

## Special Service Area 61, Hyde Park Commission

Minutes, May 28, 2014

**Present:** Allison Hartman, James Hanson, James Hennessy, Jacqueline Jackson (appointment pending), Michael McGarry, Mary Rogel, George Rumsey, Donna Trainor

**Absent:** Anthony Fox, Greg Guttman, Charles Newsome (appointment pending)

**Also Present:** Eric Reeves and Wendy Williams

The meeting was called to order at 11:05 a.m. by Chair McGarry. He thanked the members of the public for attending.

Minutes for April 26 were accepted as circulated.

**2015 Budget Recommendation.** Director Eric Reeves explained the need to submit a preliminary 2015 budget to the City of Chicago by June 15<sup>th</sup> so it can be approved by the City prior to the first of July. He will submit the same budget as for 2014, but will increase category 3.5 “Aesthetics” to \$32,000 for 2015 hanging flower baskets.

Reeves further explained that the City will return the proposed budget to the Commission for approval at the August or September meeting. The Commissioners will have an opportunity at that point to amend or adjust the budget.

Commissioner Rumsey asked about the possibility of obtaining additional funding for select projects from the 53rd Street TIF, for example the flower baskets. Wendy Williams explained that all funds for the 53rd Street TIF were already allocated to Harper Court, including any additional revenues that might be generated due to the SSA; she explained that meant the TIF had no discretionary funds. However, the City has agreed to review the possibility of reallocating the incremental revenue generated by the SSA that is received by the TIF.

**2014 Monthly Budget Forecast.** Reeves prepared a budget projection for the current year and will keep track of what the SSA actually spends so that we will have up-do-date accounting for future planning. The projected carryover from 2014 is \$47,150, but the actually carryover could be higher than that. There is a cap on how much we can carry over; but we can ask for a dispensation for this current year because we are a new commission.

**Farmers Market.** The City of Chicago is turning over responsibility for Farmers Markets throughout the city to SSA’s or other local organizations. Complete information about the Market in Hyde Park is not yet available, but the market will become our responsibility this year. Oversight of the Market has limited financial liability that includes, among other things, the hiring of a Market Manager and advertising the Market. These expenses are mostly offset by charging the vendors a participation fee, which is typically between \$25 and \$35. It would be

Director Reeves' responsibility to hire a Market Manager. The job description is provided by the City. SECC could be in charge of collecting the vendor participation fee.

The City already made the choice of vendors for this year. This year there is room for 14 vendors; 12 are returning from last year, plus a crepe maker and a bread vendor. There is a waiting list of 41 vendors. The City is responsible for garbage pickup. Advertising the Market could be good publicity for the SSA. No advertising has been done in the past, so it would not be detrimental not to advertise the Market.

The Market will remain in Harold Washington Park this year. The City is aware that this is outside the boundaries of the SSA. It was always expected that the Farmers Market would return to Harper Court after construction was completed. A new venue within the SSA footprint could also be considered for next year. The City is also thinking about night markets.

Several Commissioners expressed concern about the SSA being responsible for the Market when it is located outside its footprint. This was followed by a discussion.

The Commissioners requested Director Reeves to continue gathering information on operating the market and begin to develop a strategic plan. It was suggested that the plan include evaluating the amount of the participation fee and advertising. Reeves will update the Commissioners at the next meeting.

***Cleaning Company for Streets.*** There were two responses to the RFP for selecting a company to clean the streets of the SSA – CleanSlate and Spotless 2000. The bid from Spotless 2000 was double the bid from CleanSlate. Director Reeves recommended that CleanSlate begin the first of June. This was followed by a discussion.

The SECC issued an RFP to the several banks within the SSA footprint to establish a Line of Credit (LOC) to fund programs until the SSA receives its first tax payment in the fall. Director Reeves will contact CleanSlate to discuss delaying payment until after the LOC is available. Reeves will also evaluate the possibility of utilizing another grant to pay for the program in the event the SECC cannot establish an LOC on acceptable terms. This was followed by additional discussion. Commissioner Hartman moved that the CleanSlate contract be approved. Commissioner Hennessy seconded. Approval was unanimous.

