended, items with more than a 5% variance.

Councilman DiVittorio, asked if the money in the Department of Motor Vehicles is being moved over to the general fund.

Laura Hammett, stated yes.

Lacy Landrum, stated that that move is not reflected yet on the consolidated budget because they have not closed that fund. The closure of the fund will happen in the next budget.

Councilman Wells, asked about the request that was made previously by Councilman DiVittorio regarding a breakdown of the city's finances. He asked when the information would be available.

Laura Hammett, stated that they just finished closing the books for February and she haven't had a chance to do an analysis on that yet, but she can have it for the next meeting.

Lacy Landrum, stated that they already provided the report that was requested.

Councilman Wells, stated that they asked for a breakdown of where the money is being moved to and what's going on with the accounts.

Laura Hammett, stated that she has an open door policy and if they have any questions they can give her a call.

Councilwoman Gonzales asked about the workers comp. line item.

Lacy Landrum, stated that they did not spend as much as what was budgeted.

Laura Hammett, stated that sales tax for the year is at \$5 million above what they budgeted. They are asking for a \$4 million dollar increase to the budget in sales tax revenue. They are not appropriating the funds, they are just recognizing that revenue.

Lacy Landrum, explained the sales tax process. She stated it takes about a month to receive the sales tax.

Laura Hammett, stated that they were asking to add funds for the housing study. They already had the \$50,000 set aside for it but the proposal has come in at the \$88,000, so they are asking for an addition \$38,415, so they can move forward with the housing study.

Ron Matthews, stated that the \$88,000 from the original proposal may be reduced. He stated they had a zoom meeting with Civix and their getting closer to \$50,000.

2. An Ordinance to Amend the Hammond Unified Development Code to Add the Suburban Highway Overlay District. (Jeffery Leuenberger)

Jeffery Leuenberger, City Planner stated that the planning commission met on February 3, 2022 and recommended this.

He also stated that there was one change to correct the street name. The name on the other side of I-12 to show Veterans Ave. The Unified Development Code was to change setbacks and built to lines. He stated that this has been discussed for a long time.

Councilman Andrews, asked if this had been published in the newspaper

Jeffery Leuenberger, stated not in the paper and that notices to individuals would be expensive.

Councilwoman Gonzales, stated that they had previously talked about doing a press release. She was interested in a general notice by press release to notify the public of the changes.

Jeffery Leuenberger- stated that this was a unanimous vote of Planning and Zoning.

Councilman Wells, stated that they should find a way to give notice to the people and property owners. He stated that there were a lot of people in the Historic District. He stated that everyone needs to know and he asked why it this came up now.

Lacy Landrum, stated that Planning and Zoning had a lot of variances and this would minimize the variance request and give better direction to Planning and Zoning and property owners.

Ron Matthews, Planning & Zoning Commissioner, stated that he thinks this is a good thing. He recommend that it be advertised in the paper and he stated that this is in line with the city's master plan and it's a good thing throughout the city.

Councilman Wells, asked that it be put on hold.

Beezie Landry, 802 W. Thomas, stated he was with Stirling Properties and this is welcomed progress. He also stated that in retail development, he thinks 60ft is too small and they would still need a variance because 60ft is only for parking, but does not account for sidewalks and landscaping.

Councilman Wells, thanked Mr. Landry and for coming up and his suggestions would be taken into consideration.

Jeffery Leuenberger, stated that he agreed with Mr. Landry and he would go back and work on it.



**HAMMOND CITY COUNCIL
MEETING MINUTES
312 EAST CHARLES STREET
HAMMOND, LOUISIANA
March 8, 2022**

I. CALL TO ORDER: President Kip Andrews

II. ROLL CALL: Councilman Andrews (P), Councilman DiVittorio (P), Councilwoman Gonzales (P), Councilman Leon (P), Councilman Wells (P)

III. PRAYER: Ron Matthews

IV. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE: All veterans and active military, please render the proper salute.

V. REPORTS:

Mayor:

Mayor, stated this was a great week for LHSSA top 28 ladies. He congratulated Ponchatoula and Amite. He thanked Tangi Tourism and SLU and Chamber of Commerce and the many volunteers. He mentioned the USPCA K-9 competition taking place at Chappapeela Sports Park. He also stated that on March 28th the pond at Zemmurray Park will be stocked with catfish. On April 2nd there will be an Easter Egg Hunt at Clark Park from 12pm-4pm. There will be an Easter Camp from April 18-23. The final Hurricane Debris pick-up has begun.

