

## Special Service Area 61, Hyde Park Commission

Minutes, August 27, 2014

**Present:** Anthony Fox, Greg Guttman, James Hennessy, Allison Hartman, James Hanson, Jacqueline Jackson (appointment pending), Michael McGarry, Charles Newsome, Mary Rogel, George Rumsey, Donna Trainor

**Also Present:** Eric Reeves, Wendy Williams, and Isaac Green from SECC

The meeting was called to order at 11:05 a.m. by Chair McGarry. He welcomed members of the public who attended.

**Minutes.** Minutes for July 23, 2014, were accepted as circulated.

**Financial Statements.** Isaac Green, SECC bookkeeper, explained the SSA's monthly financial statements to the Commissioners.

**2014 Tax Disbursement.** Director Eric Reeves announced that we received total disbursements of \$253,655.55 through the end of July. This amount was received from the Spring taxing period. Since we have yet to receive disbursements from the Fall taxing period, it looks like we will receive more than the \$264,000 that we had expected to receive. Director Reeves has asked for an explanation for why the budget projection is so far off. To date we have received 95% of what had been budgeted for the year. Therefore we will no longer need a line of credit. This is an unusual situation because most SSAs receive their first disbursements late rather than early. We had not expected to receive any funds until October. We have been advised by Mark Rosha that we should not spend more than was budgeted and that we may carry over 20% into our 2015 budget.

**2015 Budget Update.** A draft 2015 budget of \$311,564, which included a 14% carryover for 2014, was submitted to the City of Chicago and passed its preliminary review. After a discussion, Commissioner Rumsey moved that the Commission approve the draft 2015 budget. Commissioner Hartman seconded. Motion passed unanimously. It will now go to the City Council on September 10 for a second review by the City. We understand that we may reallocate monies in the future as long as we notify the City when we do.

**Branding.** Ms. Williams and Director Reeves have met with four companies regarding branding for the SSA. They presented a proposal from Nancy Lerner of Otherwise Incorporated as an example of what this would involve, and they proposed that the SSA consider teaming up with other Hyde Park institutions to establish a central online location where visitors can learn about Hyde Park. Currently there are nine different websites about Hyde Park. The Commissioners requested that one or more of these companies come to a meeting to explain what they have in mind.

**Gary Comer Center Garden Program.** Director Reeves verified that the planters are 18 gal containers of the same design as the garbage cans in use within the SSA boundaries. He proposed that we purchase six planters to begin and plant them in the Fall with bulbs for Spring. The Gary Comer Program would maintain the planters. Director Reeves will obtain additional information about costs for soil and other needs, and he will look into the permits required for putting them on a public way such as Lake Park Avenue.

**Flower Basket Update.** Since we have received early disbursement of our funds, Director Reeves requested that we return to our full contract with Brickman. The original contract had been reduced because we had no funds, but now we do. Brickman will continue watering the baskets beyond August. The full contract does not include the ten baskets that were erroneously planted outside the SSA District. Director Reeves will get information for our next meeting about options for using something other than evergreens in the winter baskets.

**Trolley Report.** Commissioner Rumsey's survey of neighborhood interest in and anticipated use of a trolley within the SSA footprint will be available through September 1. Since it was launched on August 1, 718 people have taken the survey. Over 80% like the idea of a trolley. Commissioner Rumsey will give a full report of findings at the September meeting.

Director Reeves reported that two companies have responded to his request for information about costs of running a trial trolley over the Thanksgiving weekend. Director Reeves, Commissioner Hennessy, and Commissioner Guttman will present information at the next meeting about how many trolleys are needed to run through the District every 15-20 minutes, reasonable costs per user, and how to determine whether the trial has been "successful."

**Snow Removal.** Director Reeves has talked with one company about snow removal costs and will talk with two more and give us a report at the next meeting.

**Holiday Decorations.** Director Reeves has met with four companies concerning holiday decorations for the District and will give us quotes at the September meeting.

**Cleanslate Update.** Director Reeves will ask Cleanslate workers to clean the viaducts more often and to power wash them again.

**Special Events Update.** Director Reeves suggested that the Hyde Park Chamber of Commerce, the SECC, and the SSA buy gift certificates from businesses in the SSA District for a \$1000 give-away program to promote businesses in the District. Entry is online. One person wins the entire \$1000 at a drawing at the beginning of October, and must spend that money by the end of the year.

**General Sharing.** Commissioner Rumsey reported that the Used Book Sale is now accepting donations of used books.

**Public Comments.** It was suggested that there should be more bicycle racks on 53<sup>rd</sup> Street. Director Reeves reported that it is necessary to file permits and to conduct studies of where to place the bike racks. These requirements are in process.

There being no other business, the meeting was adjourned at 12:38 p.m. The next meeting will be September 24 at 7:00 p.m. at the Hyatt.

Respectfully submitted,  
Mary J. Rogel  
Secretary, SSA 61