

Special Service Area 61, Hyde Park Commission

Minutes, July 23, 2014

Present: James Hennessy, Allison Hartman, James Hanson, Michael McGarry, Charles Newsome, Mary Rogel, George Rumsey, Donna Trainor

Attending by Conference Call: Greg Guttman, Jacqueline Jackson (appointment pending)

Absent: Anthony Fox

Also Present: Eric Reeves and Wendy Williams

The meeting was called to order at 11:10 a.m. by Chair McGarry. He welcomed members of the public who attended and announced that Charles Newsome has been officially appointed to the Commission.

2014 Tax Disbursement. Director Eric Reeves announced that we received a disbursement of \$117,315.67 three months earlier than expected. This amount represents 90% of what had been anticipated.

Tax Anticipation Loan. The Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) for the tax anticipation loan has not yet been signed. It is ready to execute, but it may need to be changed in light of the early receipt of the disbursement. The terms of the loan require that it be paid back on receipt of the disbursement. A decision will be made after discussion with James Poueymirou, SECC Board Treasurer and designee for the SSA account.

Gary Comer Center Garden Program. Descriptions of possible containers were received, but discussion was tabled pending verification of container dimensions. Containers are of the same design as the garbage cans in use within the SSA boundaries.

Flower Basket Update. Contractor Brickman has agreed to adjust the bill to remove the cost of installing baskets of flowers outside the SSA footprint and outside of the contractual agreement, pending a recheck on the number of extra baskets actually installed.

Branding. Ms. Williams and Director Reeves have met with four companies regarding branding for the SSA, and they will be able to give a recommendation at the next meeting. All four companies have worked in Hyde Park before, and also at the University of Chicago. The branding will be only for the SSA District. The purpose of branding is to give a uniform look throughout the District, and it functions more as a marketing campaign for businesses within the District than as an identity. The possibility of creating a single point of contact for bringing people to Hyde Park is being explored.

June and July Expenditures. A bank account for the SSA has been opened at the Hyde Park Bank. In the future, Commissioners will receive a monthly balance sheet from the accountant.

Work is being done on creating line item expenditures, as current reports do not include personnel and administrative expenditures.

Special Events Update. Two of ten concerts planned for Nichols Park as part of the George Franklin Memorial Concert Series have taken place. They have been well-attended and well-spoken on the local Good Neighbors Google Group. An estimated 200 people attended the first and 300 the second. The concert series brings people within the SSA footprint.

Trolley Report. Commissioner Rumsey is designing a survey, with the assistance of Commissioner Rogel, of neighborhood interest in and anticipated use of a trolley within the SSA footprint. An effort will be made to run a trial trolley during the Shop Local weekend this Fall.

Cleanslate Update. Cleanslate workers are doing a good job of keeping the District clean of litter. We need to look into ways of keeping the viaducts cleaner.

2015 Budget Update. The preliminary 2015 budget was submitted to the City of Chicago. The liaison wants more detailed information about how we are going to spend the money, and wants us to submit a budget with no carryover. There will be additional discussion with the City because we are just now receiving our first disbursement, and the year is half over. After the City has finished looking it over, Director Reeves will bring the draft budget back to the Commissioners for approval. Revisions are still possible after the budget has been approved.

Other Cleaning and Bid Updates (SECC). All bike racks, garbage cans, and poles have been painted; and an effort will be made to keep the poles clean. SECC has obtained quotes for maintenance on overgrown roots and for replacing dead trees. Another tree on 53rd Street was lost this week. Grates around the trees will be painted. Hopefully trees will be trimmed in the Fall; this is the responsibility of the City. Empty and duplicate newspaper boxes will be removed next week. Hyde Park is on the list for graffiti removal, which is done by the same contractor who does the power washing.

2014 Farmers Market. In January, the Farmers Market will move from one alderman's district to the other alderman's district. Neither alderman wants to address the issue of parking for the market right now. Director Reeves visits the market weekly and reports that the vendors have noticed an uptick in business as a result of social media advertising by the SECC. Commissioner Hartman reported that she may have a donation of a banner for the market.

Holiday Decorations. Director Reeves is obtaining quotes on holiday decorations for the District.

Snow Removal. Cleanslate does some snow removal on the sidewalks. Commissioner Rumsey asked whether they can also remove snow from the intersections and viaducts. Commissioner Trainor noted the overlap of the SSA and Nichols Park, where the Park District is responsible for snow removal on the sidewalk. Director Reeves will discuss snow removal with Cleanslate and with the Park District. Commissioner Rumsey suggested that we do some educating in the neighborhood to help the various entities know their responsibilities for things such as snow

removal. Commissioner Hennessy suggested that we give reminders. Commissioner Newsome asked whether the Commission is allowed to accept donations.

General Sharing. Commissioner Hartman reported that City ordinances allow bulletin boards to be placed on privately owned property. Chair McGarry reviewed what the SSA has accomplished and asked Director Reeves for a time frame regarding projects currently in the planning stages. Director Reeves expects to have information about the trolley, the Comer planter project, and branding by the August meeting. The goal would be to hang pole banners in the District by January, with banners changing four times per year to coincide with the seasons and fiscal quarters. Commissioner Hartman recommended having something to hang by September for the returning students. Commissioner Rumsey suggested coordinating the hanging of the banners with the trolley trial, perhaps hanging them in October to promote the Thanksgiving weekend Shop Local event. Now that the cleaning has been done, Director Reeves noted that more time can be spent on other projects.

Commissioner Hennessy suggested looking into an “ambassadors” program similar to those around other universities, where residents can function as tour guides with maps and other information for newcomers. They would provide another eye on the street, and it might be possible to partner with neighborhood groups such as the Chicago Hyde Park Village. Commissioner Trainor reported that the University of Chicago is starting “Maroon Mondays.” Anyone who wears maroon on Mondays will get a discount from participating businesses. Monday may be a good day to have volunteer ambassadors in the District.

Minutes. Minutes for June 25 were accepted as circulated.

Public Comments. It was suggested that the business district should be more park oriented, that there should be electronic signs on the viaducts, and that there should be more bicycle racks on 53rd Street

There being no other business, the meeting was adjourned at 12:19 p.m. The next meeting will be August 27 at 11:00 a.m. at the Hyatt.

Respectfully submitted,
Mary J. Rogel
Secretary, SSA 61