***Partnering for Special Events with Hyde Park Vitality Committee.*** In the past, the Vitality Committee (SECC, HP Chamber of Commerce, and University of Chicago) has been responsible for "Celebrate Hyde Park." This year they will do things differently, with a series of smaller events, including a fashion show in the Hyde Park Bank and a concert series in Nichols Park.

Small Business Saturday is the Saturday after Thanksgiving. The Vitality Committee (VC) is looking to see if the SSA is interested in working with them on this project, which is in its third or fourth year. Valerie Jarrett has participated in the past, and 53<sup>rd</sup> Street gets a lot of press during this event. VC is excited about the SSA coming on line. Jackson, owner of Kilwins, suggested local businesses donate items to the promotion. She also expressed concern that the SSA gets credit for what it does and is not just lumped in with the VC.

Commissioner Hartman recommended obtaining input from small businesses as to what would help them. Director Reeves has been talking with business owners and is trying to come up with data. Commissioner Rogel suggested including service businesses as well as retail; they have different needs. The decision about participating does not need to be made until July, so we will gather more information in the meantime.

**Branding Update.** Director Reeves has scheduled a series of meetings with four businesses that have done branding programs in Hyde Park and Chicago. So far he has met with two. The goal is to have one place to go to find out about Hyde Park. One possibility is an overall website that has subsections where viewers can access existing websites. Hyde Park is ranked #4 out of 77 destinations by concierges who recommend where visitors should go in Chicago.

**Beautification of 53<sup>rd</sup> and 55<sup>th</sup> Streets.** An RFP was sent to seven vendors; only one, Brickman, responded. Ecogarden, which did the flower baskets in the past, did not respond this year. The updated proposal from Brickman reflects a compromise for the changes involved in transitioning the flower baskets from the SECC to the SSA. The long term concern is to coordinate baskets in and out of the SSA district while giving a uniform appearance throughout the shopping district. The current proposal from Brickman includes only the 86 baskets that are within the SSA district. SECC will make an offer to organizations that are near existing baskets not in the SSA so that they may participate in the discount negotiated for the SSA.

Similar to the street cleaning vendor, Director Reeves will contact Brinkman to discuss delayed payment options until after the SECC establishes a LOC. Reeves will also evaluate the possibility of utilizing another grant to pay for the program in the event the SECC cannot establish an LOC on acceptable terms.

Commissioner Rumsey moved to approve a \$17,100 contract to Brickman. Commissioner Hartman seconded. Approval was unanimous.

**General Sharing.** SECC obtained a grant to begin June 9 to power wash and steam clean all the sidewalks down 53<sup>rd</sup> Street and some of the side streets. CleanSlate will remove all placards from poles. All garbage cans, bike racks, and poles will be painted, and all 450 garbage cans will have new liners.

Brickman reported 17 dead or dying trees that will have to be replaced with certain trees as determined by a City schematic. The City will trim trees on the sidewalks and on the streets in the Spring or the Fall, including trimming roots and painting grates around the tree roots. This can be used as advertising to promote what will become the responsibility of the SSA.

Commissioner Hartman announced the DARE Spring Flea Market on Saturday, June 14; the Fall Market was so successful that DARE is also holding one in the Spring.

Members of the public voiced concerns about things happening outside the SSA that can potentially affect businesses in the district. A suggestion was made to create junction boxes at

the bottoms of lamp poles to make electricity accessible for uniform holiday lighting down 53<sup>rd</sup> and 55<sup>th</sup> Streets that would be visible from trains and busses.

There being no other business, the meeting was adjourned at 12:34 p.m. The next meeting will be June 25 at 7:00 p.m. at the Hyatt.

Respectfully submitted,  
Mary J. Rogel  
Secretary, SSA 61