

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

**Minutes, April 20, 2016
Hyde Park Hyatt
5225 S. Harper, Chicago, IL**

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

Attended by conference call: James Hanson, Jacqueline Jackson

Absent: Greg Guttman

Also Present: Eric Reaves, Wendy Williams, Reginald Mannie (auditor)

The meeting was called to order at 11:09 a.m. by Chair McGarry, who thanked everyone for attending.

Minutes. Minutes for March 16, 2016, were approved as circulated.

Financial Report. In Treasurer Guttman's absence, Chair McGarry gave the financial report. The first portion of the Spring tax payment was received in March, enabling us to pay our outstanding balance with the SECC. The new tracking spreadsheet enables us to more easily see how we are spending our money. Our biggest expenditure has been for the new bike racks, which total \$13,423, approximately half of our expenses. Other major expense categories were banners and sidewalk maintenance. The new spreadsheet also includes YTD for expenses so that we can see how much is left in each budget category.

Auditor. Auditor Reginald Mannie reviewed the 2015 Audited Financial Statements with the Commissioners. Our 2015 expenditures were greater than our revenue, and we ended the year with a deficit because we overspent the carryover. Auditor Mannie explained that expenditures are recorded when the liability is incurred, and income is recorded when the tax is levied. He recommended that we move funds between budget categories prior to paying expenditures and that we not spend anticipated income from late collection so that we do not overspend. The City wants to know when SSAs move funds to different line items because they want to consolidate the SSA budgets.

Auditor Mannie requested that a revised budget eliminating the carryover from last year be emailed to him in response to the audit. This reduces the 2016 budget by the amount of the overspending. Chair McGarry commented that a revised 2016 budget which eliminated the carryover from 2015 and the overspending was approved at the March 2016 Commissioner Meeting. He added that he and Treasurer Guttman will review the 2016 budget to confirm its consistency with the 2015 audit. This was followed by a discussion that included, among other things, the 2015 overspending, moving funds between budget categories and a new budget tracking sheet.

Auditor Mannie reported that management was responsive to the needs of the auditor. He will submit a final report, including responses. Commissioner Hartman moved to accept the audit report as presented, subject to the responses being reviewed by Treasurer Guttman. Commissioner Newsome seconded the motion, which carried unanimously.

Update on LOC. The tax anticipation loan has been approved and is available should we need it through the end of the year. It is renewable annually. We do not need a loan now because we received the Spring tax payment. Should we need it in the Fall, we will not have to repeat this process.

Tax Rate Discussion. We are in the third year of ten approved by City Council for the current tax appropriation. Chair McGarry commented that we have not increased the tax rate since the SSA was established and recommended it be reviewed for the 2017 budget. The review should include understanding the tax rate setting process and the impact a rate increase would have. We are currently at .67, and we have the option to increase the rate up to the cap of .98. Director Reaves has submitted questions to the City requesting information about the process and will report back at the May meeting.

Updates.

Website. Director Reaves sent Google analytics on the website to the Commissioners. He reported that the analytics improved as the problems with the website were resolved. It is now easier to navigate and hosted on an Apache server, which should decrease the sites loading time. Email any website problems to Director Reaves. Commissioner Hennessy offered the services of his assistant to help keep the website updated.

Farmers Market. Director Reaves had a meeting regarding the market on the previous day. He reported that 17 spaces are taken. There are three major farmers and 4-5 bakeries. He is still looking for olive oil and cheese vendors. Farmers are reporting a great planting season, and they expect the Spring harvest to be good. The market will feature music and activities to attract customers. Musicians will be acoustic so as not to interfere with businesses in the area. The new sign will be hung at the entrance to the market in the near future. Parking needs to be better advertised.

Sign on Lake Shore Drive. Director Reaves reported that we have received approval for a brown "attractions" sign announcing Downtown Hyde Park, with a logo and an arrow, but we will have to purchase it and have it made. It could be installed in three weeks.

Bike Racks. Bike racks are being shipped tomorrow. They will be received in Harper Court and will be installed by Clean Slate by the first week of May at the latest. Director Reaves will ask the *Herald* to take pictures at the kickoff of the installation.

Flower Baskets. Director Reaves reported that Brickman will have the flowers baskets installed sometime between now and next week, depending on the weather.

Banners. The banners have been a bigger challenge this year because of the high winds. Director Reaves reported that Bannerville replaced the banners that came down in the wind. A discussion ensued about the quality of the banners and the installation. The Commissioners felt that the colors are not as vibrant this year as they were last year and that the installers may not have been as experienced at hanging the banners. If they are installed too tautly, the wind will do more damage. Director Reaves will be speaking with the owner and will convey the Commissioners' concerns.

2017 Budget Process. Director Reaves sent out a request for comments and ideas from the Commissioners. He will include facade improvement in the 2017 budget.

Facade Program. Director Reaves had an architect take a look at the pilot project. He asked the architect to consider the whole area and to make some sketches with ideas to make that end of 53rd Street blend better with the rest of the district. The landlord has agreed to spend some money as part of the project.

Announcements. Chair McGarry opened the floor for announcements and public comments.

New Alderman. Mayor Emmanuel has appointed Sophia King as interim alderman. Wendy Williams will set up a meeting with Alderman King, Chair McGarry, Director Reaves, and herself to bring Alderman King up to date regarding the SSA and to invite her to an SSA meeting to meet the Commissioners.

Sidewalk Tiles. It looks like the broken tiles at 53rd and Lake Park will be getting a temporary fix until the City is ready to install the permanent tiles. Director Reaves contacted the new alderman, Sophia King, to get this done.

Tree Grates. New grates will be installed next week. One is missing in front of DARE, and the tree well fills with water during rain storms.

BrewFest. Jonathan Swain announced that BrewFest, June 4-5, which he produces in partnership with the Hyde Park Chamber of Commerce and the Hyde Park-Kenwood Community Conference, will move from Nichols Park to Harper Court this year. Music will be curated by the Silver Room, and 50 different brewers will bring their beers for sampling.

Noise and Congestion. Secretary Rogel thanked Ms. Williams for intervening with the Commissioner of Streets and Sanitation to request that Streets and Sanitation workers not leave their truck engines running while they eat lunch and obstruct traffic at the already congested intersection of 53rd and Lake Park/Old Lake Park. The area is significantly quieter, and traffic moves better.

There being no other business, the meeting was adjourned at 12:33 p.m. The next meeting will be May 18 at 7:00 p.m. at the Hyde Park Hyatt.

Respectfully submitted,
Mary J. Rogel, Secretary, SSA 61