

# Special Service Area 61, Hyde Park Commission

Minutes, June 17, 2015

Hyatt

**Present:** Anthony Fox, Greg Guttman, Allison Hartman, James Hennessy, Michael McGarry, Charles Newsome, Mary Rogel, George Rumsey

**Attending by Conference Call:** Donna Trainor

**Absent:** James Hanson, Jacqueline Jackson

**Also Present:** Eric Reaves

The meeting was called to order at 11:07 a.m. by Chair McGarry, who welcomed the community guests and thanked them for attending.

**Minutes.** Minutes for May 20, 2015, were approved as circulated.

**Financial Report.** Chair McGarry thanked Commissioner Guttman for taking on the office of Treasurer. He noted that we might be getting the financial reports a little later than usual while Commissioner Guttman is being oriented to his new position. Taking into account the tax monies received from the City, we will have a carryover of \$45,000 unless we spend more by the end of the calendar year. This is in line with what we projected.

**2015 Meeting Schedule.** Commissioner Rumsey moved that we accept the 2015 meeting schedule for the remainder of the year as discussed at the last meeting:

Aug. 19, 2015	7:00pm	CIE
Sept. 23, 2015	11:00am	Hyatt
Oct. 21, 2015	11:00am	CIE
Dec. 9, 2015	11:00am	Hyatt

Commissioner Hartman seconded; passed unanimously.

**Condition of Canadian National Railroad Properties.** Commissioner Fox suggested an idea for placing signage on the 53<sup>rd</sup> Street viaduct as one enters downtown Hyde Park. This would require permission from Canadian National, which has ignored all requests from the neighborhood regarding upkeep of their property for the past 20 years. The Jackson Park Advisory Council has asked the US Department of Transportation to get involved and has been in contact with Senator Durbin. They have also gotten the University of Chicago Office of Civic Engagement involved.

**SSA District as “Downtown Hyde Park.”** Director Reaves showed a video that will be used to promote Hyde Park and [www.downtownhydeparkchicago.com](http://www.downtownhydeparkchicago.com). He would like ideas about what to do with the video – edit it, show it before movies? It was positively received at a recent event

where it was viewed. He would like to make several versions for different uses. He has a lot of video footage that was not used in this version. The cost of the video was approximately \$1000 rather than the usual \$15,000 that it takes to produce comparable videos.

**Budget 2016.** Director Reaves must turn in a preliminary budget to the City by July 1. He has now met with all the Commissioners to discuss their ideas for projects they would like to see in the 2016 budget. The carryover will be used to electrify trees that are being planted to replace those that have been lost, as it will cost less when done at the same time as the trees are planted. The City will not commit to a schedule for planting, but they will be planting three trees on 53<sup>rd</sup> Street. We will start at one end of a block and keep going, but we will skip the trees that the City is scheduled to plant.

The SSA will be paying for the Farmers Market in 2016. Moving the Market back to Harper Court has generated a lot of positive feedback. Three additional vendors will join tomorrow's market, including a bread maker. On the first market day, 300 promotional bags were distributed; 250 were distributed the second week. The goal is to have 500 people visit the market each day it is open. Director Reaves is trying to get some signage announcing the market to people coming off Lake Shore Drive at 53<sup>rd</sup> Street.

When Vue53 is farther along in the construction process, we can do something to beautify Nichols Park where it fronts on 53<sup>rd</sup> Street. Commissioner Rumsey suggested planting in the Spring rather than the Fall to reduce plant losses due to the winter weather.

Purchase bonus program possibilities were discussed. More information needs to be gathered, especially regarding companies that do not capture customers' credit card information.

More focus is needed on the west end of 53<sup>rd</sup> Street to bring the two ends of the street together. The banners help to unify the district, but we need more than that.

This is the second year we have not increased the tax levy.

Commissioner Fox moved that we approve the 2016 budget; Commissioner Hartman seconded; passed unanimously.

**Bike Racks.** Director Reaves reported that he hopes to be installing bike racks in August. He will meet with Commissioner Hennessy to review the placement of new racks to coordinate our racks with those being planned by The University of Chicago. Director Reaves is still removing newspaper boxes, and he will be talking a local merchant about removing their canopy so that some of that sidewalk can be used for bike racks. They will try to place the racks in clusters away from the outdoor restaurants, and 36 inches must be kept as open passage on the sidewalk to be in compliance with ADA.

Commissioner Rumsey moved that we approve expenditures for the bike racks, not to exceed \$375 per rack and a total of \$20,000. Commissioner Hennessy seconded; motion approved unanimously. Commissioner Newsome requested a map of planned rack placements.

***Façade Improvement Program.*** Director Reaves is exploring a façade improvement program, using a local merchant as a model. He has talked with a perspective merchant, but not yet with the building's owner. SSAs commonly assist with facades improvements for awning and/or signage in order for the district to have a common look or brand. He would like to get the façade program going by the end of the year. It may not require the approval of the Commission because the cost would be a couple thousand dollars. This was followed by a discussion on other sections of the districts that could benefit from the façade improvement program.

Chair McGarry opened the floor for announcements and public comments.

There being no other business, the meeting was adjourned at 12:17 p.m. The next meeting will be August 19 at 7:00 p.m. at CIE.

Respectfully submitted,  
Mary J. Rogel  
Secretary, SSA 61