Council:

Council President Andrews recognized Albert Cusimano

Albert Cusimano, 39744 Reba Ln, Ponchatoula, stated he wanted to speak about making Hammond a Purple Heart City. It would be the 2nd Purple Heart City in the state of Louisiana. He stated that Ponchatoula was the first and he explained the process. He stated that it doesn't cost anything and the city would receive a proclamation and can put up a sign if they choose, stating that they are a Purple Heart City.

Councilwoman Gonzales stated that the 1st Veterans Breakfast will be on April 28th and that there would be an Easter egg hunt on April 2nd from 12-4 pm in Clark Park.

Councilman DiVittorio, asked for an update on street lights.

Lacy Landrum, stated that she did not have an update, but city personnel went out to do an assessment and Entergy said they have been doing assessments.

Councilman Leon, stated that lights were out city wide.

Lacy Landrum, stated that that city personnel went out to do an assessment and will provide an update at the next meeting.

Councilman Wells, asked about the concrete behind the splash park and the bathroom at Mooney Park.

Lacy Landrum, stated that the city needed to get quotes and look at the appropriations in the budget.

Councilman Wells, asked about getting bleachers in the park and stated that there were problems with lights and he asked about stop signs and thanked the Mayor and the community for the stop sign on Spruce St.

Councilman Andrews, stated that on April 16th there will be an Easter egg hunt in Martin Luther King Park.

VI. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Approval of minutes of the February 22, 2022 meeting.

There was a motion by Councilwoman Gonzales and second by Councilman Wells to approve the February 22, 2022 minutes.

ROLL CALL: Councilman Andrews (Y) Councilwoman Gonzales (Y), Councilman DiVittorio (Y), Councilman Leon (Y), Councilman Wells (Y). Motion Approved 5-0

VII. RESOLUTIONS

A. OLD BUSINESS: NONE

B. NEW BUSINESS:

1. A resolution authorizing 1) application for \$400,000 in "Love Louisiana Outdoors" program funds for improvements to Martin Luther King and Zemurray Parks; 2) local funds/match for design, engineering, and/or administrative costs, if incurred; 3) Grants Department staff to administer the City's "Love Louisiana Outdoors" program; and 4) the Mayor to sign related documents. (Charles Borchers IV)

Charles Borchers, stated that the application was previously approved by the council and this include more specific information which was requested by the State. He stated that there is no match. He stated that the grant would cover new equipment, a walking trail around the park, new surfaces under the equipment, bleachers and outdoor grills in Martin Luther King for a total of \$218,000. In Zemurray Park, they will put in new equipment, replace some equipment, picnic pavilions, expand the dog park and re-do the privacy wall and improve the sidewalks for a total of \$182,000.

There was a motion by Councilwoman Gonzales and second by Councilman Wells authorizing 1) application for \$400,000 in "Love Louisiana Outdoors" program funds for improvements to Martin Luther King and Zemurray Parks; 2) local funds/match for design, engineering, and/or administrative costs, if incurred; 3) Grants Department staff to administer the City's "Love Louisiana Outdoors" program; and 4) the Mayor to sign related documents.

VOTE: Kip Andrews (Y), Sam DiVittorio (Y), Carlee White Gonzales (Y), Steve Leon (Y), Devon Wells (Y). Motion Approved 5-0

2. A resolution to authorize the Mayor to enter into an Intergovernmental Agreement with Tangipahoa Parish Government to overlay the following streets: North Wilson Street, Western Avenue, Natchez Street, Mooney Avenue, South Elm Street, Fern Street, East Merry Street, West Green Street, East Green Street, and Celia Street.(Lacy Landrum)

Lacy Landrum, stated that this was a standard agreement and is covered under the Tangipahoa Parish Government. She state that there was no cost to the city and the Parish will overlay the streets. She stated that they have asked for more coordination of the priorities that the council, streets department and the Mayor and city engineer have so that they could all be on the same page.

Councilman DiVittorio, stated he was concerned about some streets that were not included and are in worse condition with potholes on several roads. He would like to see something improved and we need to get a better handle on the process.

Lacy Landrum stated that they have had meeting with parish leadership to try and get a better process.

Councilman Wells, stated they need a better understanding and better communication with City Council Members.

Councilman Leon, stated that he has had conversations with Buddy Ridgel and that a lot of these plans are more than five years out and they have their system. He stated they all have streets within their districts that are bad.

Lacy Landrum, stated that this was already bid before they received the contract.

Mayor, stated if the roads are bad we should take them on in next year's budget.

Lacy Landrum, stated we can appropriate funds, think up your top five streets in each District that needs work and think in terms of priority and look at cost.

Councilman Wells, asked that it be known that they are talking about asphalt and not concrete.

