



**HAMMOND CITY COUNCIL
PUBLIC HEARING MINUTES
312 EAST CHARLES STREET
HAMMOND, LOUISIANA
May 13, 2025
5:30pm**

I. CALL TO ORDER: Councilman Kip Andrews

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

III. PUBLIC HEARING:

1. An ordinance to approve a request by Christopher Wells to rezone 1009 Mooney Avenue from RS-3 to RM-3. The property is located in District 3. The Planning & Zoning Commission recommended denial 2-1.

Charles Borchers IV, explained the request.

Adrian Wells, Mooney Ave, spoke in support of ordinance on behalf of the owner.

Tracy Wells, 609 Mooney Ave, stated that she did not think it was spot zoning.



**HAMMOND CITY COUNCIL
REGULAR SESSION MINUTES
312 EAST CHARLES STREET
HAMMOND, LOUISIANA
May 13, 2025**

6:00pm or at conclusion of Public Hearing

I. CALL TO ORDER: Councilman Kip Andrews

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

III. PRAYER: Councilman Kip Andrews

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

V. APPROVAL OF MINUTES: Approval of Minutes of April 22, 2025 Meeting.

There was a motion by Councilman Leon and second by Councilwoman Gonzales to approve the minutes of April 22, 2025.

VI. FINAL ADOPTION OF AN ORDINANCE:

1. Final adoption of an ordinance to approve a request by Christopher Wells to rezone 1009 Mooney Avenue from RS-3 to RM-3. The property is located in District 3. The Planning & Zoning Commission recommended denial 2-1. (Charles Borchers IV)

There was a motion by **Councilman Wells** and second **Councilman Andrews** to approve request by Christopher Wells to rezone 1009 Mooney Avenue from RS-3 to RM-3. The property is located in District 3. The Planning & Zoning Commission recommended denial 2-1.

VOTE: Councilman Wells (Y) Councilman DiVittorio (Abstain) Councilwoman Gonzales (N) Councilman Leon (Y), Councilman Andrews (Y) Motion approved 3-1

VII. INTRODUCTION OF ORDINANCE:

1. Introduction of an ordinance to adopt the City of Hammond's budget for the Fiscal Year 2025-2026 with a budget work session to follow on May 30, 2025 and a public hearing to follow on June 10, 2025.

Charles Borchers IV, gave an overview of budget.

Sal Nicolosi, asked about the prior year budget

There was a motion by **Councilman Andrews** and second **Councilman Leon** to introduce an ordinance to adopt the City of Hammond's budget for the Fiscal Year 2025-2026 with a budget work session to follow on May 30, 2025 and a public hearing to follow on June 10, 2025.

VOTE: Councilman Wells (Y) Councilman DiVittorio (Y) Councilwoman Gonzales (Y) Councilman Leon (Y), Councilman Andrews (Y) Motion approved 5-0

VIII. RESOLUTIONS:

1. A resolution to authorize Hammond Downtown Development District to serve, sell, or otherwise handle alcohol at the following events: Hammond Live, June 13th, July 18th, 5-8PM, at Cate Square Park. **Michelle Kendall**, explained the event.

Councilman Andrews, expressed his concern about selling alcohol in the park.

Councilman Wells, asked questions about selling alcohol in the park.

There was a motion by **Councilman Wells** and second **Councilwoman Gonzales** authorizing the Hammond Downtown Development District to to serve, sell, or otherwise handle alcohol at the following events: Hammond Live, June 13th, July 18th, 5-8PM, at Cate Square Park.

VOTE: Councilman Wells (Y) Councilman DiVittorio (abstain) Councilwoman Gonzales (Y) Councilman Leon (Y), Councilman Andrews (abstain) Motion approved 3-0

2. A resolution to grant a waiver of the City of Hammond's Open Container law to the Hammond Downtown Development District at the following events: Hammond Live, June 13th, July 18th, 5-8PM, at Cate Square Park. (Michelle Kendall)

There was a motion by **Councilwoman Gonzales** and second **Councilman Wells** to grant a waiver of the City of Hammond's Open Container law to the Hammond Downtown Development District at the following events: Hammond Live, June 13th, July 18th, 5-8PM, at Cate Square Park.

VOTE: Councilman Wells (Y) Councilman DiVittorio (abstain) Councilwoman Gonzales (Y) Councilman Leon (Y), Councilman Andrews (abstain) Motion approved 3-0

3. A resolution to authorize Hammond Downtown Development District to serve, sell, or otherwise handle alcohol at the following event: Pavilion Grand Opening, July 31st, 3-8PM, at the Downtown Pavilion.

Michelle Kendall requested that the item be tabled.

