



HOWARD STREET

SSA #19 Meeting Minutes

Wednesday, November 20, 2019, 8:30 am at The Factory Theater, 1623 W. Howard St.

In Attendance: Carrie Sullivan, Commissioner; Gale Howard, Commissioner; Simone Freeman, Commissioner; Charlotte Walters, Commissioner (by phone); Sandi Price, RPBA staff; Cindy Plante, RPBA staff

Guests: Tzippy Rhodes from The Recyclery

1. Meeting called to order by Carrie Sullivan at 8:37 am.

2. Community Input: Tzippy from the Recyclery introduced herself. Matt had been a commissioner from the Recyclery before but resigned when he moved away. Commissioners and staff introduced themselves.

3. Approval of the October 16 meeting minutes

Simone requested that they be updated to reflect that Sol isn't yet adding dinner or moving forward with a liquor license. They had a public meeting but aren't advancing it at this time.

Simone moved approval of the minutes as amended

Gale seconded

Approved 3-0

4. Approval of financial statements

Staff has not yet received financial statements from the accountant for October, so we don't have anything to approve yet.

5. Commissioner vacancies –

Cindy reported that she will be meeting with Mike at Hairz R Us to go over the application on Thursday, but hasn't gotten anything yet from Enock, and Badou isn't moving forward because of his upcoming move. Staff has received a completed application from Casey Walters – he's a resident of the SSA and runs a business as an auctioneer and dealer of antiques, mostly online and with private clients.

Simone shared that she is somewhat concerned about Casey because he's Charlotte's son and wanted confirmation that that's allowed. She also asked about what has been done to involve nonprofit entities in the SSA.

Sandi clarified that nonprofit organizations are eligible to have people be commissioners if they're in the SSA boundaries. Family Matters is not because they're too far north. Irma at Wilye White isn't eligible because City employees aren't allowed to be commissioners.

Marilyn at A Just Harvest said no, and there's been a lot of leadership turnover at HACC recently that's limited their ability to have someone take it on.

Tzippy mentioned that Good News is actually the property owner of the building where the Recyclery is, which would make this organization eligible to have someone join as a commissioner and offered to reach out to them.

6. Event updates

- a. **Halloween event.** Cindy provided a recap. 16 businesses participated in the trick-or-treat event and reported good turnout despite the Halloween snow storm. We spent about \$400 on candy and decorations to give out to the businesses participating, and will probably repeat the event in 2020 – Halloween falls on a Saturday next year.
- b. **Live Love Shop** – Sandi provided an update on the Live Love Shop bus shelters (6 in English, 2 in Spanish) which are going up this week. Cindy passed out Live/Love/Shop postcards for businesses to distribute to customers.
- c. **Chalk Howard 2020** – Cindy and Sandi met with A5 and Five Grain last week to discuss plans for 2020 but are still waiting on a written proposal from A5 which will be shared with the commissioners when it's received.
- d. Tzippy mentioned that Good News had been organizing outdoor open mic events on Paulina during the summer and reported that the Recyclery had helped with sponsorship for some. This might be something for the SSA to get involved in next year.

7. BIP Applications

Cindy introduced the 4 applications submitted for this meeting. Howard Street Brewing, Curls & Co, Salerno's and Badou have all submitted; all the requests are for interior improvements – mostly electrical upgrades. Salerno's is for new signage.

Sandi added that there's \$24,000 in the budget for BIPs for 2019 and to date we've spent 0. Carrie asked how much each applicant was requesting.

Cindy provided a summary of the scope of work and quotes provided with each application. Three out of four submitted quotes for more than \$10,000 worth of work, which may entitle them to more than \$5,000 in rebates with commissioner approval.

Simone moved to approve up to \$6,000 in funding for Salerno's, Curls & Company, and Howard Street Brewing, and up to \$5,000 for Badou (since the highest of his quotes was only about \$11,000).

Gale Seconded.

approved 3-0.

8. Strategic Plan Review

Charlotte joined the meeting by phone at this point.

Carrie reminded the group of the statement of vision articulated in the 2017 plan.

Sandi provided a summary of the history and participants in the 2017 process. Since Cindy is new to the organization she was asked to review the 2017 plan and come up with questions to guide the discussion.

Cindy reported identifying four major themes in reading through the plan, including strategic partnerships, creating a new narrative for Howard Street, and engagement with the lakefront and Willye White Park. As a newcomer, the "new narrative" area seems to be the one where the most visible progress has been made due to the work with A5 on branding and Chalk Fest as a signature event. Strategic partnerships seems to be an area where there hasn't been as much movement. There's been some progress including Evanston businesses in the A5 branding efforts, but not as much with the area nonprofits. We've done a little bit with Willye White park, but not the lakefront, which may not be worth pursuing given the erosion problems and how far away it is.

Simone suggested inviting people to attend commission meetings from other stakeholder groups, including Evanston, the park district, and the different social service nonprofits. With the Evanston side of Howard in particular there should be more effort made to promote each other's events. Asked about vacancy reduction efforts.

Sandi added that the City Grange project on the Evanston side may not be happening now due to a financing shortfall. The biggest challenge on storefront vacancies has been landlords. It's more of a systemic problem because if the space is vacant they get to claim a tax writeoff. The new assessor is looking into changes and there's a coalition of chambers and community groups pushing for reform, but it's likely to be a longer-term process.

Simone asked about more public art.

Sandi said that the current owner of 1557 Howard was open to a mural on the side of the building but wanted to charge rent for having a mural there. He may be about to sell, and the potential buyer seemed more receptive.

Cindy added that she's started soliciting quotes to add lighting to the mural near Howard & Sheridan. There might be some opportunities to try and be more proactive and encourage more of the existing businesses to pursue BIP funding for improved windows and signage.

Tzippy asked about trees. Sandi said that the SSA funds some of the landscaping but trees are from the city, and parkway trees can be requested through 311.

Charlotte asked about collaborating with the Jarvis area businesses.

Cindy said that they actually asked to be added to the Howard Street SSA as part of the reconstitution process that we'll be going through in 2020. We've already submitted the first round of paperwork to the city.

Simone asked to return to the topic of engagement with the park and lakefront, specifically the park. Even if we can't invite Irma to be a commissioner, we should invite her to meetings more frequently. The park district does a lot of events that businesses would like to be more aware of.

9. 2020 meeting dates

Cindy asked if anybody objected to sticking with the current schedule of meeting on the 3rd Wednesday of the month. Nobody did, so meetings will remain at 8:30am on the 3rd Wednesday for 2020.

10. New/Closed business announcements

Cindy reported that there haven't been any new closings but that Badou is moving to 2049 W. Howard, just a few doors east of where he is now. The new business in the former Millionaire Kicks space is IM Beauty Supply – the store manager is Alexis Wilson. They sell wigs and hair as well as makeup and cosmetics. The new shop opened at the end of October and was among the 16 participating businesses for Halloween trick or treat.

11. Meeting was adjourned 10:15 am.