

Special Service Area 61, Hyde Park Commission

Minutes, October 22, 2014

Hyde Park Hyatt

Present: Anthony Fox, Greg Guttman, James Hennessy, Allison Hartman, Jacqueline Jackson, Michael McGarry, Charles Newsome, Mary Rogel, George Rumsey, Donna Trainor

Note: James Hanson attempted to attend via conference call but was unable due to technical difficulties at the meeting.

Also Present: Eric Reeves, Nancy Lerner

The meeting was called to order at 11:15 a.m. by Chair McGarry. The meeting started late due to technical difficulties and waiting for a quorum. Chair McGarry welcomed the public.

Minutes. The Secretary was reminded that Minutes need to state where the meetings are held, so prior Minutes need to be corrected to say that the meetings were held at the Hyde Park Hyatt. Minutes for September 24, 2014, were accepted as circulated and corrected to include the location.

Marketing Plan for the District. Director Reeves invited Nancy Lerner of Otherwise, Inc., to speak with the Commissioners about her thought processes regarding marketing for the District. Otherwise, Inc., was selected by the SECC and Director Reeves after interviewing four companies.

Ms. Lerner explained that she likes to work by developing a marketing strategy as a first phase, including a set of guidelines that others can use going forward. She does not expect that the SSA District will look different from the rest of Hyde Park. The work of Otherwise, Inc., is heavily grounded in supporting all the businesses in the District. The more we know about the neighborhood, the better help Otherwise, Inc., can be. Her approach would be to ask us to consider what is vital about Hyde Park that draws residents as well as outsiders so that Otherwise, Inc., can harness the feel of the neighborhood to create something tangible that people will understand. This would get reflected in a standardized messaging platform, website, banners, badges for retailers to put in their windows, and a brochure template. To accomplish this, Otherwise, Inc., would host a series of conversations for strategy sessions to figure out objections, needs, and problems. The point is not to reinvent the wheel, but to invent a wheel that is not there.

Commissioner Rumsey asked how one would gauge success. Ms. Lerner replied that it would be by the business community's enthusiasm and adoption of the created tools, as well as signs of increased business activity and Google analytics about who is coming to the website.

Commissioner Guttman pointed out that Ms. Lerner is describing a long and expensive process. Director Reeves reported that Ms. Lerner was gracious enough to discount the cost of Phase 1 to \$25,000. As we start to see evidence of success for the strategy, we can start securing other

funds and layering in other pieces, such as advertising; but we need to create the core aspects of marketing first. Ms. Lerner is willing to discount Phase 1 from the \$150,000 originally requested because she is confident that she will be able to secure contracts for Phases 2 and 3 because of the quality of her product in Phase 1.

Ms. Lerner responded to multiple questions from the Commissioners. After which, Chair McGarry thanked Ms. Lerner for presenting and she exited the room.

After a discussion, Commissioner Hennessy moved that we accept her proposal for Phase 1; Commissioner Jackson seconded; the vote passed unanimously.

Mission Statement. The mission statement for the Commission was written prior to any of the Commissioners being named. Chair McGarry presented it to the group and asked whether anyone felt a need to revisit the statement:

To enhance and maintain a vibrant, pedestrian friendly, neighborhood commercial district that reflects the culture of Hyde Park, serving local stakeholders and attracting visitors.

After a discussion, everyone agreed with the statement and felt that formal adoption was not needed. Commissioner Rumsey suggested that it is good practice to review it annually.

Trolley Report. Director Reeves and several Commissioners took a test run through the district along the proposed route, with seven stops. They were able to make the run in the recommended 15 minute time frame.

Commissioners Guttman and Hennessy met with Director Reeves to define goals, determine what will constitute a successful trial, and suggest data that we will want to collect during the trial. They determined that the trial would be a success if enough people rode to bring the cost down to \$5 per rider; there would be 330 riders over 2 days. They will draft a short questionnaire to be given to every rider, asking basic information such as zip code of residence, where they boarded the trolley, their destination, and whether they were catching the trolley from home or from a parking lot. Director Reeves is meeting later today with a person hired to collect the data from riders. An attempt will also be made to assess whether the trolley is affecting congestion. A press release will be issued to alert businesses that the trolley is available over the Thanksgiving weekend.

Commissioner Hartman moved to authorize the trolley trial; Commissioner Rumsey seconded; the vote was 9 in favor. Commissioner Guttman voted against the motion.

Holiday Lights. Director Reeves reported that holiday lights cost too much. He recommended wrapping poles instead. There are 159 poles and 582 trees in the District. None of the trees have electric except those that are managed by McCafferty, who does the lights for Harper Court and decorations on much of Lake Park Avenue. It costs \$2500-\$3000 to electrify each tree because the electricity must be installed underground.

We can afford to wrap 35 poles and hang snowflakes or wreathes with the \$1500 that was allocated. Commissioner Fox commented that he would rather spend the money to begin to electrify and slowly build a presence with lights rather than purchase wrappings that will get damaged in the weather. Commissioner Guttman agreed that this will have more residual value. We could carry over the allocation and begin electrifying after the winter is over. Commissioner Newsome suggested that Kimbark Plaza can use the decorating guidelines being used by the University of Chicago for Harper Court. This would anchor the two ends of 53rd Street and improve uniformity. We can observe what other merchants are doing over the winter and identify gaps for better planning next year. Commissioner Newsome reported that lighting in Kimbark Plaza has significantly reduced crime.

Financial Statements. Current assets are \$194,338. There are no accounts payables as of the end of September. Revenues are over budget by \$66,000. Sources of funds were under budget by \$128,243. This is a learning year for us to understand how the cash flows. Director Reeves will ask the bookkeeper to line up expenses with line items, e.g., audit vs annual report, so that we can work more effectively with the budget next year.

Hyde Park Bucks. 250 people entered the Hyde Park Bucks contest. The winner is Karen Davis. This year, all the businesses participating in the contest were retailers; next year service providers will be invited to participate as well.

OctoberFest. OctoberFest was held this year on Saturday, October 4, from 11:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m. in Nichols Park. It was raining and cold; but everything else moved smoothly, and 1000 people attended. He reported that SSA made a financial contribution. The SECC as the organizer did not lose any money and even made a little.

Clean Slate. Clean Slate provides quarterly reports. These will be publicized so that everyone knows what the SSA is doing to keep the District clean.

General Sharing. Director Reeves will provide dates for next year's meetings at the December meeting.

Director Reeves reported that the SECC will take care of getting Aldermanic letters for any Commissioners with expiring commissions who have applied for 2015 commissions.

Commissioner Rogel announced that the Chicago Hyde Park Village will officially open on November 22.

Public Comments. There were none.

There being no other business, the meeting was adjourned at 11:55 a.m. The next meeting will be December 3 at 7:00 p.m. at the Hyatt.

Respectfully submitted,
Mary J. Rogel
Secretary, SSA 61