There was a motion by **Councilwoman Gonzales** and second **Councilman Andrews** to table the request to serve, sell, or otherwise handle alcohol at the following event: Pavilion Grand Opening, July 31st, 3-8PM, at the Downtown Pavilion.

VOTE: Councilman Wells (Y) Councilman DiVittorio (Y) Councilwoman Gonzales (Y) Councilman Leon (Y), Councilman Andrews (Y) Motion approved to table 5-0

4. A resolution to grant a waiver of the City of Hammond's Open Container law to the Hammond Downtown Development District at the following event: Pavilion Grand Opening, July 31st, 3-8PM, at the Downtown Pavilion.

Michelle Kendall asked that the item be table.

There was a motion by **Councilwoman Gonzales** and second **Councilman Andrews** to table the request to for the City of Hammond's Open Container law to the Hammond Downtown Development District at the following event: Pavilion Grand Opening, July 31st, 3-8PM, at the Downtown Pavilion.

VOTE: Councilman Wells (Y) Councilman DiVittorio (Y) Councilwoman Gonzales (Y) Councilman Leon (Y), Councilman Andrews (Y) Motion approved to table 5-0

5. A resolution to authorize Hammond Downtown Development District to serve, sell, or otherwise handle alcohol at the following event: Hot August Stroll, August 23rd, 8AM-8PM, the event boundaries are E. and W. Robert St, N. and S. Cherry St, E. and W. Coleman Ave, and N. and S. Magnolia St, and include Railroad Park, the 100 block of W Charles near Cate Square Park, and Cate Square Park.

Michelle Kendall, explained the event.

There was a motion by **Councilwoman Gonzales** and second **Councilman Leon** to authorize Hammond Downtown Development District to serve, sell, or otherwise handle alcohol at the following event: Hot August Stroll, August 23rd, 8AM-8PM, the event boundaries are E. and W. Robert St, N. and S. Cherry St, E. and W. Coleman Ave, and N. and S. Magnolia St, and include Railroad Park, the 100 block of W Charles near Cate Square Park, and Cate Square Park.

VOTE: Councilman Wells (Y) Councilman DiVittorio (Y) Councilwoman Gonzales (Y) Councilman Leon (Y), Councilman Andrews (abstain) Motion approved 4-0

6. A resolution to grant a waiver of the City of Hammond's Open Container law to the Hammond Downtown Development District at the following event: Hot August Stroll, August 23rd, 8AM-8PM, the event boundaries are E. and W. Robert St, N. and S. Cherry St, E. and W. Coleman Ave, and N. and S. Magnolia St, and include Railroad Park, the 100 block of W Charles near Cate Square Park, and Cate Square Park. (Michelle Kendall)

There was a motion by **Councilman Leon** and second **Councilman DiVittorio** to grant a waiver of the City of Hammond's Open Container law to the Hammond Downtown Development District at the following event: Hot August Stroll, August 23rd, 8AM-8PM, the event boundaries are E. and W. Robert St, N. and S. Cherry St, E. and W. Coleman Ave, and N. and S. Magnolia St, and include Railroad Park, the 100 block of W Charles near Cate Square Park, and Cate Square Park.

VOTE: Councilman Wells (Y) Councilman DiVittorio (Y) Councilwoman Gonzales (Y) Councilman Leon (Y), Councilman Andrews (abstain) Motion approved 4-0

7. A resolution to authorize We Didn't Planet LLC to serve, sell, or otherwise handle alcohol at the following events: Planet in the Park, June 7th, August 9th, 11AM-6PM, at Cate Square Park

There was a motion by **Councilman Andrews** and second **Councilwoman Gonzales** to remove from the agenda the resolution to authorize We Didn't Planet LLC to serve, sell, or otherwise handle alcohol at the following events: Planet in the Park, June 7th, August 9th, 11AM-6PM, at Cate Square Park

VOTE: Councilman Wells (Y) Councilman DiVittorio (Y) Councilwoman Gonzales (Y) Councilman Leon (Y), Councilman Andrews (y) Motion approved 5-0

8. A resolution to grant a waiver of the City of Hammond's Open Container law to We Didn't Planet LLC at the following events: Planet in the Park, June 7th, August 9th, 11AM-6PM, at Cate Square Park. There was a motion by **Councilman Andrews** and second **Councilman DiVittorio** to remove from the agenda the resolution to grant a waiver of the City of Hammond's Open Container law to We Didn't Planet LLC at the following events: Planet in the Park, June 7th, August 9th, 11AM-6PM, at Cate Square Park.

VOTE: Councilman Wells (Y) Councilman DiVittorio (Y) Councilwoman Gonzales (Y) Councilman Leon (Y), Councilman Andrews (Y) Motion approved 5-0

9. A resolution to ratify and reject all bids received for "Hammond Community Center Addition." **Charles Borchers IV**, explained that all bides were over budget with the exception of one which was under budget but had a mistake and they would not honor the price. He stated they will have to start the process over.

