

Special Service Area 61, Hyde Park Commission

Minutes, May 20, 2015

CIE

Present: Anthony Fox, Greg Guttman, James Hanson, Allison Hartman, Jacqueline Jackson, Michael McGarry, Mary Rogel, George Rumsey,

Attending by Conference Call: James Hennessy

Absent: Charles Newsome, Donna Trainor

Also Present: Eric Reaves, Wendy Walker Williams

The meeting was called to order at 7:11 p.m. by Chair McGarry, who welcomed the community guests and thanked them for attending.

Minutes. Minutes for April 22, 2015, were approved as circulated. Commissioner Rumsey suggested that SSA meeting minutes be posted on the City's website. Chair McGarry noted that the minutes and the schedule of meetings are posted on the SECC website under the SSA #61 menu.

Financial Report. Chair McGarry noted that the financial report now includes a couple new lines, as recommended by the auditor. Property Tax Receivable is the amount of tax revenue expected; it is offset by the Deferred Revenue category. Net Assets marked as Temporary Restricted is carryover from last year's budget. The Expense categories represent the standard expenses for running the SSA. We can expect to start seeing a large outflow of cash as we start paying for the services we contracted, such as power cleaning, Otherwise, Inc., and flowers.

SSA District as "Downtown Hyde Park." Commissioner Rumsey reported on a meeting that he and Commissioners Hennessy and Guttman had with Nancy Lerner and staff of Otherwise, Inc., concerning the direction of website development. There are two main concerns: whether a website is needed for the branding of downtown Hyde Park and the amount of the expenditure for such a website, as Otherwise, Inc., has proposed. Commissioner Guttman is of the opinion that Otherwise, Inc., will do a great job of website development, if our goal is a great website to brand Downtown; but he questioned the amount of the expenditure. For such a website to be effective, it needs to be updated daily. The committee is concerned that this much content management is beyond the ability of SECC staff to do. Ms. Williams suggested that the SECC could get an intern to manage the website, and Commissioner Hennessy volunteered that someone from his office could maintain it as well. With these concerns addressed, the committee felt that the question still remains on the amount of the expenditure.

The Phase I contract with Otherwise, Inc., provides us with a minimal website with static pages, which would be the foundation upon which the rest of the website would be built, as the Phase II \$45,000 contract. The website would be a piece of the overall digital marketing strategy.

Google analytics would be used to monitor who comes to the site; and other existing Hyde Park websites would be linked to this one. The SSA would be buying the website, rather than renting it; so we can change it whenever we want. Otherwise, Inc., staff and the Commissioners would oversee site maintenance and would seek redress if the updates are not occurring.

After a lengthy discussion, Commissioner Hennessy motioned that we move forward with the Otherwise, Inc., Phase II contract to further develop the website; Commissioner Jackson seconded; the motion passed unanimously.

Banners. Director Reaves reported that 110 banners have been hung. Up to six more sets will be added on the east side of 53rd Street. Trees obstruct some of them right now, but there will be more time without leaves on the trees than with. The plan is to renew them in October with banners of a different design. The University of Chicago will be celebrating its 100th anniversary and wants to use some of the poles after our permit ends at the end of October. Director Reaves and the Committee will look at where to add banners on 53rd Street between Harper Avenue and Hyde Park Blvd on the north side of the street and to the alley past the viaduct on the south side of the street.

Planters. Director Reaves is looking into how to bring the Gary Comer Center's youth gardening program to Hyde Park. One idea is to add planters around the trees in the median on Lake Park Blvd from McDonald's to 55th Street. Commissioner Rumsey asked how they would be watered. Director Reaves will get a quote from Brickman to water these when they water the baskets.

Chair McGarry asked the Commissioners to give Director Reaves their ideas about what to do with Nichols Park. The Nichols Park Advisory Council is looking into planting trees in the park, but not on the parkway, which is the responsibility of the City. The berm is the responsibility of the Park District. Bike racks are a possibility, as is replacing trees that were cut down. Director Reaves reported that it costs \$7,000 to remove the roots of each tree that has been cut down and plant a new tree. The City will be replacing four of the trees that were cut down, but we do not know when. He suggested that the SSA consider budgeting for the replacement of two trees per year; the SECC will provide matching funds. Commissioner Rumsey suggested that business owners may be willing to contribute funds toward replacing trees in front of their businesses. Chair McGarry encouraged the Commissioners to think about what can be done going west on 53rd; it looks better coming east.

