

HOWARD STREET SSA #19 Renewal



May 13, 2020 at 8:30am | Zoom Virtual Meeting | Advisory Committee Meeting #3

Attendees:

SSA #19 Renewal Advisory Committee

Bob Copeland, Resident, Keller Williams Realtor

Torrence Gardener, 49th Ward Director of Community & Economic Development

Gale Howard, Resident*

Jay Johnson, Property owner

Renee Labrana, R Public House

Cindy Plante, Economic Development Manager, RPBA

Sandi Price, Executive Director, RPBA

Carrie Sullivan, Factory Theater*

Charlotte Walters, Lost Eras*

*Current SSA 19 Commissioners

Presenters

Dante Odoni, Odoni Partners LLC

Lizzy Kreindler, a5 Inc.

John Harris, a5 Inc.

City of Chicago

Mark Roschen, DPD, City of Chicago

Teska Associates

Carol Brobeck, Associate

Erin Cigliano, Principal

Scott Goldstein, Principal

Introduction

On May 13th, 2020, an SSA #19 Commission and SSA #19 Renewal Advisory Committee meeting was held via Zoom. This was the third meeting of the SSA Renewal Advisory Committee.

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 Zoom meeting.

In addition, members of the SSA #19 Renewal Advisory Committee were present.

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SSA Commission Action Items

Cindy Plante of RPBA addressed the SSA #19 Commission agenda items:

1. Approve Minutes for April 15, 2020 Meeting (*approved 2-0*)
2. Approval of 2019 Audit (*approved 2-0*)
 - a. Dante Odoni of Odoni Partners LLC presented the audit via screenshare and noted the following:
 - i. Minimal changes when compared to 2018
 - ii. Overall fund balance is \$135,125
 - iii. Slightly over budget in Customer Attraction
 - iv. Financial statements explain the figures and the SSA organization
3. Presentation by a5 - Potential Event Ideas for Summer and Fall 2020 (*presentation only*)
 - a. Lizzy Kreindler and John Harris of a5 Inc. shared ideas for alternative events:
 - i. Goals of Chalk Howard were to provide a free event that would drive traffic, attention and spending to businesses, strengthen the community, grow followers, celebrate diversity etc.
 - ii. Alternative events would aim to capture interest from the same audiences and possibly have a broader reach
 - iii. Intention to create events that allow for social distancing, either partially or completely virtual
 - iv. Potential to combine events
 - b. Howard Street Experience
 - i. Idea 1: Placemaking Chalk Art Series
 1. Four consecutive Thursday evenings in Fall 2020
 2. Each week a combination of a different chalk artist, venues, live bands/music
 3. Art could be 4D, utilizing a vertical wall
 4. Indoor/Outdoor event without street closure
 5. Events held in different areas of SSA to draw attention to the larger area
 - ii. Idea 2: Virtual Chalk Art Series
 1. Series of 5 Instagram Live events; 1 hour or less, interactive with (Q&A)
 2. Artist would create tabletop 3D art
 3. Artist would highlight a local business and market Howard Street
 4. SSA would own final pieces, 16"x24"
 5. Create a time lapse video
 6. Opportunity to place art in shop windows
 - iii. Idea 3: Halloween on Howard
 1. Halloween is on a Saturday
 2. Halloween event in 2019 had high attendance
 - c. Commission Comments and Questions
 - i. SSA should move forward quickly with these concepts
 - ii. Potential to do just one event with the potential to plan more
 - iii. Integrate local artists, businesses and actors to help facilitate and lead aspects
4. 2021 Budget
 - a. Overview of budget at a future meeting

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- b. 2021 budget based on 2020 budget
 - c. Anticipating some loss of revenue due to property taxes
5. Next SSA Commission Meeting: June 17th, 2020
6. General Updates:
- a. Summer plantings scheduled for May 29th, 2020
 - b. Food license approved for Athena Board Game Café, former T-Jam space
 - i. Planning to open with limited menu for takeout only in next few weeks
 - c. Emergency Rebate Programs
 - i. 3 applicants across the 2 programs
 - d. Building permit approved for Howard Street Brewing

SSA #19 Renewal

The next portion of the meeting focused on updates from Teska Associates regarding the renewal process for SSA #19. Erin Cigliano, Principal at Teska Associates, began by confirming that the Needs Assessment Survey was closed on May 12th. Erin reviewed the proposed boundary for the Howard Street SSA upon renewal, which is being extended to include Jarvis Square area businesses (the SSA will be extended via railroad parcels which is allowable and common). Erin noted that respondents in the Needs Assessment Survey indicated widespread support for extending the SSA to Jarvis Square.

Successes + Challenges

Erin then spoke about the successes and challenges businesses and stakeholders have mentioned through outreach and engagement. Successes include events like Chalk Fest, several rebate programs, beautification efforts, holiday décor and public art. Challenges include storefront vacancies and the perception of crime and loitering.

Budget + Tax Levy

Scott Goldstein, Principal at Teska Associates, then spoke about the SSA levy and tax rate, noting the Advisory Committee agreed to use the same maximum tax rate of 0.833% at the April 15th, 2020 Advisory Committee meeting. This rate would cost approximately \$320 per year per \$50,000 in EAV for properties in the SSA.

