

HOWARD STREET SSA #19 Renewal



April 15, 2020 at 8:30am | Google Hangouts Virtual Meeting | Advisory Committee Meeting #2

Attendees:

SSA #19 Renewal Advisory Committee

Sandra Carter, Taste Food & Wine

Bob Copeland, Resident, Keller Williams Realtor

Torrence Gardener, 4th Ward Director of Community & Economic Development

Gale Howard, Resident*

Jay Johnson, Property owner

Renee Labrana, R Public House

Chuck Patella, Howard Street Brewing Co.

Cindy Plante, Economic Development Manager, RPBA

Sandi Price, Executive Director, RPBA

Carrie Sullivan, Factory Theater*

Charlotte Walters, Lost Eras*

*Current SSA 19 Commissioners

Public Attendees

Karen Viado

Mike Tish

City of Chicago

Karen Forte, SSA Liaison, City of Chicago

Mark Roschen, DPD, City of Chicago

Teska Associates

Carol Brobeck, Associate

Erin Cigliano, Principal

Scott Goldstein, Principal

Introduction

On April 15th, 2020, an SSA #19 Commission and SSA #19 Renewal Advisory Committee meeting was held via Google Hangouts. A quorum of the SSA Commission was present online, consistent with Governor Pritzker's Executive Order 2020-07 which suspends the requirement of the Open Meetings Act that members of a public body be physically present at meetings of the public body, and the limitations of the Open Meetings Act as to when members of a public body may participate in meetings of the public body remotely. The meeting was noticed on the RPBA web site and open to the public through a Google Hangouts meeting.

This was the second meeting of the Advisory Committee following the first meeting which was held in person on March 5th at Willye B. White Park.

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The meeting began with a welcome from Cindy Plante of RPBA and SSA #19. Cindy shared objectives for the meeting and provided an opportunity for public comment. As there were no public comments, Cindy welcomed Scott Goldstein and Erin Cigliano of Teska Associates, the firm assisting SSA #19 with the reconstitution process.

SSA #19 Renewal

The next portion of the meeting focused on the renewal process for SSA #19. Scott Goldstein, Principal at Teska Associates, explained that the SSA would expire at the end of 2021 if no action is taken. Despite current challenging circumstances, carrying out the renewal process now is important as it is the only way to seamlessly transition and have existing funds carry over into the following year's budget.

Mark Roschen, Assistant Commissioner of the City of Chicago Department of Planning and Development (DPD) then shared that the timeline for renewal is still being determined, but the City would still like to have in-person community meetings and must leave time for the legislative process in the Fall. The ultimate goal is to still to meeting requirements for renewal this year and the City will work closely with the SSA to make that possible. A major next step will be to gather taxpayer signatures in support of the SSA (20% of all PINs in SSA are required). Mark confirmed that electronic copies of physical signatures will be accepted, although electronic signatures will not be.

Scott briefly recapped the first Advisory Committee Meeting, including Howard Street's existing successes/challenges and current SSA services. Cindy spoke briefly about the major efforts of the SSA by budget category, examples include events such as Chalk Howard for Customer Attraction and snow removal and the business improvement program for Public Way Aesthetics.

Needs Assessment Survey

Erin Cigliano, Principal at Teska Associates, then shared information on the Needs Assessment survey. A critical piece in the renewal process, this survey will be distributed to local businesses owners, property owners, employees, neighborhood residents, customers, and other stakeholders. It will be used to determine needs, budget, and areas for improvement for the renewed SSA #19. SSA Commissioners are encouraged to take the survey and share it among their networks. The Needs Assessment will close Friday, May 8th.

Outreach

An essential part of the renewal process is outreach and engagement with local businesses and property owners. Given the current shelter-in-place order, much of this will need to be conducted virtually. Erin provided an overview of virtual outreach techniques including digital communication, quick polls, remote meetings and virtual cafes, newsletters/social media/website, voice over videos, and comment feedback forms. The goal will be to gather as much support as possible for SSA renewal leading up to community meetings, which will be scheduled to take place in summer with the intention that they will be in-person. Cook County requires the submission for renewal by the end of the year and the City needs to first get through its legislative process, which can take a few months. The current goal is to submit everything for SSA #19 renewal by late summer.

Signatures

DPD has agreed to accept the required Support Signature Forms via email of signed forms or via regular mail of signed forms. To gather signatures, the forms will be posted to the website and emailed to taxpayers and owners. There are 235 total PINs (parcels) in the SSA boundary, so 24 PINs will constitute 10% of signatures and 47 PINs will constitute the total 20% of signatures needed. Note: if a property owner has multiple PINs, each PIN counts for one signature. A cover memo will discuss the renewal process, the achievements of SSA #19 and the proposed maximum rate for the renewed SSA (which

will be approved for the next 15 years). The purpose of these signatures is to show that property owners support the renewal of SSA #19 and recognize the cost and benefit to them. Signatures must come from the taxpayer of record, property owner, or a certified agent of the property.