New Treasurer. Commissioner Trainor is finding it difficult to be Treasurer with all her traveling, but she is interested in continuing to be a Commissioner. Chair McGarry nominated Greg Guttman as the new Treasurer. Commissioner Guttman pledged his support to assist the Commission and to be open with the finances.

Commissioner Fox made a motion to elected Commissioner Guttman as Treasurer; Commissioner Rumsey seconded; approval was unanimous.

Bike Racks. Director Reaves presented a map of existing bike racks in the District; existing racks east of the viaduct on 53rd Street need to be added to the map. The budget includes

\$20,000 for bike racks. The University of Chicago wants to work with the SSA to determine the placement of new racks in front of their property. At a cost of \$350 per hoop shipped and installed, the budget will allow us to purchase 55 bike racks.

Commissioner Rumsey asked whether we can do anything at the Metra crossings to promote Downtown Hyde Park. Director Reaves met with Metra and reported that we just have to make a request.

Downtown Hyde Park Rollout June 9. Director Reaves announced that “Downtown Hyde Park” will be unveiled Tuesday, June 9, at 6 p.m. Chair McGarry, Hyde Park Chamber of Commerce President Wallace Goode, and SECC Director Wendy Walker Williams will speak. There will be a little video explaining the purpose of the badge to get the message out to the business people about what the SSA is trying to accomplish. Chair McGarry asked the Commissioners to add the event to their calendars; he would like a good turnout of Commissioners.

Summer Events. There will be a summer concert series on ten Sundays. Last year 1700 people attended, with each person spending about \$20 while in Hyde Park. There will be several different events over the summer, designed to bring people into the SSA footprint.

Proposed Meeting Schedule 2nd Half of Year. Director Reaves reported that the Hyatt is getting so busy that the meeting room schedule is booked for the rest of the year. The elevator at CIE will be fixed, and he will try to book the TBA meetings at CIE. He will try to get on the Hyatt schedule for 2016. There will be no SSA meetings in July and November.

Commissioner Hartman moved that we accept the meeting schedule; Commissioner Rumsey seconded; approved unanimously.

Budgets are needed by the June meeting. We will have the 2015 forecast in June. Chair McGarry will fill in Treasurer Guttman on the details. Director Reaves has scheduled 2016 budget discussions with the Commissioners individually over lunch to get their ideas for projects.

Rewards Program. Chair McGarry, Director Reaves, and Commissioner Hennessy met with the Lo-Lo rewards program for businesses. The idea is that a customer buying at one location will earn points to spend elsewhere in the District, as a way of targeting the market and bringing people into the District. It is up to the merchants how they will participate. Treasurer Guttman raised the issue of who owns the data, as it would be good to know how people spend money in the District. Commissioner Hartman wondered how Hyde Parkers would respond to something like that. Chair McGarry does not anticipate that anything will happen this year. Director Reaves wants to take time to research the different programs.

Sidewalk Cleaning. Director Reaves reported that the service map has been corrected for the proposal from Advance ProClean for power-washing of the sidewalks. It was originally sent with the wrong coordinates. Commissioner Rumsey requested that the map be included as part of the contract to be sure that non-SSA areas are not inadvertently added.

Farmers Market. Director Reaves reported that the opening of the Farmers Market in Harper Court will be marked with a ribbon cutting at 9:00 a.m. on June 4, the first day of the market.

Chair McGarry opened the floor for announcements and public comments. Secretary Rogel asked about progress on repairing the handicap tiles at intersections throughout the District. Commissioner Rumsey heard that the City will no longer be using these tiles and has begun replacing them with something else. The new tiles are installed at 56th and Lake Park Blvd, and work is expected to progress northward. Unfortunately, in the meantime, the loose tiles are dangerous. Director Reaves reported that he is meeting with people regarding a Downtown Hyde Park phone app.

There being no other business, the meeting was adjourned at 8:21 p.m. The next meeting will be June 17 at 11:00 a.m. at the Hyatt.

Respectfully submitted,
Mary J. Rogel
Secretary, SSA 61