There was a motion by **Councilman Andrews** and second **Councilman DiVittorio** to reject all bids received for "Hammond Community Center Addition."

VOTE: Councilman Wells (Y) Councilman DiVittorio (Y) Councilwoman Gonzales (Y) Councilman Leon (Y), Councilman Andrews (Y) Motion approved 5-0

10. A resolution authorizing the Mayor to enter into an agreement with *The Daily Star* to serve as the City's official journal of record from July 1, 2025 through June 30, 2026.

Charles Borchers IV, explained item.

There was a motion by **Councilwoman Gonzales** and second **Councilman Wells** authorizing the Mayor to enter into an agreement with *The Daily Star* to serve as the City's official journal of record from July 1, 2025 through June 30, 2026.

VOTE: Councilman Wells (Y) Councilman DiVittorio (Y) Councilwoman Gonzales (Y) Councilman Leon (Y), Councilman Andrews (Y) Motion approve 5-0

11. A resolution approving the City's holiday closing schedule for Fiscal Year 2025-2026. (**Charles Borchers IV**)

There was a motion by **Councilwoman Gonzales** and second **Councilman Leon** approving the City's holiday closing schedule for Fiscal Year 2025-2026.

VOTE: Councilman Wells (Y) Councilman DiVittorio (Y) Councilwoman Gonzales (Y) Councilman Leon (Y), Councilman Andrews (Y) Motion approved 5-0

12. A resolution authorizing the Mayor to renew a 5-year agreement with Axon Enterprise, Inc. in the amount of \$445,502.88 (\$89,100.58 per year) under State Contract 4400028582 for licensing, services, including cloud storage, warranties, and upgrades for the Police Department's body cameras.

Charles Borchers IV, explained the item.

Councilman Andrews, stated there needs to be a better level of transparency.

Stanley Campbell, District 1, stated his concerns and that trust needs to be regained with body cameras and equipment should be used for its intended purpose. He asked about the police department policies and procedures and stated they were not on the website.

Mayor Panepinto, explained the process and referenced civil service.

Councilman DiVittorio, stated that he supports the body cameras but he heard that they were not being used and the cameras should be used and he asked about the consequences of not using them.

Pam Haynes, asked does the cameras have to be renewed for 5 years because of how technology is changing.

Charles Borchers, explained that the contract includes upgrades.

Tracy Wells, Mooney Ave, asked if they could use the IT Department and that there were questions that still needed to be answered.

Councilman Wells, stated that he wanted to look at the cameras in Mooney Park and Clark Park. He stated that they need to get control of the gun violence and the cameras need to be working in the parks.

Councilman Andrews, stated there needs to be transparency and accountability.

There was a motion by **Councilman Andrews** and second **Councilman Wells** to table a resolution authorizing the Mayor to renew a 5-year agreement with Axon Enterprise, Inc. in the amount of \$445,502.88 (\$89,100.58 per year) under State Contract 4400028582 for licensing, services, including cloud storage, warranties, and upgrades for the Police Department's body cameras.

VOTE: Councilman Wells (Y) Councilman DiVittorio (Y) Councilwoman Gonzales (Y) Councilman Leon (N), Councilman Andrews (Y) Motion approved to table 4-1

13. A resolution to ratify proposals received for "Mooney Avenue Park Splash Pad" (RFP 25-11) and award a contract in the amount of \$123,000 to the lowest responsive and responsible proposer, Francise Horticultural Services pending concurrence from the State Land and Water Conservation Fund Program.

Charles Borchers IV, explained the item.

Councilwoman Gonzales left the meeting

There was a motion by **Councilman Andrews** and second **Councilman Wells** to ratify proposals received for "Mooney Avenue Park Splash Pad" (RFP 25-11) and award a contract in the amount of \$123,000 to the lowest responsive and responsible proposer, Francise Horticultural Services pending concurrence from the State Land and Water Conservation Fund Program.

VOTE: Councilman Wells (Y) Councilman DiVittorio (Y) Councilwoman Gonzales (absent) Councilman Leon (Y), Councilman Andrews (Y) Motion approved 4-0

14. A resolution to appoint Nicolas LeBlanc to the Hammond Historic District Commission for the remainder of a 4-year term ending December 31, 2028. Mr. LeBlanc will be completing the term of Brandon Recotta, who has stepped down after being reappointed to the Commission in December 2024.

Heather Diebold, Hammond Historic District, presented information on Mr. LeBlanc.

Councilwoman Gonzales, returned to the meeting

Mr. LeBlanc was present to answer questions.