There was a motion by Councilman Leon and second by Councilwoman Gonzales authorizing the Mayor to enter into an Intergovernmental Agreement with Tangipahoa Parish Government to overlay the following streets: North Wilson Street, Western Avenue, Natchez Street, Mooney Avenue, South Elm Street, Fern Street, East Merry Street, West Green Street, East Green Street, and Celia Street.(Lacy Landrum)

VOTE: Kip Andrews (Y), Sam DiVittorio (Y), Carlee White Gonzales (Y), Steve Leon (Y), Devon Wells (Y). Motion Approved 5-0

3. A resolution for the Hammond City Council to accept the recommendations from Seth W. Stoughton's report and request the Mayor to develop a Request for Proposal (RFP) to solicit information from private entities that will conduct a comprehensive review of the Hammond Police Department and its operations. (Councilman Wells)

Councilman Wells, stated they agreed on an investigation and that the city has the report and it is only right for the council to request the Mayor to develop an RFP to review the Hammond Police Department operations.

Councilman Leon, stated that they ask for a report to be done and the report was done and the administration was given a copy of the report and he doesn't think the city needs to go further.

Councilman Wells, stated that he and his community is asking for it. He stated that the city needs to do something about this, people who something wrong should not be promote. Councilman Wells asked the Mayor if he read the report.

Mayor, stated that he read the report and listened to the man give his report and he was taking the word of the suspect and that there is a distorted view.

Councilman Andrews, asked about some of the recommendations that were made inside of the report, he stated that if they could get some of the information; current copy of the booking room policies and procedures, training, proper handcuffing, current copy of the use of force procedures, current copy of the policies on securing prisoners in the jail and the booking room, including the dates and times of the training. He thinks that that would help him in his review, he stated that he couldn't speak for anyone else.

Lacy Landrum, stated that some recommendations are under review or have already been done.

Councilwoman Carlee Gonzales, stated that some recommendations are based on testimony or old information. She stated that she thinks it's appropriate to get something in writing on the status of recommendations in the department. She stated that she still has a problem with this resolution.

Councilman Andrews, stated that the information he is requesting is a place to start.

Councilman Wells, stated that he doesn't think his community is safe with the current chief and he thinks the Mayor is turning the city into rotten fruit and he should fix it.

Councilman Andrews, proposed to make an amendment to the resolution

Tracy Wells, 610 Mooney Ave, stated that she that what's on the agenda is asking for an RFP for recommendation number one. She stated that recommendation number one states that the City of Hammond should conduct a comprehensive review of the Hammond Police Department and its operations. She stated that these do not fall under policies and procedures as stated; agency culture, employee morale, retaliation (real or perceived) against Hammond Police Department employees and former employees, favoritism etc. She stated that there is a problem with Hammond Police Department operations. She stated that the report states that there is an over reach between the Mayor and department and the police department should be above and beyond reproach. There's no delineation between the department and the Mayor's office and people in her community are afraid to call the police.

Councilman DiVittorio, stated that the video is clear, stated that the department does have issues and they need to be addressed and fixed the right way. We need to do what's right.

Nana Minimar, 52 Whitmore Dr, stated that there are two parts to the resolution 1) acceptance of report, 2) Issue RFP. She asked how we can make the department better and safe for everyone and a critical self-analysis is sometimes needed to help us get better.

Mayor, stated that the chief, assist chief and some of the officers are involve in reviewing the policies.

Denise Palmer, 43502 Robertson Rd, stated that the council represents Hammond as a whole. She spoke of a situation happened to her regarding the Hammond Police Department. She told the council that they need to do the right thing.

Tracy Wells, stated that there is a difference in professionalism between the different departments in the city. Some are well trained in customer service and some are not and she stated that it was a systemic issue.

Councilman Andrews, proposed a substitute motion that the Mayor give a written report to the council, this is an amendment to the resolution.

There was a motion by **Councilman Andrews** and second by **Councilman DiVittorio** to add a report by the Mayor to the Council to the resolution.

VOTE: Kip Andrews (Y), Carlee White Gonzales (N), Sam DiVittorio (Y), Steve Leon (N), Devon Wells (Y). Motion Approved 3-2

There was a motion by Councilman Wells and second by Councilman DiVittorio to authorize the Hammond City Council to accept the recommendations from Seth W. Stoughton's report and request the Mayor to develop a Request for Proposal (RFP) to solicit information from private entities that will conduct a comprehensive review of the Hammond Police Department and its operations and for the Mayor to issue a report to the Council.

