

Devon SSA #43 Commission Meeting
Monday, July 20, 2020; 2:30pm
Zoom: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/81404104228>
Dial in: +1 312 626 6799 meeting ID 814 0410 4228



MINUTES

Commissioners present: Pete Valavanis, Maura Levitt, Mohammed Junaid, Jay Shewakramani, Irshad Khan, Avi Bereliani, Sanhita Agnihotri

Commissioners absent: Rebeca Vasquez

Others present: Cindy Plante & Sandi Price, RPBA; Marlene Raddatz, 50th Ward Office
Amanda Wilson & Brad Ball, Big Buzz

I. Call to Order

Pete called the meeting to order at 2:36pm

II. Public Input

There was no public comment.

III. Approval of minutes from the 6/15/2020 meeting

Sanhita moved approval, Pete seconded. APPROVED.

IV. 2020 YTD financials

Cindy and Sandi presented a report on 2020 spending from January to June. Due to the pandemic, we're under budget on most of the categories listed.

Cindy proposed moving up the Devon's Got Talent agenda item so the Big Buzz team can provide updates without having to stay for the whole meeting.

V. Old Business

a. Devon's Got Talent update

Amanda and Brad shared updates on Devon's Got Talent, currently planned for November 1. Big Buzz has started reaching out to performers but hasn't had much response yet since we're still several months away. We're planning for contingencies and compliance with whatever public health guidelines are in place this fall; this year's event won't include a buffet and we're preparing to shift to a virtual event if needed due to venue capacity limits.

Pete asked about the timing for a decision on whether or not to cancel - how long should we wait before making that decision?

Cindy and Amanda suggested that it doesn't have to be complete cancellation and could shift to a virtual format, either as a standalone event (as Andersonville has done) or a series of social media videos like Howard Street did with Chalk Fest. Current regulations

limit performing arts venues to 25% capacity, but are subject to change over time. This may mean moving to a hybrid approach that incorporates both a live event with limited capacity as well as an online alternative; one lesson from prior years has been that we should make more of an effort to capture video to use for promotional purposes, so pivoting to virtual may be helpful there. The media release has already gone out and it does include language about the event date being subject to public health guidelines and regulations.

Jay asked about the possibility of rolling what's been spent so far over to next year in the event of cancellation.

Amanda said she would have to check with Melissa on this. Cindy said she had reviewed the original contract from January and it doesn't directly speak to this; it only covers cancellation for cause or at the discretion of Big Buzz.

Sanhita feels that we should make a decision today to postpone the event to 2021 given the uncertainty of what's happening with Covid and venue capacity restrictions. Pete agrees but would be ok waiting some more but would prefer to make the call before more money is spent on planning for 2020. Avi agreed.

Jay moved to cancel Devon's Got Talent for 2020. Maura seconded. APPROVED.

b. Mandala decorations

Sandi provided background on where things stand since last meeting. Cindy has reached out to other vendors about additional bids for new mounting hardware and installation but other vendors weren't comfortable putting together a since the mandalas were custom made and unlikely to be able to use readily available hardware. Sandi has been in contact with the original vendor, Scott at Illuminight and he was willing to come down a few hundred dollars on price from the original installation quote. He recommends against leaving the mandalas up year round because sun damage will accelerate wear and tear and limit their useful life span. They suggest putting them up for a few months in the fall and winter to coincide with Diwali and take them down after to avoid excessive wear.

Jay said that the point of getting new mounting hardware was to be able to put them up for longer.

Pete moved to put the mandalas up for fall (September through November).

Avi asked about leaving them up longer.

Sandi suggested it may be possible to put them up now without an end date and see how well the new mounting hardware holds up.

Jay indicated a willingness to put them back up if we have some assurance that they'll stay up, and asked about insurance coverage in case they fall down again.

Cindy reminded commissioners that RPBA has to submit proof of insurance coverage to the City as part of the process of getting permits for projects like this. Sandi added that Scott's company is also required to provide insurance.

Pete feels that the mandalas should be put back up.

Maura moved to put them back up for the recommended duration of time in the fall. Junaid seconded.

Avi, Jay, and Sanhita vote no; motion fails.

Avi moved to put the mandalas back up without specifying a removal timeline. Sanhita seconded. APPROVED.

c. Landscaping / Tree grates

Cindy shared that CDOT has come out to replace the broken tree grates identified by commissioners since last meeting, and Brightview has replanted the planter pots that were vandalized last month. We've been getting positive feedback from businesses about the new planter arrangements.

Junaid asked about who's responsible for maintenance and watering of landscape features.

According to Cindy watering of the planter pots is part of Brightview's scope.

Cleanstreet does litter pickup and weeding in the in-ground planting areas and tree pits.

Sandi clarified that the above ground planter pots are watered by Brightview but watering of the in-ground planters isn't part of either vendor's scope - they're planted with perennials that aren't supposed to need as much maintenance and watering.

Jay and Junaid remain concerned about the maintenance of the in-ground planting areas and were interested in having their maintenance supervisor come speak to the commissioners at the August meeting. Cindy will reach out to him about this.

Junaid also asked about the possibility of relocating the bike racks that are currently located in front of Sabri Nihari; Pete expressed an interest in having them moved to the block near Cary's lounge. Sandi asked if Ald. Silverstein or Marlene was still on the call to weigh in on this, but they seem to have gotten disconnected.