There was a motion by **Councilman Andrews** and second **Councilman DiVittorio** to appoint Nicolas LeBlanc to the Hammond Historic District Commission for the remainder of a 4-year term ending December 31, 2028.

VOTE: Councilman Wells (Y) Councilman DiVittorio (Y) Councilwoman Gonzales (Y) Councilman Leon (Y), Councilman Andrews (Y) Motion approved 5-0

15. A resolution supporting the submission of a \$10,000 application to the Louisiana Main Street Restoration Grant Program for improvements to the Levy Building.

Charles Borchers IV, explained the needed work.

There was a motion by **Councilman Andrews** and second **Councilwoman Gonzales** supporting the submission of a \$10,000 application to the Louisiana Main Street Restoration Grant Program for improvements to the Levy Building.

VOTE: Councilman Wells (Y) Councilman DiVittorio (Y) Councilwoman Gonzales (Y) Councilman Leon (Y), Councilman Andrews (Y) Motion approved 5-0

16. A Resolution to request an Attorney General Opinion Regarding Guns in City Parks and Recreation Areas.

Councilman Andrews, explained that he is concerned about the guns in the park.

Stanley Campbell, thanked the administration and police for removing guns from the community. He stated that there was a huge uptick in violent crimes in our area and we need to reduce the gun violence. He shared information about a community youth event on May 20th in Amite to try and reduce gun violence.

Councilman Wells, expressed his concerns and stated that no one should carry guns in the parks.

Jacqueline Taylor, expressed her concerns and stated we got to do better.

There was a motion by Councilman Andrews and second Councilman Wells to request an Attorney General Opinion Regarding Guns in City Parks and Recreation Areas.

VOTE: Councilman Wells (Y) Councilman DiVittorio (Y) Councilwoman Gonzales (Y) Councilman Leon (Y), Councilman Andrews (Y) Motion approved 5-0

17. A resolution to approve the engagement of Deborah Villio to represent the City of Hammond and its employees in cases where there is conflict of interest with the City attorney's representation.

Andre Coudrain, explained the item.

Stanley Campbell, District 1, asked about the cost to the city.

Councilman Wells, asked about her ability to be present at court appearances.

Andre Coudrain, explained that she has other attorney's in her office.

Councilman Wells, asked what was done in the past.

Andre Coudrain, explained the process and what was done previously.

There was a motion by Councilwoman Gonzales and second Councilman Leon to approve the engagement of Deborah Villio to represent the City of Hammond and its employees in cases where there is conflict of interest with the City attorney's representation.

VOTE: Councilman Wells (Y) Councilman DiVittorio (Y) Councilwoman Gonzales (Y) Councilman Leon (Y), Councilman Andrews (Y) Motion approved 5-0

IX. REPORTS:

Mayor: stated that selling alcohol in the parks is not a good idea. He asked that they think about it. He stated the that downtown is doing well and businesses are doing well, but the crowds are getting bigger and harder to control. He expressed his concern about events in the streets and he thinks that after dark event should be shutting down.

Councilwoman Gonzales asked about the process according to the Municode. She stated that she thinks that it is up to the Mayor to make the decision about the item coming to the council.

Mayor stated that times are changing and can get worse.

Councilwoman Gonzales, asked about the process, something with the Mayor giving his blessing for the people/organization to come to the council. She thinks that before it comes to the city council it needs to be approved by the Mayor according to the code.

Andre Coudrain City Attorney, stated that the Mayor has the authority to approve but it doesn't speak to what happens if he denies it and can they appeal to the council. He stated that generally you can't have alcohol in parks unless there is a special permit.

Mayor, spoke of stopping events at 8pm and nothing good happens after 12:00 am. After dark people can disperse and go into the businesses.

Council:

Councilman Wells, stated he hope that something can be done about the bars closing at 12 am because they have issues. He stated they need to start shutting the bars and resturants at 12:00 am. He thanked the city council and stated he would like to go see the cameras/monitors.

Mayor, stated the City of Ruston which has two universities close to it shuts down the bars at 12:00 am.

Councilman DiVittorio, asked about the drainage behind the Hammond Housing Authority, water backing up in the property behind it off of Timberlane.

Councilman Andrews, asked for an update on Martin Luther King Park.

Charles Borchers, gave an update.

Councilman Andrews, asked for a flood study update.

Charles Borchers, gave an update

Councilman Andrews, thanked Andrew for assisting him with an issue in his district regarding, rehab homes. Congratulated Councilwoman Gonzales on her award.

X . ADJOURN

There was a motion by **Councilman Andrews** and second **Councilwoman Gonzales** to adjourn the meeting. All members were in favor and the meeting was adjourned.

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

MAY 13, 2025

BEING 5 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.