

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, Tonia Banks

City Attorney, Andre Coudrain



**HAMMOND CITY COUNCIL
PUBLIC HEARING
AGENDA
312 EAST CHARLES STREET
HAMMOND, LOUISIANA
January 26, 2021
5:30pm**

I. CALL TO ORDER: Councilman Andrews, called Public Hearing to order at 5:30pm.

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

III. PUBLIC HEARING: NONE



**HAMMOND CITY COUNCIL
REGULAR SESSION AGENDA
312 EAST CHARLES STREET
HAMMOND, LOUISIANA
January 26, 2021
6:00pm or at conclusion of Public Hearing**

I. CALL TO ORDER: Councilman Andrews, called Public Hearing to order at 5:31pm.

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

III. PRAYER: Councilman Kip Andrews

**IV. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE: All veterans and active military, please render the proper salute.
Isiah Lewis (Westside Montessori)**

V. REPORTS:

1. Mayor: 500 lbs. of rainbow trout were placed in Zemurray Park. Mayor informed everyone to stay safe with COVID and be vigilant.

2. Council: Councilman DiVittorio, looking at the first Housing Committee meeting in February- once everything is confirmed he will announce the date.

Councilman Wells, announced Mrs. Wanda Davis to come up to the podium.

Wanda Davis, stated she's a resident of Greenville Park Subdivision 110 E. Louisa West Street.

Stated she spoke with Councilman Wells, about the intersection of Washington Ave., and Louisa West Street. This has been a dangerous corner over the past years which she lived there for 59 yrs., and noticed numerous

accidents and many have not been reported- stated she could give an account because she has had an accident there. The reason she didn't report the accident was because of the fear of retaliation. Over the years the shrubbery and other things that's there you cannot see oncoming traffic and she asked for 4 way stop sign to be placed.

Mayor, since the shrubbery has been cut can you clearly see?

Wanda Davis, if someone is parked in the driveway you can't see from the Eastside of that corner if you're looking to the Southside because if cars are parked in the driveways you can't see and this has been a problem in this area for years. There have been several accidents within the last year and none of them reported.

Mayor, stated Councilman Wells said he will have someone to come up and speak about the accidents in the area. We usually go by statistics but we don't want anyone to get hurt so the City will look into putting a stop sign up.

Councilman Wells, thanked Isiah Lewis which is a future leader.

Mrs. Muse shared with the board anyway she could assist children as a Counselor she would because they are our future and she thanked Councilman Andrews for the invite.

Councilman Wells, asked has anyone taken Mr. CC Gaiennie place in the building department?

Lacy Landrum, stated the City has received several applications, the job posting has expired and the HR Department will review. There are 2 potential applicants at this time with certifications.

Councilman Wells, Loretta Severan has retired after 31 years of service this will be a big loss for the City and who is in place to take her place?

Lacy Landrum, stated Jacqueline Browder is overseeing the department and this job position will be posted hopefully by tomorrow. We have been reviewing the description and talking about priority and needs but there will be a full search for this position

Mayor, Lorretta has guided him through the process since he's been with the City. She guided right and fair and handled her role professionally and she will be missed.

Councilman Wells, stated she provided a two week notice and she asked if there is a need for her to assist in training for the next person in charge. The City has a major issue, a person just don't wake up and say they quit. People are quitting because they are being forced out and the City will run into some lawsuits. The City needs more diversity and there is only one black in the Administration. There is not enough diversity in the City and we're in a Country that needs to be healed and it needs to start now and Hammond is a small portion of the World that needs to be healed. He's telling people that the City has openings and go complete an application and everyone should have a chance. Syeda Naeem took a black man's place in Accounting. Human Resource and Accounting are the two biggest department we have. She was head of department for 6 years with no audit mistakes with a total of 15 years of service with the City. How will her position be replaced?

Lacy Landrum, stated it's also being advertised and Syeda left to take a higher paying job

Councilman Wells, asked who is running the Financial Department

Lacy Landrum, stated myself and Laura Hammet

Councilman Wells, for accountability, who has access to the accounts and the money?

Lacy Landrum, stated a segregation of duties is being maintained and she has spoken to the auditors about the City's plan on who is doing what to make sure to maintain the City maintains the segregation of duties.

Councilman Wells, there is no need for 1 year from now there being a financial problem where money is missing? Who has access to the computers in the financial department?

