

**Special Service Area #61,
SSA Board of Commissioners Meeting**

**Minutes, August 19, 2015
Chicago Innovation Exchange
1462 E 53rd Street
Chicago, IL**

Present: Greg Guttman, James Hanson, Allison Hartman, James Hennessy, Jacqueline Jackson (arr. 7:25), Michael McGarry, Charles Newsome, Mary Rogel, George Rumsey,

Absent: Anthony Fox, Donna Trainor

Also Present: Eric Reaves

The meeting was called to order at 7:01 p.m. by Chair McGarry, who welcomed the community guests and thanked them for attending.

Minutes. Minutes for June 17, 2015, were approved as circulated.

Financial Report. Treasurer Guttman reported that invoices are coming due for items that were budgeted earlier in the year and that we do not expect a large carryover as we had from last year. We have had more expenses in the 2nd quarter for festivals and summer projects such as viaduct cleaning. The first installment of second half tax disbursement just arrived. Additional disbursements are expected before the end of August. Because we could run short before we receive our disbursements in March 2016, Chair McGarry and Treasurer Guttman met with our accountant to discuss cash flow. Our options are to adjust our spending or to carry a line of credit that could be paid off when our 2016 disbursements are received. If we choose an LOC, we may need to set it up in prior to year-end as it would need to be coordinated with the SECC Board. Treasurer Guttman noted that most of the temporarily restricted funds are carryover allocated for specific programs and will not appear in the next quarter's financial reports.

Updates. Most of today's meeting was devoted to updates.

SSA District as "Downtown Hyde Park." Director Reaves reported that the branding of Downtown Hyde Park is gaining traction. He saw someone on the Gold Coast carrying one of our blue Downtown Hyde Park tote bags, and an article in the Herald referred to the business district as Downtown Hyde Park. UC has been using the concept in its promotions.

Badges. Three different badges will be available for businesses: two sizes of blue round badges for businesses in the SSA district, and one square badge for businesses outside the district. Digital versions will be available next week for businesses to use on their websites and social media.

Website. Website construction is on schedule for launch in the second or third week of September. It is on budget. Director Reaves showed mockups of the website for computers and

for pads/tablets. Businesses within the district will be added to the website first. Director Reaves will update the Commissioners as the site progresses.

Video. Hyde Park is one of four neighborhoods being featured at Tilt 360 in the John Hancock Building. The Downtown Hyde Park video will be shown as part of that promotion. Hyde Park Day is October 8. Discounted tickets will be available, along with a special Hyde Park bar drink, and a free trolley ride from Hyde Park to the John Hancock Building. Food from Chant will be featured in the bar from 6 – 8 p.m.

The video is also being featured on Choose Chicago. Director Reaves brought copies on flash drives for the Commissioners. In addition, it is being featured on the SECC website and will be featured on our own website.

Sunday Concert Series in Nichols Park. The series has been quite successful. Attendance is up this year to 450, compared with 90-150 last year. To date, 3400 people have attended. People arrive several hours before the concert begins. It is estimated that each person “spends” \$19.25 while in Hyde Park. This figure includes a factor for employment that is created as a result of concert attendance.

Downtown Hyde Park Fest. The festival is scheduled for September 18-19 and will begin with a fashion show featuring local retailers on Friday at Hyde Park Bank. Harper Theater will feature a free film children’s film on Saturday morning and provide free popcorn. Harper Court will be closed off on Saturday for concerts and family friendly activities, including such things as jugglers, face painting for children, a magician, and a stilt walker. The Fest wraps up Sunday with the Sunday Concert Series in Nichols Park. Other activities in Hyde Park that weekend include the Children’s Book Fair and the Bulb and Mum Sale.

Bike Racks. Director Reaves reported that the bike racks have been ordered, however, installation has been delayed while we obtain the City’s approval of the proposed map. Director Reaves and Commissioner Hennessy found places to install 55 racks. Those with three hoops will include branding for Downtown Hyde Park. Installation is being done by a private contractor. We will review bike racks for the Nichols Park parkway next year.

Flower Pots on Lake Park Median. Commissioner Rumsey has selected some planters for placing flowers in the median along Lake Park Avenue. He discovered that there are concrete pads around every tree in the median, which will make it much easier to place planters around them. Brickman will do some research on placing the planters and will give us a proposal for planting mums. Work will start north and proceed south. Director Reaves will send out an RFP for placing the planters and planting and maintaining the flowers.

Tree Replacement. Director Reaves will also send out an RFP for replacing trees in the now-empty tree wells and electrifying them as they are planted.

Way-finding Signs. Director Reaves has spoken with Metra about placing a sign on the 53rd Street viaduct to direct westbound traffic coming from Lake Shore Drive to proceed straight

ahead for Downtown Hyde Park. He also plans to place a Downtown Hyde Park badge on the signage directing traffic from Lake Shore Drive to 53rd Street.

Holiday Plans. Director Reaves reported that a Harper Court merchant has shared some ideas for activities to attract holiday customers. It is time to start planning for Small Business Saturday the weekend of Thanksgiving and for snow removal. Commissioner Hartman asked for suggestions for what the SSA might do for DARE for Thanksgiving. This was followed by a discussion.

Farmers Market. Attendance is up 2/3 from what it was last year in Harold Washington Park. Last week's market was the largest attendance, 650 people and two weeks ago some of the vendors sold out. There are currently 19 vendors. Additional vendors are calling to find out how to become part of the market. Attractions such as a classical trumpeter, a yoga class, and face painting are draw people to the market. Director Reaves reminded the Commissioners that the SSA will be responsible for the Market beginning next year.

55th Street Viaduct Mural. Chair McGarry and Director Reaves attended the unveiling of the mural under the 55th Street viaduct and spoke with the artist, Carol Yasko, about how to care for it. It will probably be a line item in next year's budget.

Event Cool Herb. Chair McGarry reported that the restaurants were very satisfied with business generated by the event. Commissioner Hennessey reported that feedback was all positive and that the event seemed to attract more people than expected.

Façade Improvement Program. Director Reaves has renderings to give to the owner of the building being targeted as the model for the façade improvement program. He will report back to the Commissioners as the program progresses.

Chair McGarry opened the floor for announcements and public comments.

There being no other business, the meeting was adjourned at 8:18 p.m. The next meeting will be September 23 at 11:00 a.m. at the Hyatt.

Respectfully submitted,
Mary J. Rogel
Secretary, SSA 61