In the interest of keeping the meeting moving, Cindy will follow up with folks offline about bike rack placement later.

d. Covid19 recovery / reopening support

Cindy provided a recap of the Covid recovery projects SSA43 has funded so far since shelter in place order began in March: bulk orders from restaurants for first responders, PPE and Ecommerce rebates for businesses, and most recently bulk purchasing and distribution of PPE and cleaning supplies for businesses. Given where we are on budget and spending so far for the year, is there anything else commissioners would like to try? Several people expressed an interest in more bulk supply orders and standardized "we're open" banners for businesses to display in windows.

Avi asked about cost for banners.

Cindy said it would depend on specifics; size, material, and, whether we want something specific to our OnDevon branding or a generic off-the-shelf “we’re open” sign.

Jay reported that one vendor had 2ft by 6ft paper banners available off the shelf for \$15.

Avi pointed out another generic 12inch by 30inch vinyl “we’re open” banner with grommets that could be ordered for \$15 which might be a better fit for different window sizes.

Other commissioners preferred ordering custom ones through a local printer to keep money local. Sandi reminded commissioners of 25% window coverage limitations in the City’s sign regulations.

Avi moved approval of up to \$2000 for we’re open banners with grommets, and suction cups or hooks for businesses to put them up. Jay seconded. APPROVED.

Cindy will reach out to local vendors for quotes on banners that include our branding and URL.

Avi proposed funding an additional round of funding for distribution of bulk orders of PPE and sanitation supplies now that more businesses are opening.

Irshad asked how much we spent last time.

Sandi checked prior meeting minutes and records - it was \$3,000 initially, then \$7,000; supplies were distributed to about 150 businesses.

Avi shared some quotes on supplies, including masks, gloves, and hand sanitizer.

Jay said last time each business got 100 masks, two boxes of gloves and a gallon of hand sanitizer.

Pete moved approval of up to \$10,000 funding for the next round of bulk PPE distribution. Sanhita seconded. APPROVED.

VI. New Business

a. BIP application - Naaz Studios (2356 W. Devon)

Cindy presented drawings and estimates for installation of an awning at Naaz Studios, near the corner of Devon and Western. It’s a pretty straightforward application with a rebate amount not to exceed \$1850.

Avi moved approval, Maura seconded. APPROVED.

b. BIP application - Roberts’ Fish Market (2916 W. Devon)

Cindy presented drawings and estimates for installation of an awning at Robert’s Fish Market. The prior owners had an awning similar to what’s being proposed here but didn’t keep current on annual permit renewal fees, so the current owner was forced to take it down and pay fines when he took over a few years back; he’s looking to put an awning back up because there’s very little signage there now.

Sandi added that management had also reached out to her to ask if it would be possible to also request additional funding from the sign removal program.

Irshad favored just sticking to the standard 50% BIP rebate covered by the application submitted; isn't comfortable funding sign removal after the fact when program guidelines specify that you have to apply and be approved before the sign is removed. Sandi agreed but said that the city had imposed a deadline on sign removal at the time that meant it wouldn't have been feasible to wait on submission and approval of an official application, and the then-new owner wasn't aware of the process. Several commissioners asked for more information about how much the sign removal cost and how long ago it was done. Pete moved approval of up to \$2000 funding on the submitted application. Jay seconded. APPROVED.

c. 2020-2021 snow removal

Cindy asked if commissioners had any feedback or changes for snow removal for the upcoming season.

Commissioners were generally OK with continuing snow removal service as in prior years but wanted to keep an eye on consistency of performance by the subcontractor given some complaints that we had last season about sidewalks adjacent to vacant stores not being cleared and getting icy.

Irshad asked to invite the vendor to the August meeting to discuss further; Cindy will reach out.

d. 2021 budget & service provider agreement

Cindy presented the draft 2021 budget, which is largely the same as this year's. The levy is down slightly due to the fact that the pandemic will mean more carryover from this year to next, and the discontinuation of last year's contract with PLACE Consulting, which was still included in the 2020 budget at the time it was drafted and approved. Pete and Irshad requested that the document be emailed to commissioners, which Cindy sent in both excel and pdf formats.

Pete moved approval of the budget and service provider agreement. Avi seconded.

Sandi added that it was the understanding of staff that a decision had already been reached on the service provider agreement back in February when the West Ridge chamber made their presentation to commissioners; it wasn't reflected in the minutes because RPBA staff wasn't present for that portion of the meeting agenda.

Commissioners should also keep in mind that the budget can be changed after this initial approval via the budget revision process; the only thing that can't be changed is the total levy.

Jay feels that commissioners need more time to review the draft budget and asked if it would be possible to provide this information earlier in the process.

Sandi responded that we're held to a difficult timeline by the City's process; initial drafts were due in early June and we've been back and forth with the City on requested revisions ever since; the most recent version is based on feedback we got from the city on Friday, so Cindy was still working on it this morning.

Jay moved to table this for now and call a special meeting to vote on budget approval on Friday the 24th. Avi seconded. APPROVED.

VII. Adjournment

Junaid asked if there were any updates on the status of the expanded outdoor dining permit request submitted for Devon and Campbell.

Marlene replied that the 50th ward heard back on Friday that we're now waiting on DCASE and have reached out to them to ask about the status of this.

Sandi added that we also have a new police commander for the 24th district, as commander Rubino was recently promoted to a position elsewhere at CPD. The new commander is Joe Brennan, who was previously at the 14th district. The 24th district commander has also been involved in reviewing these requests and had been looking to require additional barricades than the City requires, which was also holding up the process. We're still trying to get an official decision on it.

Meeting adjourned at 4:16pm

Next meetings:

Friday, July 24, 2020; 3pm, Zoom

Monday, August 17 2020; 2:30pm, Zoom