Lacy Landrum, stated everyone has different types of permissions and levels based on the segregation of duties. This is why we're working close to the auditors to make sure we don't change any the patterns, behaviors, or permissions that we violate the segregation of duties this is our internal controls. It takes multiple people to approve transactions on every level. Also, it's recorded in both of the systems as to who is doing what and its time stamped and the auditors can review at any time and it cannot be edited.

Councilman Wells, concerned of the access of the funds and he asks questions because he wants everything on record. He challenges the Councilman to ask more questions about the City. This weekend there has been a lot of problems with the Sewer- he asked Mr. Palermo to come and speak concerning the problem in district #3.

Guy Palermo, stated it rained and in the three pumps at the station the water reached a certain level. The two pumps that were running kept the level down where it wouldn't overflow. The third pump tripped out which tripped the breaker and it was reset and back on line and he checked manholes. It must have been a power glitch that tripped the breaker.

Councilman Wells, is there a way that when a pump goes out that you're contacted?

Guy Palermo, there is an alarm but, water did not reach that high- the 2 pumps kept the water level where it was it was not high enough to trip the alarm.

Councilman Wells, stated he is glad Guy attended the meeting and now you can see the issue. There is a sewer issue in District #3 - we need to sit down and see what is going on.

Guy Palermo, stated the system is better now than it was before- it takes time and you cannot control power.

Councilman Andrews, with the open position with the Historical District-how is this going?

Lacy Landrum, stated there are 3 applicants and they are being reviewed.

Councilman Andrews, stated next month will be the Wilbert Dangerfield Award - if anyone else would like to share the duties he's open.

Councilwoman Gonzales, asked the Council clerk to send the resolution to the Council to review.

VI. Minutes of January 12, 2021: There was a motion by Councilwoman Gonzales and second by Councilman Leon to approve the minutes of January 12, 2021.

Vote: Councilwoman Gonzales (Y), Councilman Andrews (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 demolition of a property located at 128 Moran St., (94%) damaged located in Council District 1. Notices sent to Betty Whittington, Cornelia Harris, Laurence Charles Harris, and Rose Harris Hollins. Bobby Mitchell, stated his recommendation is to demolish and he's been in communication with one of the owners Betty Whittington. She has spoken with her Councilman which is Councilman Andrews, and she's in favor of doing her own demolition.

Councilman Andrews, stated he has a letter from Mrs. Whittington, the letter will be provided to the Council Clerk for the record - she did not attend due to illness. Mrs. Whittington is in the process of speaking with someone about demolishing the home and asking for additional time to take care.

Councilwoman Gonzales, stated she was in favor of 60days

Bobby Mitchell, recommended demolition with the option to allow the owner to do demolition within 60 days.

There was a motion by Councilwoman Gonzales and second by Councilman DiVittorio to approve demolition for 60 days with option of homeowner to demolish a property located at 128 Moran St., (94%) damaged located in Council District 1. Notices sent to Betty Whittington, Cornelia Harris, Laurence Charles Harris, and Rose Harris Hollins.

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

2. A resolution authorizing demolition of a property located at 311 S Linden St., (93%) damaged located in Council District 2. Notices sent to Thelma L. Rudison, Phetima A. Myers, Ms. Lovely Jones, Ruenell Rudison, and Charles Reid. Bobby Mitchell, recommendation is to demolish and there is family present. This property has deteriorated over some time.

Phetima Myers, 311 S Linden, Hammond, would like to demolish the property

Raneisha Black, 9415 West Acres Place, a friend of Ms. Phetima and has been working with her. Ms. Phetima stated she has a case with the Adult protective services for abuse and while this is under investigation we're requesting additional time and she understands the property needs to be demolished but, she would like to facilitate the demolition herself.

Councilwoman Gonzales, how much time?

Raneisha Black as much that can be given

Councilman Wells, a lot of time they give 90 days and will 90 days be enough

Raneisha Black, this would be a blessing because of the case with the state due to her funds being taken

Councilman Wells, this has been brought up every year. After 90 days we do not want to continue with this problem if 90 days is enough time to have it demolished I have no issue.

Councilwoman Gonzales, its 90 days from today

Bobby Mitchell, its 90 days from tonight's decision

Councilman Wells, the last time we were told once they receive their permit

Bobby Mitchell, it was not recommended by me

Andre Coudrain, if she gets the permit within 90days is this satisfactory?

