

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

**Minutes, September 23, 2015
Hyde Park Hyatt
5225 S. Harper
Chicago, IL**

Present: Allison Hartman, James Hennessey, Michael McGarry, Charles Newsome, Mary Rogel, George Rumsey

Absent: James Hanson, Donna Trainor

Excused: Anthony Fox, Greg Guttman

Also Present: Eric Reaves

The meeting was called to order at 11:03 a.m. by Chair McGarry, who welcomed the community guests and thanked them for attending.

Minutes. Minutes for August 19, 2015, were approved as circulated.

Approval of the SSA Service Provider. Chair McGarry requested that Director Reaves and Wendy Williams, Executive Director of the South East Chicago Commission (SECC), excuse themselves from the meeting. McGarry informed the Commissioners that we need to re-appoint the SECC as the SSA Service Provider for 2016. This was followed by an extensive discussion that included, among other things, the SECC's performance as the Service Provider.

Commissioner Hennessey made a motion to re-appoint the South East Chicago Commission the 2016 Service Provider for SSA #61. Commissioner Rumsey seconded and the motion was approved unanimously.

Director Reaves and Wendy Williams returned to the meeting

Financial Report. Chair McGarry reported that he and Treasurer Guttman met with the SSA's accountant, Isaac Greene, earlier in the week in order to review the August financial statements. He reported that we received approximately \$119,000 in disbursements during the month from the city for second half property tax payments. He noted that we may receive an additional \$7,600 prior to year-end. McGarry informed the Commissioners that we have approximately \$153,000 remaining and noted that this amount will be reduce rapidly during the remainder of the year as expenses for programs are paid. This was followed by a discussion.

Updates.

Blue Badges. Director Reaves reported that all business in the SSA District are eligible to display the round blue Downtown Hyde Park badges. The businesses will have the option of displaying either a large or small version. Both retail and service businesses will be featured on the SSA website and may promote specials or other relevant information. This was followed by a discussion on how badging will help promote nonprofit entities. Director Reaves will reach out to the entities within the footprint to discuss how they want to be featured on the SSA website. He expects to have completed this process by the third week in October.

The second phase of badging and website development will begin in 2016 with "proximity marketing."

Bike Racks. Chair McGarry thanked Commissioner Hennessy and his assistant Aaron for walking the District and making a map of the 103 existing bike racks. Director Reaves sent this map, including the sites of the 60 proposed new hoops (26 of which will be branded) to CDOT for location approval and permitting. Chair McGarry explained that various factors were taken into consideration when deciding where to place the new hoops, including the locations of existing racks, DIVVY bike racks, bus stops, and where people are currently locking up bikes to sign posts or fences. Commissioner Hennessy noted that we may add 20 new hoops per year going forward. At that time, we will reassess where the high demand areas are located and how much capacity is available. Director Reaves indicated that the goal is to install the new racks in October. Six bolts are required for each rack, and the installation process is simple. Director Reaves reported that as long as people lock their bikes to the hoops correctly, two bikes per hoop, we will be providing 120 extra spots for bikes over what is available now.

Lake Park Median. After doing some research on placing flowers around the trees in the median, Brickman suggested that we consider an art program instead of or in addition to flowers because this location is "hostile" to flowers. The plants get damaged easily in the median, and they are difficult to maintain in this location. The Commissioners agreed that median art does not work well for many reasons and will explore other alternatives such as hanging baskets. Director Reaves will confer with Commissioners Rumsey and Hartman.

Way-finding Signs. Director Reaves has requested permission from CDOT to place Downtown Hyde Park badges and logos for restaurants and other facilities and attractions on signs seen by traffic coming off Lake Shore Drive and approaching the Metra viaduct.

Website. Director Reaves reported that the Website construction was finished on September 21st and traffic will soon migrate to the new site. Commissioners will be notified when the site is live. The address is www.downtownhydeparkchicago.com.

Banners. Director Reaves reported that the Fall/Winter banner design is being developed. It will keep the same colors to reinforce the brand, and it will add space at the bottom for advertising. The current banners have held up well even on windy days. We have had them almost five months and have lost only 2 of 110 banners. The new design, which will be installed during the first two weeks of November, will hang from Nov 1 - Mar 31. Permission

for the current banners expires Oct 31; Director Reaves will apply for the new banner permissions in the next 10 days. Commissioner Newsome suggested moving the banners that are in trees, and he noted that some of these banners technically are outside the district.

Sunday Concert Series in Nichols Park. Director Reaves reported that attendance per concert, total concert attendance, estimated revenue brought into the District have nearly tripled since the concert series was launched in 2012. Commissioner Rumsey reported anecdotally that most businesses around the park saw an increase in business because of the concerts.

Farmers Market. Market attendance continues to be up from what it was last year. Director Reaves reported that the vendors are happy and have increased the amount of items they bring to the market. Director Reaves is recruiting vendors from the downtown market, and he is getting calls from vendors wanting to join the market. There are now 13 vendors. The highest number of vendors was 19; the lowest was 9. The market can accommodate 25. So far, Director Reaves has been unable to secure vendors for cheese and eggs. Two weeks ago, the market got the Link program; people have been using it. Director Reaves again reminded the Commissioners that the SSA will be responsible for the Market beginning next year.

Downtown Hyde Park Fest. Director Reaves reported that 32% more people visited the Facebook page for Downtown Hyde Park Fest than for the Hyde Park Jazz Festival; 37% of visitors came to our site from Facebook, while 13% came from an article in the Hyde Park Herald. An estimated 2000 people attended the Fest, with 150 attending the fashion show and 1,000 attending the Children's Book Fair and final concert in Nichols Park. RSVPs for the children's film sold out. The Fest was family friendly, and Director Reaves gave out 500 Downtown Hyde Park bags.

Hyde Park Day at 360. We will be using bounce back couponing for the event to assess its impact on business in the District. SECC partnered with Choose Chicago for this event; we get 1/2 million person boost when we partner with them. A bus will take people from Hyde Park to the Hancock Building for \$10 each, leaving Hyde Park at 5:30.

Holiday Plans. Director Reaves reported that plans are being made for Small Business Saturday. SECC believes that Valerie Jarrett will visit again this year. Santa was a big hit on the trolley last year and we will try to have a Santa event again this year. Director Reaves plans to have additional suggestions for our October meeting.

Tree Replacement. Director Reaves reported that Brickman will replace 17 trees on 53rd Street starting in October after the first frost. This will not be done through the City or the SSA but rather through other funds from SECC. We will have an assortment of five different species out of the seven that are approved by the City. These trees will not be electrified.

Façade Improvement Program. Director Reaves would like to complete the model for the façade improvement program by the end of the year. The owner has agreed to participate and wants to see drawings.

Chair McGarry opened the floor for announcements and public comments.

There being no other business, the meeting was adjourned at 12:29 p.m. The next meeting will be October 23 at 11:00 a.m. at the Chicago Innovation Exchange.

Respectfully submitted,
Mary J. Rogel
Secretary, SSA 61