

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

**Minutes, April 19, 2017  
Chicago Innovation Exchange/Polsky Center  
1462 E 53<sup>rd</sup> Street, Chicago, IL**

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

**Absent:** Jim Hanson

**Also Present:** Eric Reaves, Wendy Williams, Isaac Greene (accountant), Reginald Manning (auditor)

The meeting was called to order at 11:10 a.m. by Chair McGarry, who welcomed the public and thanked everyone for attending.

**Minutes.** Minutes for the February 15, 2017, meeting were approved with the following corrections:

- Jim Hennessy was not present, but Jim Hanson was
- The date of the January meeting was January 18, 2017
- The date of the next meeting is April 19, 2017
- The Event Policy document was approved subject to the recommendation by Commissioner Rumsey that funds not be provided for events without an invoice

**Auditor Report.** Auditor Reginald Manning presented the 2016 Audited Financial Statements. He reported that spending by the Commission in 2016 was close to what was budgeted. The excess of revenue over expenses was \$723. The accounting procedure has been changed from cash to accrual. Auditor Manning explained the process of notifying the City of amendments to the budget; the approval and the amendment need to be filed, and verification needs to be documented for the audit. Director Reaves will inquire to determine why verification has not been received from the City for the amendment that was posted and to review the rules for posting to the City Dashboard.

Auditor Manning stated that there is no need for a separate meeting with management. After an extensive discussion, Treasurer Guttman moved to accept the audit and release it to the City subject to the response to the inquiry by Director Reaves. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Tijan and passed unanimously.

**Financial Report.** Director Reaves reported that a budget tracking system has been devised. Treasurer Guttman reported that there is very little spending at this time of the year, and everything looks good.

**2018 Tax Rate.** Director Reaves reported that our current tax rate of 0.65% generates \$265,179 in income. In comparison, the authorized maximum of 0.95% would generate \$389,366, all other things being equal. The Commissioners determined that it is good practice to do an annual evaluation of the tax rate, i.e., to examine priorities and associated expenses in relation to what it would cost to accomplish those priorities, and to determine whether if the value generated exceeds the tax increase in any given year. Smaller tax increases are preferable to deferring expenditures until the point that a large tax increase becomes necessary. Chair McGarry noted that in the three years that SSA 61 has existed there has been no rate increase, which means that we are losing purchasing power to inflation. Our cap of 0.65% was set unusually low because we had been under the impression that we would have additional funding from the TIF that we did not get. Director Reaves will obtain data so that we can see how our SSA compares to others in the City and in surrounding areas in terms of total budget, maximum and minimum tax rates, and how other SSAs manage their tax rates. The Commissioners will review this information at the June meeting and vote in July whether or not there will be a change in the 2018 tax rate. No proposal is being made at this time for a tax increase.

**Events Policy Update.** Vice Chair Rumsey moved to approve the Events Policy as circulated; Treasurer Guttman seconded; and the motion was approved unanimously. Director Reaves has distributed the Events Policy that was circulated to the Commissioners in February to entities planning events during the coming year; and he is speaking with businesses to get their support for various large and small events appropriate to the proposed setting, such as small local entertainments that will not inconvenience neighbors but will activate the west end of 53<sup>rd</sup> Street.

#### **Updates.**

**Banners.** The new banners are up.

**Flower Baskets.** Flower baskets will be hung on May 22. Though the vendor has not yet spoken with the Committee (Rumsey, Hartman, Rogel) about what they are using, Director Reaves has been assured that this year's plantings will be more robust and nicer and will be watered.

**Steam Cleaning Spring Cleaning.** The first viaduct cleaning is scheduled for next week. Garbage can lids have been cleaned, and the tops are on. They will probably be cleaned again mid-season.

**Bike Racks.** The bike racks discussed previously were not purchased because the cost would have been double what we paid for the ones we have. We will wait until we can purchase 60 at a time so that we can get a better price. Fifteen abandoned bicycles were removed from the SSA District yesterday.

**Panhandlers.** The City Ordinance regarding panhandling is ambiguous. Because panhandling is particularly problematic in the center of Downtown Hyde Park, Director Reaves has developed some panhandling rules that are working well, e.g., no sitting, no loitering, no badgering.

**Hyde Park Service Business Initiative.** Director Reaves has been investigating a “Guerilla Marketing Initiative” for service businesses. The idea is to do a promotion in a short time frame. He will develop this idea further and test it with a service business to see whether it is worth pursuing.

**Farmers Market.** A new banner for the Farmers Market will go up soon near the site of the market. There will be new vendors as well as returning vendors.

***Contracts.***

- **Clean Slate:** We will be paying them a little less (\$27,820, down from \$29,211); we have stopped the Wednesday cleanup because the City cleans that day in the area that includes the District. The 2-year contract was given to Clean Slate because they were the only ones to bid on it. Motion to approve by Treasurer Guttman, second by Commissioner Newsome, unanimous approval.
- **Advanced ProClean:** Viaducts will be steam-cleaned in the Spring and in the Fall to coincide with events (\$4,350); and sidewalk cleaning will cost \$23,900. Motion to approve by Commissioner Hennessy, second by Commissioner Tijan, unanimous approval.
- **Bannerville:** No new brackets are needed; the cost for 110 banners is \$10,450. Motion to approve by Commissioner Hartman, second by Vice Chair Rumsey, unanimous approval.

**Strategic Planning.** Director Reaves requested that the Commissioners email suggestions to him for a list of Capital Projects that eventually will become part of the 2018 budget, such as new lighting under the viaducts to make them more inviting. Metra is willing to work with us on such a project. This is the time to look at the budget and what we would like to accomplish in the seven years remaining before the City would need to renew the SSA.

**SSA Commissioner Forum.** Director Reaves will speak at the SSA Commissioner Forum to be held at the Harold Washington Library for Commissioners and Service Providers. He will speak about the success of branding SSA 61, the only SSA that is branded and for which it received an award.

**Improvements to the View of Harper Court from 53<sup>rd</sup> Street.** There was discussion of a proposal being discussed by one of the businesses located at Harper Court. More information and a proposal will be forthcoming at the next meeting.

**Announcements.** Chair McGarry opened the floor for announcements and public comment.

There being no other business, the meeting was adjourned at 12:55 p.m. The next meeting will be June 21 at 11:00 a.m. at the Polsky Center, 1462 E 53<sup>rd</sup> Street, Chicago, IL. .

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