

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

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

Present: Greg Guttman, Jim Hanson, Allison Hartman, James Hennessy, Jacqueline Jackson (conferenced in at 11:23), Michael McGarry, Mary Rogel, George Rumsey.

Absent: Charles Newsome, Brian Tijan.

Also Present: Eric Reaves, Wendy Williams, Kim Webb from 5th Ward Alderman Leslie Hairston's office (conferenced in at 11:40), Kiana Varet from 4th Ward Alderman Sophia King's office (arrived 11:42).

The meeting was called to order at 11:00am by Chair McGarry, who welcomed the public and thanked everyone for attending.

Minutes. Minutes for the April 19, 2017 meeting were approved.

Financial Report. Details of the May financial report were reviewed by Treasurer Guttman and Director Reaves.

- **Farmers Market** funds are in a separate account and are subject to separate accounting. The expense of the Farmers Market is based on startup advertising and the purchase of specialized tents. Director Reaves reported that he had been buying tents every three months last year because they were being damaged by high winds. We are now using bigger and sturdier tents; we should be able to make up the cost from market proceeds. The Commissioners were reminded that income from the Farmers Market goes to the SECC which then transfers the money to the SSA.
- **Facade Improvement.** Director Reaves reported that he has been unable to find an architect to provide drawings for the proposed facade improvement pilot project because the job is too small. He is now looking for a student to do the drawings.
- **Garbage Remediation.** So far we have spent more than half of what we budgeted for the year. Director Reaves will confirm payments made with Accountant Green, as there may be some 2016 bills in the current figures. If necessary, we may need to transfer into garbage remediation some of the savings we realized by putting off purchase of bike racks.
- **Tree Replacement.** We will be putting in three or four trees on 55th Street this year to bring 55th Street into parity with the rest of the SSA District.

2018 Budget Approval and Tax Rate. The 2018 budget must be approved by the Commissioners and submitted before the end of June. Director Reaves reviewed items of the proposed budget line by line. The budget is based on the assumption that the tax rate will remain

the same. Director Reaves will incorporate several suggestions from the Commissioners and submit the budget to the City.

Director Reaves provided income projections for various tax rates. Our cap is 0.95%. If we raise the tax rate above the cap, it will be necessary to reconstitute the SSA. We would have to notify the City of such a plan by the end of June so that it could be voted by the City Council at the end of July. Our current tax rate is 0.65% and is the lowest in the City because we expected TIF money that we did not receive. We are operating with half of what we had expected. Further, we have not seen an increase in taxes collected in spite of all the business growth within the SSA District. The general feeling among the Commissioners is to leave the tax rate as is for one more year and then reevaluate.

Commissioner Hartman moved to keep the tax rate unchanged and approve the proposed budget. Commissioner Hennessy seconded the motion, and it was approved unanimously.

Proposal from Alderman King's Office. Ms. Varet raised the issue of traffic flow within the District and suggested that a study of the delivery process within the District could be helpful. The SSA did a parking and transportation study for Alderman Burns in 2014. Basically, there is no way for trucks to unload without obstructing traffic, and the alleys are impassable. Before we conduct another study, Director Reaves will look at the plan we already have and speak with business owners about what they need. City Ordinance already requires that alleys be kept open. Ms. Williams requested that both aldermen speak with the Police Department about keeping the alleys open. When parking is enforced, traffic flows better. If it turns out that another traffic study is needed, we should be able to find money in the budget to conduct one.

2018 Service Provider. With no reflection on the SECC, which the Commissioners have not expressed any concern about continuing as the Service Provider, Chair McGarry noted that it is good corporate governance process to establish criteria on selecting the Service Provider, especially since there has been at least one inquiry about applying for the position. Chair McGarry and Vice Chair Rumsey will draft criteria for what we expect and require in a Service Provider so that we can vote on it at our July meeting. We will be approving our 2018 Service Provider in October.

Events Updates.

- BrewFest doubled its attendance from last year. The SECC received a couple complaints, and one restaurant experienced three incidents of dine-and-dash, which Commissioner Hennessy reported has never happened in ten years. Otherwise the event is perceived to be a success.
- Director Reaves and Ms. Williams are working with Eric Williams from the Silver Room to prepare for the upcoming Block Party. There were no problems last year, and none are anticipated this year; but we need to be prepared because of the large numbers of people who are expected to attend.
- \$2500 was allocated for 4th on 53rd.
- Zoomba-bash has sold out several times at 30 people per class. The music will be lower volume, and speakers will face a different way to avoid inconveniencing the neighbors.

Flower Baskets. Flower baskets were hung late, and they were put in with dead flowers. Brightview replaced them once, but the result is not satisfactory. Director Reaves recommended renegotiating the flower basket contract with a new vendor who will use the flowers that can be salvaged, fill out the baskets, and maintain them.

Treasurer Guttman moved that Vice Chair Rumsey and Commissioner Hartman be authorized to implement any correction they deem necessary for the flower baskets, including renegotiating the landscaping contract, as long as they remain within the original budget. Commissioner Hennessy seconded the motion, which carried unanimously.

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

- Vice Chair Rumsey noted that the City has strict guidelines about flowers for restaurants that provide outdoor dining. Businesses within the District are not following these guidelines. Ms. Varet offered Alderman King's assistance in remedying this.
- Director Reaves introduced beautiful caps with the DTHP logo.
- More recycling could be done by businesses within the District as a way of keeping the sidewalks and alleys clear.

There being no other business, the meeting was adjourned at 12:56 p.m. The next meeting will be July 19 at 11:00 a.m. at the Polsky Center, 1462 E 53rd Street, Chicago, IL. .

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