Scott stated that establishing and funding the SSA is an investment in the area and the money put towards the SSA is often spent towards the same types of services, events, and business marketing regardless. The SSA makes larger efforts, which may be harder to do as an individual, possible, with the added benefit of having an advocate and coordinator (RPBA). The annual levy is decided each year by the SSA Commission. The 2021 levy will be decided by the SSA Commission once the SSA is renewed. In 2019, the tax rate was 0.6398% which brought in about \$280,000.

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Needs Assessment Survey Results

Next, Erin shared results of the Needs Assessment Survey. The survey was open for 3 weeks, between April 16th and May 12th, 2020. A critical piece in the renewal process, this survey was distributed to local businesses and property owners, employees, neighborhood residents, customers, and other stakeholders. The results will inform service and program priorities going forward and be used to determine the budget and areas for improvement for the renewed SSA #19.

The survey was shared on social media networks with almost 19,000 followers across three groups; in four RPBA newsletters; and via e-mail communication with businesses and SSA Commissioners. The survey was open to anyone shopping or visiting the SSA area. The goal of the survey was to understand what people love and what can be improved. Preliminary takeaways include:

- Over 50% of respondents were residents; 25% property owners (some may have been both)
- Many are residents and/or business owners in Rogers Park (Glenwood Arts District, Devon Street, Loyola University area)
- Participants presented a mix of neighborhood newcomers and long-standing residents —45% have been in Rogers Park between 1 and 5 years, and 29% for over 20 years
- SSA Services and Programs were rated by survey participants as *important, very important, or not important*.
 - Based on responses, top services included:
 - Small Business Improvement Program
 - Tenant Retention / Attraction
 - Litter Removal / Service
 - Security / Surveillance
 - Open Response comments about services and program needs provided far more ideas, estimating 100+ additional insights in total.

Service Priorities: 2021 Budget

Scott then shared the current 2020 budget, highlighting the budget categories under which services and programs are provided by an SSA: *Customer Attraction, Public Way Aesthetics, Sustainability and Public Places, Economic/Business Development, Safety Programs, SSA Management, and Personnel*. The Howard Street SSA 2020 budget focused most funding (and has in recent years as well) towards Customer Attraction and Public Way Aesthetics, which include events, marketing, holiday décor, rebate programs, snow and litter removal and landscaping.

Scott then posed a question about whether the SSA might dedicate greater funding upon renewal to the Sustainability and Public Places category as a means of implementing tenets of Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED) to address some of the persistent perception of crime and safety issues in the area. Outreach has shown that there are areas in the SSA that feel less safe, whether public or private. Implementing CPTED practices could help address safety concerns, improving the perception of safety in the SSA. Examples include stormwater management via the installation and maintenance of bioswales, rain barrels, and community gardens, as well as the installation of bike racks, bicycle repair stands, and recycling bins.

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Next Steps

Outreach and engagement are ongoing and will continue to be conducted virtually. The next Advisory Committee meeting is scheduled for June 17th, 2020.

1) Develop plan to gather signatures

As was shared at the April 15th meeting, DPD will accept the required Support Signature Forms via email or via regular mail. To gather signatures, the forms will be posted to the website and emailed to taxpayers and owners. 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.

DPD requires a minimum of 20% of property owners to sign in support of the SSA. 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. The SSA will reach out first to property owners with multiple PINs. A property owner may list multiple properties on a single form if 1) the properties are all registered to the same name, and 2) if the properties are adjacent to each other. If the property is owned by the same entity but is registered to a different name, different forms are required for each property.

2) Share survey results + notify gift card winner

A summary of the results of the Needs Assessment Survey is forthcoming. A \$50 gift card to a local SSA business will be awarded at random to one respondent of the Needs Assessment Survey.

3) Plan for community meetings

The SSA #19 renewal process started just before the stay-at-home order, necessitating the majority of outreach and engagement with businesses and the Advisory Committee transition to virtual, online meetings instead of in-person. We have had good attendance at all virtual meetings toward this effort, though outreach is key to maintaining high attendance. The goal is to still hold in-person community meetings regarding the renewal, however, is it possible that those meetings may need to be held virtually. All efforts will be taken to ensure that the community meetings, whether virtual or in-person, are well-publicized, convenient and enact proper safety precautions.

4) Prepare Application / District Plan

The District Plan, a key component of the Application for renewal, is underway and a draft is anticipated within the next month. The Plan will be finalized after the community meetings.

5) Submit Application and Signatures in August

The original June 12th deadline for 10% of signatures has been extended to August (date to be determined) when all 20% of signatures are due. Mark Roschen, Assistant Commissioner of the City of Chicago Department of Planning and Development (DPD) confirmed that DPD continues to evaluate deadlines and will continue to work with the SSA to ensure it is able to comply with requirements of renewal to avoid a disruption in services.

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6) Legislative Process in the Fall

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, the goal is to prepare the SSA renewal application and participate in the legislative process in the Fall of 2020. 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.