Bobby Mitchell, I would like the 90 days as the compliance date for completion

Councilman DiVittorio, do we need a timeframe to file for the permit

Bobby Mitchell, the demolition permit states there is a 30 day window to complete. Do not want to encourage to wait 60 days then inquire about the permit. We have the right to extend the timeframe.

Raneisha Black, will be assisting Phetima- is there any paperwork that could be provided with guidelines of what steps needs to be taken.

Councilman DiVittorio, this is zoned residential and this would be a residential permit

Raneisha Black, what is the process?

Bobby Mitchell, once you acquire a permit you want to hire someone or yourself you want to make sure the property is safe. You're welcome to come to come by the permit office at 219 E Robert Street we would be happy to assist.

Councilman Wells, customers should be able to get information online

Councilwoman Gonzales, looked through 2019 minutes to search demolitions so it could be clear of what was done in the past. The majority are within a certain amount of days and it's from the date we made the ruling that's how many days the structure has to be demolished by the City or owner. Twice ruling were made specific to when a permit was pulled and how many days they had to pull the permit and apply a different timeline based on permit. In 90 days it will need to be down

Bobby Mitchell, a permit specifies 30 days from the date of the permit but our office has the right to give an extension. I will follow the rule of the Council - it negates the 30 days allowance of the permit if it surpasses the 90 days, they have to stay within that 90 day window.

Councilwoman Gonzales, would like to stick to the 90 days as the deadline if something comes up maybe we could reevaluate but, it has to be well ahead of the 90 days.

Councilman Wells, so much is being left on the job site and its need to be clear. Property needs to be clean after demolished- all rules need to be clear.

Bobby Mitchell, this home is raised which is on blocks. The blocks will removed as well as all the piping and plumbing and the ground will be leveled. The contract is from corner to corner which is the new rule if the owner is demolishing they just need to meet the criteria of high grass as long as there is no trash or debris.

Councilman DiVittorio, has the document been revised

Bobby Mitchell, yes

Mayor, if a house is on a slab does that slab goes?

Bobby Mitchell, if owner would like to retain their slab they have the right to keep it. Jana will be handling this through purchasing and it would in the request for bids

Councilman Wells, is the City required to remove everything?

Bobby Mitchell, correct

Councilman Wells, when will this process start?

Bobby Mitchell, this started from the date of Council meeting in June when Council made this determination. Previous bids that were not held to that stipulation the bids were based on previous criteria.

Councilman Wells, would like to see this in black in white. If the owner or the City is tearing down a home it should be clear across the board.

Bobby Mitchell, there are rules in place

Councilman DiVittorio, ask that he receive an email of the rules and guidelines

Raneisha Black, ask for a homeowner demolition package

Bobby Mitchell, stated it is part of your demolition permit

Councilman Wells, presented a slide to the Council of a home that was demolished by a contractor in district #3. The reason for the slide is to show the property and how it was left. Councilman Wells, asked if the owner or City demolished this home.

Bobby Mitchell, the City hired a contractor under the previous requirements

Councilman Wells, stated these are pictures he took at the property where the slab was left. He asked if the tree was down the time of the contractor.

Bobby Mitchell, it fell a few days after the job was complete and there are after photos before the tree. The owner is in process of getting the tree cut up.

Councilman Wells, this is in district # 3 and he can speak on it. There is a whole slab left and the property is up for sale look at how much the City will lose on trying to sale something verses the property being cleaned off. If we're going to do this let's do it the correct way. Whatever the rules are set them Bobby said the new rules were applied in June and this contract was given in July.

Bobby Mitchell, the bids were prior to the new rules

Councilman Wells, is this where the contractor was upset that he bid on and he didn't receive them.

Steven Quinn, 900 S. Mooney, stated he has an email from Ms. Jana that we discussed the issue about the requirement's, and the standards that were going to be set by demolitions. He's not clear about the previous contract on the last house in district #3 but it was pulled back from previous bids and Jana set the standards out for the new methods of how demolitions should be done. Stated he did not bid on the second set of demolitions because it met new standards and requirements. He could have bided on the demolitions if the standards were under previous standards. Bids were not resent out again and do not understand how this house was done without all contractors not being notified that there was opportunity to bid on old standards and new standards were sent out.

Andre Coudrain, this was a claim brought against the City that individuals were in the gap when transitioning from one to another and questions about what was required and the City. The claim was settled with the contractor that demolished this home and part of settlement is he honored his bid the first time and he resolved his claim with the City. He was the low bidder.

