

Special Service Area 61, Hyde Park Commission

Minutes, January 21, 2015

Hyde Park Hyatt

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

Also Present: Eric Reaves and Wendy Williams of SECC; and Erica Grubman, Project Manager, and Quentin Rosborough, Content Strategist, from Otherwise, Inc.

The meeting was called to order at 11:09 a.m. by Chair McGarry. Chair McGarry welcomed the public.

Minutes. Minutes for December 03, 2014, were corrected as follows:

- Date should be changed from December 04 to December 03.
- Mr. Reaves name is spelled “Reaves,” not “Reeves.”
 - *Secretary’s note: Mr. Reaves’ name was misspelled in all the Minutes for 2014; all must be corrected. Apologies to Mr. Reaves.*
- Commissioner Hennessy clarified that Harper Court parking was free only through 2014.
- There was a request to remove the word “of” from the section entitled, ***Building Relationships with Other SSAs***, however, I cannot determine which “of” should be removed. Following is the text of that section:
 - Director Reeves, Wendy Williams, and Chair McGarry attended a meeting with other SSAs in the City. It is good to have relationships with other SSAs. We have issues in common, and a new Commission like ours can learn from more experienced Commissions. For example, one of the SSAs has an awning rebate program that would be good for us to explore. SSAs have not given up on meeting with the City about obtaining the portion of funds that TIFs receive because of the SSAs. Commissioners were encouraged to attend these meetings.
- There was a request to check the Minutes of November 19, 2014, to see whether a vote was taken to charge Otherwise, Inc., with developing the concept of branding the SSA District as “downtown Hyde Park.” No vote was taken. It was requested that the following sentence be added to the Minutes of November 19, 2014: “The Commissioners voiced general support for the concept of branding the SSA district as ‘downtown Hyde Park,’ so that we can go forward with the process.”

SSA District as “Downtown Hyde Park.” Ms. Grubman and Mr. Rosborough of Otherwise, Inc., presented three conceptual options for branding the SSA district as “downtown Hyde Park.”

1. “Own Down Town,” a play on words suggesting that residents can create their own downtown; it is both a logo and a call to action.
2. “Down” and “Town” intersecting at the letter “w,” suggesting that the SSA district is an intersection of people, cultures, and classes.
3. “Map” as logo, with the tag line “Think outside the Loop.”

The Commissioners discussed why the SSA district should be considered “downtown.” It has what a hometown/downtown has – transportation hub, restaurants, movie theater. We are not trying to redefine Hyde Park, but we are trying to market the district to two different groups, residents and visitors. Downtown has a community aspect, as well; people do not go downtown for just one purpose.

Mr. Reaves will ask Otherwise, Inc., to work up some iterations on Option 3 and to suggest some additional tag lines.

Trolley Review and Analysis. The salient point of the trolley trial is that we did not reach our goal of 165 riders per day. People commented that they did not know about the trolley, but it is hard to imagine how more inclusive we could have been with the marketing, which was extensive. Commissioner Hartman suggested that the holidays are not the best time to measure use because people are not around Hyde Park over the holidays. Commissioner Rumsey suggested that we explore the possibility of cooperating with other entities in the community that operate trolleys, in an effort to create a broader system of trolleys within Hyde Park. He noted that the DuSable Museum trolley also is not operating the way they had hoped it would. Mr. Reaves and Ms. Williams will be meeting with Choose Chicago regarding another trial of the Museum Campus South trolley; and Commissioner Guttman suggested that they also reach out to the University of Chicago’s Director of Transportation because the U of C revisits the issue of a trolley every couple years. So far they have generally concluded that it is better to pay the CTA to run a bus than it is to run their own trolley. Mr. Reaves will write a recommendation regarding alternative transportation for the district, for consideration at the February SSA meeting.

Financial Report. Chair McGarry explained that it takes 2-3 weeks to prepare the monthly financial report, which is why the Commissioners receive the report right before the meetings. The net surplus (carryover to next year) is \$83,000. 2014 expenditures include the \$10,000 down payment for Otherwise, Inc.; an additional \$15,000 will be in the 2015 budget. The trolley was recorded as Special Events; it should be in Transit. Mr. Reaves will revise the budget to reflect this. Category names were changed by the City for the 2015 budget.

Commissioners Rumsey and Rogel questioned check #2316, dated January 14, to CEI Media for “local” because it is in excess of \$5,000 and was not approved by the Commissioners. Mr. Reaves suggested that the check covers items from multiple categories. He will go over the line items with Mr. Isaac Green (bookkeeper) to make sure they match and are in the appropriate budget lines; and he will review the budget and forecast for 2015 with Chair McGarry.

Mr. Reaves will tell the City the actual amount of our carryover, which is greater than we estimated. The year end audit will begin soon. There is a two-year leeway for new SSAs to get their budgets straight.

Mr. Reaves reported a conversation with the City about TIF funds. The City reiterated its position that TIF funds may not go to the SSAs. We will continue to ask.

Today's City Council meeting is expected to reappoint Commissioners McGarry, Newsome, and Rogel.

Planning for Next Year's Projects. Mr. Reaves will call each Commissioner to get specific ideas for what each would like to accomplish in 2015.

Snow Removal. The contract with Clean Slate for snow removal did not go so well. They did not do what they were supposed to do. Director Reaves has spoken with the manager; they know and understand the problem and will correct it. The Contact for Clean Slate has been very responsive. The Safer Foundation has also been working in the district but has not been in communication with the SSA or SECC.

Beautification Contraction Extension. The contract extension has been tabled.

Year End Report. A year end report containing statistics for what we accomplished in 2014 is being prepared.

General Sharing. Commissioner Newsome suggested that we have line item funds for strategic planning, for example, where we want to be in two or three years. There is a line item for strategic planning in the 2015 budget, and it contains \$5,000; there is nothing in the line item for "master planning."

Public Comments. Phil Moy, who is newly appointed to the Hyde Park Chamber of Commerce and who was invited by Ms. Williams, presented some of the promotional events that will be occurring in Hyde Park in 2015.

Commissioner Rumsey invited attendees to the aldermanic forums sponsored by the HPKCC. Wallace Goode will chair the January 24 forum; and Mike McGarry will chair the January 31 forum.

Commissioner Jackson recommended putting out a 30-second advertising spot all year, costing \$2,000 per month, in lieu of the money spent on advertising Santa and the trolley, neither of which was successful. Word of mouth is a more successful advertising strategy.

There being no other business, the meeting was adjourned at 12:34 p.m. The next meeting will be February 18 at 7:00 p.m. at the CIE building at 53rd and Harper. Note the change in venue, which is due to three meetings conflicting for use of the space at the Hyatt.

Respectfully submitted,
Mary J. Rogel
Secretary, SSA 61