

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

**Minutes, March 16, 2016
Hyde Park Hyatt
5225 S. Harper, Chicago, IL**

Present: Greg Guttman, Allison Hartman, James Hennessy, Michael McGarry, Charles Newsome, Mary Rogel, George Rumsey, Brian Tijan

Absent: James Hanson

Called in but no line was available: Jacqueline Jackson

Also Present: Eric Reaves, Wendy Williams, Bethany Thomas

The meeting was called to order at 11:02 a.m. by Chair McGarry, who thanked everyone for attending. Vice Chair Rumsey took the minutes until Secretary Rogel arrived.

Minutes. Minutes for February 17, 2016, were approved as circulated.

Election of Officers. Commissioner Hartman moved to reappoint Chair McGarry, Vice Chair Rumsey, and Secretary Rogel for another two-year term. Commissioner Tijan seconded the motion, which carried unanimously. Secretary Rogel arrived after the vote was taken and continued taking the minutes.

Financial Report. As Treasurer Guttman began the financial report, Director Reaves reported that the first portion of the Spring tax payment, \$113,000, was received after the February books were closed. Another, slightly larger payment is expected in July. Cash on hand is now approximately \$118,000 minus current expenses.

The financial report is now being presented in a format that is easier to read and helps us keep track of where we are spending our money so that we can see whether we are investing in the community as we think is appropriate.

Director Reaves has begun working on the 2017 budget, which must be submitted in July. Last July we were expecting that we would have carryover into 2016. Because we received less in 2015 than had been projected, there was no carryover, and the 2016 budget must be modified. The 2017 budget will take these modifications into consideration.

Director Reaves went through the 2016 budget modifications line by line. A discussion ensued on the proposed expenditure of \$10,000 for social media to attract customers to the district. The Commissioners requested quarterly reports on the effectiveness of the social media strategy. They also suggested areas that may require special attention during the year, such as litter along the railroad embankment of Lake Park Avenue and litter that has lodged in the trees.

We may need to increase the amount allocated for the bookkeeper. The current bookkeeper is also working for the SECC, so expenses are being shared. We will also see an increase in the personnel category because the SSA will be picking up a larger portion of Director Reaves' salary and benefits. Prior to the creation of SSA #61, four local businesses established a grant to fund the SSA's start-up expenses, partially fund the hiring of the Executive Director, as well as fund other neighborhood improvements. Chair McGarry added that personnel expense will increase again in 2017 as the grant will be exhausted during this year.

The Commissioners would like to see the facade improvement program put back into the 2016 budget if the tax allotment turns out to be higher than expected.

Commissioner Hartman moved and Commissioner Newsome seconded that we approve the 2016 budget modifications. Approval was unanimous. Chair McGarry thanked Director Reaves for all the work he put into preparing the budget.

Auditor. Chair McGarry reviewed and gave to Treasurer Guttman an engagement letter for Auditor Alexander Manny. This is the same company who did the audit last year, to the satisfaction of the City and the Commissioners. Commissioner Tijan moved and Commissioner Rumsey seconded that we approve Alexander Manny as this year's auditor. The motion carried unanimously.

Update on LOC. Ms. Williams reported that the SECC board met and approved the 2015 audit. The SECC can now move forward with applying for the LOC. The SECC board approves of the SSA's recommendation to continue with the LOC even though it is not needed at the present time. It may be needed at the end of the year for the first quarter of 2017.

Updates.

Flower Baskets. Director Reaves received two responses to the RFP that he sent out for this year's flower basket contract. Brickman and Christy Webber both responded. Director Reaves recommended that we remain with Brickman because of their familiarity with the needs of our neighborhood and because we have a good working relationship with them, we received many compliments on last year's baskets, and they have been helpful when we needed estimates and advice that were not part of their contract with us. Commissioner Rumsey moved, Commissioner Hartman seconded, and the Commissioners voted unanimously to approve a new contract with Brickman.

Bike Racks and Banners. Director Reaves reported that the flower baskets, bike racks, and new banners are scheduled to be installed in the third week of April. He will send out a letter to all businesses that will have bike racks installed outside their establishments to inform them what is happening; and he will schedule a press conference to inform the neighborhood.

Farmers Market. Commissioners were given an opportunity to review the Rules of the market. Last year all vendors were in compliance. This year Director Reaves plans to enforce the rules to a greater degree so that the market will be more uniform in appearance. The large banner announcing the market will be changed in April. It will look pretty much the same this year as it did last year; and we will have a contract with the business whose wall we are using to display the banner. The market will also have a regular music program this year, organized by Amy Williams from CREO.

Announcements. After a question about purchasing trash cans, Chair McGarry opened the floor for announcements and public comments.

Stephanie Franklin announced the beginning of fundraising for the 25th annual 4th on 53rd celebration and requested volunteers to work on the project.

Wendy Williams introduced Bethany Thomas, from Comfort Me, who has applied to be an SSA Commissioner. She also announced that the Vitality Committee is working on a First Thursday promotion to encourage stores on 53rd, 55th, and 57th Streets to remain open until 9:00 p.m. and to offer something special to increase foot traffic. The first will be April 7. SECC is also hosting a fundraiser tomorrow to fund their beautification grants for the five communities they serve.

Secretary Rogel raised the problem of excessive noise from Streets and Sanitation workers leaving their truck engines running while they eat lunch. The sound reverberates between the office buildings. Commissioner Rumsey observed that they also obstruct traffic at the already congested intersection of 53rd and Lake Park/Old Lake Park. Ms. Williams will speak with the Commissioner of Streets and Sanitation.

There being no other business, the meeting was adjourned at 12:23 p.m. The next meeting will be April 20 at 11:00 a.m. at the Hyde Park Hyatt.

Respectfully submitted,
Mary J. Rogel
Secretary, SSA 61