VOTE: Kip Andrews (Y), Carlee White Gonzales (N), Sam DiVittorio (Y), Steve Leon (N), Devon Wells (Y). Motion Approved 3-2 as amended

VIII. FINAL ADOPTION OF ORDINANCE:

A. OLD BUSINESS: NONE

B. NEW BUSINESS:

1. Final Adoption of an Ordinance to amend the budget for Fiscal Year 2021 - 2022. (Lacy Landrum)

Laura Hammett, stated that they were amending the beginning fund balance, recognizing \$4 million dollars in sales tax and moving \$38,000 to consultant services for a housing study.

There was a motion by Councilman DiVittorio and second by Councilman Andrews to adopt an Ordinance to amend the budget for Fiscal Year 2021 - 2022.

VOTE: Kip Andrews (Y), Sam DiVittorio (Y), Carlee White Gonzales (Y), Steve Leon (Y), Devon Wells (Y). Motion Approved 5-0

2. Final Adoption of an Ordinance to Amend the Hammond Unified Development Code to Add the Suburban Highway Overlay District. (Jeffery Leuenberger)

There was a motion by Councilwoman Gonzales and second by Councilwoman Leon to amend the ordinance as recommended to correct the street names.

VOTE: Kip Andrews (Y), Sam DiVittorio (Y), Carlee White Gonzales (Y), Steve Leon (Y), Devon Wells (Y). Motion Approved 5-0

There was a motion to by Councilwoman Gonzales and a second by Councilman Andrews to table this item and have it advertised in the Daily Star, Advocate and Action News as amended.

VOTE: Kip Andrews (Y), Sam DiVittorio (Y), Carlee White Gonzales (Y), Steve Leon (Y), Devon Wells (Y). Motion Approved 5-0

IX. INTRODUCTION OF ORDINANCE AND SET OF PUBLIC HEARING:

1. Introduction for an Ordinance to annex Farris Family, LLC property being a 0.181 acre portion of Tract A-1 per survey by David Patterson, PLS dated 2/2/2022 located at 2307 W. Thomas St to be zoned C-H and is in City Council District 4 (Z-2022-02-00099)

Jeffery Leuenberger, stated the planning and zoning unanimously recommended it.

Councilman Wells, stated that the application was not complete

Jeffery Leuenberger, stated the he would get the application updated.

There was a motion by Councilman DiVittorio and second by Councilman Wells to Introduce an Ordinance to annex Farris Family, LLC property being a 0.181 acre portion of Tract A-1 per survey by David Patterson, PLS dated 2/2/2022 located at 2307 W. Thomas St to be zoned C-H and is in City Council District 4 (Z-2022-02-00099)

VOTE: Kip Andrews (Y), Sam DiVittorio (Y), Carlee White Gonzales (Y), Steve Leon (Y), Devon Wells (Y), Motion Approved 5-0

2. Introduction for an Ordinance to grant an Expanded Conditional Use (ECU) on a lot being 0.407 acres in accordance with a survey by Wm. J. Bodin Jr. dated 2/9/2022 requested by Anthony and Joyce Cox located at 1106 South Pine Street. (Z-2022-02- 00098)

Jeffery Leuenberger, stated that the applicant wants to put a duplex on the property that would allow for a salon on one side and living on the other. He stated that duplexes are allowed and this is a conditional use for business and this was in District 3.

There was a motion by Councilwoman Gonzales and second by Councilman Andrews to introduce an ordinance to grant an Expanded Conditional Use (ECU) on a lot being 0.407 acres in accordance with a survey by Wm. J. Bodin Jr. dated 2/9/2022 requested by Anthony and Joyce Cox located at 1106 South Pine Street. (Z-2022-02- 00098) (Jeffery Leuenberger)

VOTE: Kip Andrews (Y), Sam DiVittorio (Y), Carlee White Gonzales (Y), Steve Leon (Y), Devon Wells (Y). Motion Approved 5-0

X. ADJOURN: there was a motion by Councilman Andrews second by Councilwoman Gonzales to adjourn. All members were in favor and the meeting was adjourned. 5-0

CERTIFICATION OF CLERK

I LISA COCKERHAM, CLERK OF COUNCIL DO HEREBY CERTIFY THAT THE ABOVE
AND FOREGOING IS A TRUE AND CORRECT RECITATION OF THE BUSINESS
TRANSACTIONED AT THE REGULAR MEETING OF THE CITY COUNCIL HELD March 8, 2022
BEING 7 PAGES IN LENGTH

LISA COCKERHAM
HAMMOND CITY COUNCIL CLERK

PRESIDENT, KIP ANDREWS
HAMMOND CITY COUNCIL

Persons needing accommodations or assistance should contact City Council Clerk Lisa Cockerham at **985-277-5610**. Request should be made at least 24 hours prior to the scheduled meeting.