Lacy Landrum, the only one that had bid under new standards was 611 Magazine and this is only one under new standards

Councilman Wells, we have to show accountability- there needs to be a list in the building permit office that show who has entered the offices. The City will have lawsuits and he get calls about the complaints from that office because the always turning them down.

Eric Brumfield, 47154 Grecco Road, this seems to be an occurring issue and here to speak on his interest. Stated he won 611 Magazine Street but all bids were rescinded then place back up for bid and someone else bided lower. He would like clarification at least transparency how this process is going forward. There was no knowledge there was a settlement and we were understanding it was going to be resubmitted and he don't trust the system. He was following the guidelines of the new rules that was emailed concerning bids and he would like some type of answer.

Councilman DiVittorio, the contractor that settled did he do the removal of the new standards

Andre Coudrain, under the standard of his bid the old rules and guidelines applied. Going forward there is a new process and this was part of the problem – it was confusing and misunderstanding and individuals were caught in the gap in this transition

Councilman Wells, contractors trying to bid on the new standards not old standards. When do the new rules start?

Andre Coudrain, now, the City is starting over and trying to create a new process

Councilman DiVittorio, thinks the problem was transparency letting these guys know there was a settlement.

Lacy Landrum, the new bid packet has the new checklist

Steven Quinn, the contractor was paid without a permit

Councilman Wells, this is an issue that needs to get straight

Bobby Mitchell, didn't move forward because of issue of notice in addition these were new bids that was not awarded. The building department is doing their job and the documentation shows we're doing the same thing each time. The previous set of bids were being bided on for the previous process the new bids that are coming after that time are bided and clear on Jana description what needs to be removed there is no conflict of understanding. Mr. Brumfield won the bid no work was done on site and he won that bid.

Steven Quinn, no permits were pulled

Bobby Mitchell, permits were pulled they're in the council packets

Lacy Landrum, there were further documentation that was shown to the City Attorney that resulted in a settlement.

Steven Quinn, if this was the case no one should be paid

Councilman Wells, stated Bobby, Jana, & Andre need to get together and speak on demolition. When this come before us this should already be set in stone it should be across the board and straight. It should be in black and white where everyone has the rules we would not have to continue to speak on these problems.

Councilman DiVittorio, there is an issue here something was mishandled and hopefully this gets straightened out.

Lacy Landrum, asked Council Clerk Tonia Banks to send out the new guidelines to all Council members.

Mayor, now everything is in black and white to move forward

Councilman Wells, asked that on Perkins Drive he would like another bid to get the slab removed

Bobby Mitchell, this can't be done because it was bided under old criteria and the owner wanted to keep the slab

Councilman Wells, the owner should had demolished the home down. We can't go by what the owner say

Mayor, if the City tears it down the owner has no options

Bobby Mitchell, this is under the old rule

Demetrius Carter, 401225 Dunson Road Ponchatoula, had an issue brought it before the Council and it was resolved. The houses were bided on and then pulled and all houses were supposed to be under the new rule the problem is back door deals and it's causing a ruffle. If Jana supposed to take care of this then Bobby should not have nothing to do with it. Stated he did not receive no emails, phone calls on any bids. Everybody needs to follow the new process.

Councilman Wells, Mr. Carter has shared with other contractors about the City and that's why some of them have worked with the City.

There was a motion by Councilman Wells and second by Councilman DiVittorio to allow 90 days to demolition from today of a property located at 311 S Linden St., (93%) damaged located in Council District 2. Notices sent to Thelma L. Rudison, Phetima A. Myers, Ms. Lovely Jones, Ruenell Rudison, and Charles Reid.

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

3. A resolution authorizing demolition of a property located at 611 S Olive St., (92%) damaged located in Council District 2. Notices sent to Christopher Egan, Hancock Whitney Bank C/O Newman, Mathis, Bradly & Spedale, Karen Porter, and James Porter. Bobby Mitchell, there are some issues to TABLE

Andre Coudrain, stated Bobby sent out the notices he suggested but and there was a notice that wasn't given to a judgement holder and recommend that this be tabled.

Councilwoman Gonzales, do you have send new notices to everyone and what is the delay on the notice

Andre Coudrain, recommended to be tabled- stated a judgement holder who has a property interest in this that should have received a notice.

