

Special Service Area #61
SSA Board of Commissioners Minutes
Tuesday, January 26, 2021
Virtual Meeting

Present: Angie Marks, Charles Newsome, Mary Rogel, George Rumsey, and Wendy Williams

Absent: Anthony Beach, Greg Guttman (excused), Nancy Stanek

Also Present: Brandon Evans (SSA Program Administrator), Diane Burnham (SECC), JoAnn Newsome (SECC), Mike McGarry, Isaac Greene, Karen Forte' (SSA Unit), Aaron Gettinger (Herald Newspaper), Stephanie Franklin (NPAC), and Jared Kelly (CEI Media Group)

A quorum being present, Chairman Rumsey called the meeting of SSA #61 to order at 11:05 a.m. ***Pursuant to the applicable law and his determination that attendance by remote means is necessary because an in-person meeting is not practical nor prudent due to the declared public health disaster cause by COVID-19, this meeting was conducted by videoconference.*** The meeting was recorded as is available at [what website?]

Reading/Approval of the Minutes:

Minutes accepted as circulated.

SSA Financials – B. Evans and I. Greene

The SSA has closed the 2020 books in the black with a surplus. Commissioner Rogel questioned that since the expenditures (spending) are reduced and the personnel expenses increased, will this cause an issue? ***No, because all expenditures are within budget and within accepted percentages.***

Budget Tracker – B. Evans

The funds due to the SECC for repayment have been paid in full and the tracker is up to date and the committee will begin working on the 2021 budget.

Rebate Program – B. Evans

The rebate program will be extended another 6 months (June 2021). Commissioner Rogel had several questions regarding the program: (1) Is this round of support only for those businesses that have not yet received reimbursement or can businesses who received prior reimbursement apply as well? ***The program is available to all businesses within the footprint however preference will be given to those businesses that did not***

receive a reimbursement in the first round. (2) How will the program be promoted? *The program will be promoted through social media avenues, i.e., Facebook, Hyde Park Cares website, other websites, Constant Contact and emails.* (3) Are the smaller, independent businesses that are not street level included on the list? *Yes, they are.* Commissioner Williams asked if the list can be sent to Commissioner Rogel for review and notify Brandon if she notices any businesses have been omitted. She and Chairman Rumsey will receive the business list for review.

Social Media Campaign – Jared Kelly, CEI Media Group

The number of hours required to implement and monitor the campaign for the months of December and January tripled. Three key facts resulted from the campaign:

1. The campaign drive resulted in a 2% increase overall in social media audience (followers)
 - a. Facebook – 14%; Instagram – 5.2%, Twitter – 0.7% (roughly 1%)
2. Increased traffic to the businesses within the SSA 61 footprint
 - a. 3,007 impressions (30 days). 14,500 people reached. However, if businesses do not have social media accounts or website there is no sharing of content resulting in dormant activity. Also imperative for the business to stay current on sales, promotions, etc.
3. Increased engagement
 - a. Special content (photos), news posts featuring 22 businesses including website links to those businesses.

Commissioner Williams questioned if the current contract needed revising considering the increased workload. The work required for the campaign is included in the current contract and budget.

Recommendation: Mr. Kelly shared an exchange he and his team encountered when working on the campaign. Several businesses were not aware of what was going on and did not want to participate, rightfully so. There was an issue of trust. Karen Forte witnessed the exchanges unaware of the situation. However, she commended the photographer on his professionalism and positive interactions with the business owners.

