

**Special Service Area #61  
SSA Board of Commissioners Meeting**

**Minutes, October 21, 2015  
Chicago Innovation Exchange  
1462 E 53<sup>rd</sup> Street  
Chicago, IL**

**Present:** Greg Guttman, James Hennessy, Michael McGarry, Charles Newsome, Mary Rogel, George Rumsey

**Absent:** Anthony Fox, James Hanson, Allison Hartman, Jacqueline Jackson, Donna Trainor

**Also Present:** Eric Reaves; Representatives from Brinkman.

The meeting was called to order at 11:07 a.m. by Chair McGarry, who welcomed the community guests and thanked them for attending.

**Minutes.** Minutes for September 23, 2015, were approved as circulated after amending the attendance list to reflect that Jacqueline Jackson attended via teleconferencing.

**Financial Report.** Treasurer Guttman reported \$105,000 cash at the end of the period. We need to spend what we take in, but we also need to watch expenses so that income and expenses line up closely. Chair McGarry noted that this is our first time managing year end cash levels. The city recommends that revenue be spent in the calendar year during which the funds are disbursed. This can cause a cash flow gap during the first quarter of the calendar year that would last until the first tax disbursement is received in March. As a result of this gap, we may need to decide whether to stop spending money or to ask the SECC to take out a line of credit to meet our obligations. Chair McGarry explained that he, Treasurer Guttman, and Director Reaves have met with SECC Executive Director Wendy Williams, SECC Board Treasurer James Poueymirou, and the SSA Accountant Isaac Green in order to monitor SSA cash flow. He added that additional meetings will be held prior to year-end in order to review and forecast any potential cash flow gap. Chair McGarry continued that he will be attending the next meeting of the SECC Board of Directors and request that the SECC establish a line of credit that would cover any potential cash gap as well as provide flexibility to fund any program that may be needed during the first two months of the year.

**Updates.**

**Lake Park Median.** The representatives from Brickman addressed the Commissioners about the unique qualities of the Lake Park median that must be considered when beautifying the roadway. Because of the harsh conditions that exist there, the curbs have deteriorated, and an 18-inch perimeter affected by salting and plowing jeopardizes any plantings. No plant is hardy enough to withstand these conditions. In addition, the concrete collars around all the trees on the median are choking the trees. They made a number of recommendations.

- The curbs will need to be redone and the tree rings replaced to create a suitable foundation before beautifying. They recommended using pervious concrete which is cheaper in the long run, will last longer than regular concrete, and will allow drainage of water, obviating the need to install storm sewers. Salt washes out of it in 36 days.
- Create an artificial means to shield the plants, such as by elevating the plants or erecting a physical buffer. They suggested erecting steel girders as planters to mirror the railroad that parallels the street and presented two concept drawings to illustrate.
- Any beautification program that involves a traffic corridor will require extensive back and forth with CDOT to ensure that the design adheres to the City landscape ordinance, does not exceed 36 inches in height, and presents no visibility hazards at intersections. Brickman is willing to remain a partner but can suggest design firms that specialize in these types of design projects. Director Reaves has already spoken with two design firms that could do this project.

Chair McGarry noted that this is a fairly complicated process that could take until 2017 to complete. It will be expensive, and many things must be taken into consideration. However, once it is done, it will last for 25 years.

***Tree Replacement.*** Director Reaves reported that Brickman has replaced 16 trees on 53rd Street, making a considerable difference in how things look.

***Bike Racks.*** Director Reaves reported that the City has inspected each of the spots on the bike rack placement map prepared by Commissioner Hennessy and his assistant Aaron and has accepted all but one, which had to be changed because there was not enough space in the chosen spot. The map is currently with the City law department, and then it will go to the department that issues permits. Director Reaves would like to have the bike racks installed by the first part of November and is seeking a contractor to install them.

***Website.*** The website has been launched, and corrections are being made. Of the 400 businesses in the district, Director Reaves has spoken with approximately 300. He is instituting a Business of the Month feature on the home page but does not yet have a process for choosing it. The website will be updated on a daily basis. Because updating is so important, the Commissioners emphasized the importance of using available resources to accomplish this.

***Holiday Plans.*** Director Reaves reported that some merchants want to organize a stroll during the holidays. Santa will be included in marketing plans for the holidays.

***Halloween.*** The SSA in conjunction with the SECC will pass out candy at 1511 E. 53<sup>rd</sup> Street on Halloween. Director Reaves has requested that SSA businesses pass out candy from 3:00-7:00 p.m.

***Banners.*** Banners are scheduled to come down in October. However, since the banners have weathered so well, with only six being in bad shape, Director Reaves recommended that we keep them up through March 31. If any deteriorate because of the winter weather, they can be changed earlier. Director Reaves reported that merchants have not expressed a lot of interest in

advertising on the new banner. The Commissioners agreed with the plan to continue using the current banners through March 31.

***Video of Downtown Hyde Park Fest.*** Director Reaves has produced a video of Downtown Hyde Park Fest with the intention of putting it on the SSA website under Events. It can be used to help obtain sponsors for the 2016 event.

***Facade Improvement Program.*** Director Reaves has met twice with the owner of the building selected as the model for the facade improvement program. Funds will come from the 2016 budget because it will take time to get permits to begin the work. The landlord will participate in paying for the improvements.

***Farmers Market.*** Director Reaves reported that 7000 people have been through the market so far this season. The market will be open for two more weeks. He hopes for a full market next year and has begun recruiting vendors. Vendors pay \$30 per space, and some vendors take more than one spot.

***Small Business Saturday.*** As part of the roll out event, Director Reaves reported that he expects Valerie Jarrett will probably attend again this year and will visit two businesses. A passbook will be used again this year, though on a smaller scale and with coupons under \$25. Five businesses in the passbook will be from the SSA district.

Chair McGarry opened the floor for announcements and public comments.

There being no other business, the meeting was adjourned at 12:28 p.m. The next meeting will be December 9 at 11:00 a.m. at the Hyde Park Hyatt.

Respectfully submitted,

Mary J. Rogel  
Secretary, SSA 61