Budget and Rate Options

As part of the renewal process, the Advisory Committee needs to recommend a maximum tax rate that will be set for the next 15 years by the City Council. While this one-time decision sets the maximum rate, the actual tax rate can change annually by the Commission. Each year, the SSA Commission must determine a budget and recommended tax levy (the amount that would be raised through a tax rate that does not exceed the maximum rate). The County Clerk then determines the tax rate, which must be below the maximum rate set for the SSA.

The current established maximum tax rate for SSA #19 is 0.833%, though the SSA currently only taxes at a rate of 0.6398% and the rate has been lower than the maximum rate over several years.

If using the existing levy rate (0.6398%), the cost to an individual business would be approximately \$639 annually for a property valued at \$100K Equalized Assessed Value (EAV). This would increase to \$800 annually if the rate were closer to the maximum rate, such as 0.8%. The current rate (0.6398%) raised approximately \$280,000 last year (2019). The Commission has set the rate lower than the maximum rate which would have raised approximately \$368,000.

To begin the discussion on budget and rate options, the following points were shared for consideration:

- While Jarvis Square businesses have requested to join the SSA, increases in costs are anticipated to be minimal because of proximity to the area already served.
- RPBA, which administers four SSAs, is able to negotiate contracts at a lower cost and allocate staff efficiently at less cost to each SSA than if they were operated independently.
- On Chicago's North Side, the levy rates range from .25 to 1.5%; it is higher in other areas of the City where property values are lower and the maximum can be as high as 3%.
- All taxpayers pay the same rate, regardless of whether they are commercial businesses or residential condo owners.

The Commissioners and Advisory Committee members present at the meeting shared their thoughts on a proposed maximum tax rate. The key concepts of the discussion were:

- The maximum rate lasts for 15 years, so consideration should be given to the fact that flexibility will be important even after COVID and the Commission may want to save funds to complete larger projects.
- The maximum rate is set, but the actual levy is set every year by commissioners and does not have to be the maximum rate.
- The SSA has not needed to raise the levy to the maximum rate because it has been fiscally prudent.

At the conclusion of the discussion, the Commissioners and Advisory Board members agreed to propose the same maximum rate of 0.833%.

Erin Cigliano mentioned that the signature support forms will include an attached cover memo which would explain the reasons for maintaining the same maximum rate, how the annual rate is decided (and has historically been lower than the maximum rate), and describes the SSA's track record of financial stewardship and its commitment to helping strengthen the local business community.

SSA Commission Action Items

Cindy then addressed the SSA #19 Commission agenda items and held a vote for the following items:

1. Approval of previous meetings minutes
 - (postponed)
2. Approval of annual audit report
 - (postponed)
3. Approval of emergency rebate programs for businesses
 - (Approved 3-0)
4. Chalk Fest 2020
 - Voted 3-0 to cancel for 7/18 without picking a date to reschedule for 2020.
 - Cindy will remain touch with vendors and artists about finding ways to incorporate chalk art into other events and promotional efforts this year; maybe schedule individual artists to do smaller pieces on the sidewalk during weekends once things reopen. Will plan to bring the festival back for 2021.

Market Study Overview

As part of the renewal process, Teska is also providing a market study for the Howard Street SSA area. Scott Goldstein presented a summary of initial research that Teska has conducted for business owners to help them understand the current market near the SSA. Highlights include:

- Demographics
 - Population has decreased slightly since 2000, by about 7% within a 5-minute drive and 4% within a 10-minute drive
 - Roughly 50% of the population is white non-Hispanic
 - The area is very diverse, with almost a quarter of the immediate area comprised of black non-Hispanic (23%) and Asian (10%) residents
 - Roughly a quarter of nearby residents are Hispanic
 - Nearly 40% of people speak a language other than English at home, including Spanish and Indo-European languages (likely French) among others
- Housing
 - Over half of all households in the market area rent their homes
 - In the immediate areas, over 1,200 housing units have been built since 2000, a 3% increase
- Retail Opportunity
 - There are spending gaps in almost every retailing category, indicating that there is unmet demand that can be met by local businesses.
 - In Retail Trade & Food + Drink, there is a \$715 million gap
 - In General Merchandise, there is a \$176 million gap
 - In Food Service & Drinking Places, there is a \$60 million gap
- Who is the market?
 - ESRI's *Tapestry* segments provide cluster data about customer types, and they have been found to be pretty accurate
 - Top 3 *Tapestry* segments near Howard Street SSA:
 1. Uptown Individuals: professionals
 2. Middle Ground: come from various parts of the globe
 3. Next Wave: multigenerational, ethnic, Hispanic

Timeline & Next Steps

- Next meeting: May 13th

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- Ongoing -- Digital Communication
- Complete Needs Assessment
- Develop plan to gather signatures
- Plan for community meetings in summer once stay-at-home orders are lifted