1. Relationship building – Some businesses are not familiar with Special Service Area 61 therefore resulting in large number of the businesses within the footprint are not aware of or utilizing the resources available to them. This may be an educational opportunity here. *This is one of the scopes of year 2 programming.*

Commissioner Newsome – Can anything be done to assist those businesses going forward and if so, in what ways? (1) *Educating the business on what a Special Service*

*Area is and who SSA #61 is (purpose) and (2) **Brokering partnership with businesses to build trust.***

Program Committee – Chairman Rumsey

Informed the body that it is the responsibility of the Commissioners to decide on the programming for the SSA and for the service provider (SECC) to implement that programming. Commissioner Marks agreed with Chairman Rumsey regarding getting the program work done through committee such as the work that was done through the Finance and Reconstitution Committees. This committee would have monthly standing meetings. Commissioner Rogel volunteered to work on the committee. Chairman Rumsey will follow up with the Commissioner through email to see who else may be interested in being on the committee.

Community Meeting – Chairman Rumsey

Chairman Rumsey reminded the Commissioners about the Lake Park Median Landscape project and that there are \$60,000 for improvements. There are 8 locations total between 52nd and 55th Streets on Lake Park Avenue. Suggested that the SSA host a community meeting late February/early March to discuss the project and receive community feedback. Circling back to the earlier recommendation about increasing the presence of the SSA, this would confirm to those community members that may be unaware that the SSA #61 really does exist and bring relevance to its purpose. Commissioner Rogel stated the community would really appreciate the dialogue and somewhat help to quell the negative undercurrent that the SSA is a group of individuals making decisions on behalf of the community.

Questions and Comments from Commissioners

Commissioner Rogel – Is there anything going on with the 53rd Street Viaduct? The lights have been out for about a week or so. ***Brandon Evans stated that for specific repairs Metra would have to be contacted. Diane Burnham added that the SECC has a community liaison contact at Metra and Brandon and she will reach out to that person.*** Chairman Rumsey added that the HPKCC Transit Taskforce meets Thursday and he will share this information with them as well.

Questions and Comments from Guests

S. Franklin – Nichols Park was misspelled in one of the financial reports. ***It will be corrected.***

A. Gettinger – Bruce Sagan, Editor, Herald Newspaper, has instructed us to address the safety and security issues at the intersection of 53rd Street and Lake Park Avenue. If any

of you hear of anything, please let us know so that we can provide useful content to the community a week in advance of any community meetings. This issue must be important as the editor has designated this topic as a priority. Diane Burnham (SECC) answered that safety and having the ability to safely walk in the community are important to the SSA. She will follow-up with the 4th ward about the capital improvement funds for the ward.

K. Forte – For Chairman Rumsey: **(1)** regarding the commentary expressed about DTHP and the perceived issues that the community has, where is this coming from? I am a Hyde Parker and have not heard any negative comments regarding DTHP. Commissioner Rumsey reported that *the conversations/comments are generated on the Hyde Park Classics Facebook Page (8,000+ followers). The most common states there is technically no “downtown” Hyde Park and wish that persons would stop referring to the designated area as such.* (2) Social Media Campaign – Someone mentioned that the businesses on the 7th floor of the Hyde Park Bank building were not aware that there is a Special Service Area designation nor aware of the PPE Rebate Program. How can this be corrected? Rumsey added that he and *Diane Burnham (SECC) went business to business in the bank building, including the 7th floor, and personally delivered information on the rebate program. The main issue is that there are approximately 100 businesses in the building. However, there is no current directory. The directory that is currently available is outdated by about 10 years* and the electronic directory does not work.

J. Kelly – is there a way for the SSA to place some type of signage inside the building to gather information from the businesses to build the directory? (Chairman Rumsey) – the property is managed by Aegis Properties and they are offsite. The company previously had an office in the building, but are not currently present. We can reach out to them and see what they will say.

Commissioner Newsome – Mentally ill person roams 53rd Street and has been in the area for over a year. Frequents the area in/near Nichols Park and Target. What can be done? *SECC has met with a homeless prevention team and will follow up with them regarding the transient population in Hyde Park.*

The meeting was adjourned 12:13pm. The next regular meeting is for Tuesday March 23rd at 11:00am, Zoom Virtual Meeting Chicago, IL.

Respectfully submitted,
Raymonde Vance, Secretary, SSA 61