Frank DiVittorio, 1 Arbrook Circle, purchased the mortgage and started the process to purchase the property. Whitney bank had the mortgage but did not foreclose on it and they were willing to sell the note- he filed suit on the debt in August of 2020 and redeemed property taxes shortly after in 2020. He has a judgement against the owner and notice of seizure filed and in process of sheriff sale. This property on its way to be returned to commerce. Asked to deny the request.

There was a motion by Councilwoman Gonzales and second by Councilman Wells to Table demolition of a property located at 611 S Olive St., (92%) damaged located in Council District 2. Notices sent to Christopher Egan, Hancock Whitney Bank C/O Newman, Mathis, Bradly & Spedale, Karen Porter, and James Porter.

Vote: Councilwoman Gonzales (Y), Councilman Andrews (Y), Councilman DiVittorio (Abstain), Councilman Leon (Y) Councilman Wells (Y). Motion Approved 4- 1Abstain

Councilman Andrews stated moving forward with these demolition we're are going by the new rule

Councilman Wells, request the rules emailed

Lacy Landrum, stated the information is in the bid packet and Council can be added to the bid notices

Councilman DiVittorio, concerned about the percentages. There are some homes in his district that are bad but the percentage is at a lower percentage.

Bobby Mitchell, it's structural percentage

Councilman Wells, this should have been taken care of concerning not providing notices everyone needs to get notices

Mayor, thinks slabs should be taken out if homeowner demolishes

Councilman Wells, all slabs should be removed

Bobby Mitchell, will follow whatever council wishes.

4. A resolution authorizing the Mayor to enter into an Intergovernmental Agreement with Tangipahoa Parish Government for the overlay of the following streets: N Oak St, Lafitte St, Phoenix Square, Harden St Ext, E Hoover St, Ruth Dr, Caroline Dr., Harvey St, Octavia Dr, and Freret St. Lacy Landrum, Parish will start overlay on streets.

Councilwoman Gonzales, what is the situation with Octavia - the City is doing the work which is a low spot needing to be filled. Stated she would like to see this fixed before the Parish starts the overlay.

Lacy Landrum, will check into it

Councilman Wells, Professional Plaza off of Club Deluxe - the contractors did the overlay and he has seen the damage they did with the curbing which is an issue. If the contractor did damage who's paying for the damage.

Lacy Landrum, it was not the overlay contractors there were other construction going on at that time. We do not have clear records who did the damage. This is why the City is taken on the repairs.

Councilman Wells, this is a bill the City takes on - we need before and after pictures and he would like to see the bill.

Mayor, we would only know about it if we see it

There was a motion by Councilwoman Gonzales and second by Councilman Wells authorizing the Mayor to enter into an Intergovernmental Agreement with Tangipahoa Parish Government for the overlay of the following streets: N Oak St, Lafitte St, Phoenix Square, Harden St Ext, E Hoover St, Ruth Dr, Caroline Dr., Harvey St, Octavia Dr, and Freret St.

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

5. A resolution 1) supporting the submission of a \$51,750 application to the Assistance to Firefighters Grant Program to purchase communication equipment for the Hammond Fire Department (HFD); and 2) supporting a cash match of \$6,750 from the HFD. Charles Borchers IV, stated there is a cash match of 15% that will come from the fire department.

There was a motion by Councilman Leon and second by Councilman Wells 1) supporting the submission of a \$51,750 application to the Assistance to Firefighters Grant Program to purchase communication equipment for the Hammond Fire Department (HFD); and 2) supporting a cash match of \$6,750 from the HFD.

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

VIII. FINAL ADOPTION OF ORDINANCE: NONE

IX. INTRODUCTION OF ORDINANCE AND SET OF PUBLIC HEARING: NONE

Councilman Andrews asked can Council sit in on interviews for the open City positions

Lacy Landrum, stated the City has never done this before.

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

CERTIFICATION OF CLERK

I TONIA BANKS, CLERK OF COUNCIL DO HEREBY CERTIFY THAT THE ABOVE AND
FOREGOING IS A TRUE AND CORRECT RECITATION OF THE BUSINESS TRANSACTED AT THE
REGULAR MEETING OF THE CITY COUNCIL HELD **JANUARY 26, 2021**
BEING 7 PAGES IN LENGTH

TONIA BANKS

HAMMOND CITY COUNCIL CLERK

PRESIDENT, KIP ANDREWS

HAMMOND CITY COUNCIL

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