

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

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

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

Absent: Jim Hanson, Jacqueline Jackson, Charles Newsome.

Also Present: Eric Reaves, Wendy Williams, Keiana Barrett from 4th Ward Alderman Sophia King's office

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 June 21, 2017, meeting were approved as circulated.

Financial Report. Treasurer Guttman reported that we are operating close to budget. Director Reaves noted that there were adjustments to the payments made for garbage remediation, and banners and sidewalk cleaning are both under budget.

Updates.

Flower Baskets. Vice Chair Rumsey, Commissioner Hartman, and Director Reaves examined the baskets provided by Brightview and came to an agreement with Clarence Davids Co. to pick up where Brightview left off, replace dead plants, and water the baskets for the amount originally budgeted.

Tree Replacement. Two trees at the east end and two trees at the west end of 53rd Street are completely dead. The tree that was damaged by frost has rejuvenated itself. Clarence Davids quoted a cost of \$1900 for two trees, bringing the cost of replacing four trees to \$3800, which is within our budget for this year. They will be planted in the Fall.

Tree Grates. Iron grates are very expensive, but grates made from recycled plastic are becoming available at a cost of \$400 per grate rather than \$3500. Director Reaves will assess the status of the grates in the District and determine what needs to be addressed.

Website Performance. For next month's meeting Director Reaves is preparing a full report on website performance over the past two years. The website has been performing phenomenally. People are naming Downtown Hyde Park rather than individual businesses as a "destination." The bounce rate remains low, at 4% compared with a 70% industry average. Site visitor demographics are in the categories retailers want, making it easy to sell ads on the site

should we decide to do so. Commissioners who wish to examine the Google analytics for the site may request read-only access, which also allows them to create spreadsheets.

Events. It was a busy weekend.

- **Silver Room Block Party.** Director Reaves reported that the block party was phenomenal. An outside firm using a drone and the internationally-accepted Jacobs method of counting estimated that 30,000 people attended the event compared to 15,000 last year. Businesses had to close their doors because they were at capacity. At peak, people could not move between Blackstone and Old Lake Park Avenues, on Harper Avenue, and in Harper Court. The economic impact was estimated at \$1.5 million. Individuals involved in planning the event will have a debriefing meeting after the SSA meeting to evaluate the event. Businesses were pleased; but residents were affected by noise and trash, and fire lanes were a major concern given the large crowd. Plans will begin for next year's event, which will take place on July 20, 2018.
- **4th on 53rd.** Wallace Goode noted that the community played a major role in pulling off this event, which was managed this year by the Hyde Park Chamber of Commerce rather than by volunteers as in the past.
- **Zoomba Bash.** The Bash is working to activate the plaza and the west end of the District. There is interest in moving it to 55th Street in 2018 to activate that area. People sign up on line, 30 per class. Classes are sold out through August.

Farmers Market. Director Reaves reported that our Farmers Market is doing ok. Numbers are where they were last year, so it would be good to see more growth. The Market Manager quit after the second week, and we now have three rather than four farmers; but we have a cheese vendor this year and fabulous baked goods, new tents, and good musicians.

Facade Improvement. Director Reaves reported that interns from the Vue53 architects are doing the drawings for the facade program.

2018 Service Provider. Chair McGarry requested that representatives from the SECC and the Hyde Park Chamber of Commerce leave the room for a discussion of the 2018 Service Provider. Chair McGarry and Vice Chair Rumsey have developed a set of criteria for evaluating applications for Service Provider. The decision about the Provider is not up to the Commissioners. The Commissioners will have a special meeting in mid August to make their recommendation to the Aldermen of Wards 4 & 5, who will notify the City of the decision by mid August. The SSA needs to send out an RFP to solicit applications. An announcement will be made in the *Hyde Park Herald*, on the SSA website, and to the Aldermen. We will need to check the bylaws to determine whether the Service Provider must be within the District. A Commissioner cannot be on the Board of the Service Provider.

There being no other business, the meeting was adjourned at 12:05 p.m. A time and place will be determined for the special meeting and announced to the Commissioners and the public.

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