



SSA Commissioners Meeting

Zoom: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/82807671489>

Dial in: +1 312 626 6799 ; Meeting ID: 828 0767 1489

Thursday, July 16, 2020 at 8:30am

Commissioners present: Heather Hill (chair), Chris Bell, Jennifer Clark, Tony Fox. Sara Lukens, Nick Anderson

Others present: Cindy Plante & Sandi Price, Rogers Park Business Alliance; Scott Parrish, Illuminight Lighting

1. Call to order

Meeting called to order at 8:34am

2. Public Comment

There was no public comment

3. Approve minutes from May 21

Tony moved approval, Chris seconded, APPROVED.

4. Review 2020 YTD financials

Cindy and Sandi presented YTD financial statements. We're currently under budget on most categories where we haven't spent anything due to Covid. The only place we're over budget is landscaping, but it's OK because the overall public way aesthetics category is still on track.

Sandi asked where we put Covid19 rebates. Cindy responded that these went in the BIP category.

5. 2021 Budget

Cindy presented a draft budget for 2021. Although the proposed levy is increased slightly compared to 2020, the tax rate is actually lower than this year's because of an increase in EAV, which allows us to stick to the plan established by the SSA renewal advisory committee of keeping the tax rate consistent for the 2021 year due to concerns about covid19.

Chris asked about safety - we haven't historically done anything in this area, but it was identified as a priority on the community survey and outreach we've done so far as part of the renewal process.

Cindy shared that the two main items that go in this tab are usually camera programs or rebates, the other is security ambassadors or private security. Other RPBA SSAs do

cameras, but we haven't done security. Sandi added that Morse used to many years ago but didn't find it helpful and decided not to continue.

Chris asked about costs for cameras.

Sandi responded that Devon recently spent over \$80,000 to sponsor installation of 3 additional OEMC cameras, which are installed by the city and integrated into the police department's surveillance infrastructure. They only use specific Motorola hardware and tie everything into their system, which is why it's such a large outlay. Cindy shared that Howard Street has continued to maintain about a half a dozen cameras installed at businesses around the district, at a cost of a couple thousand a year. These aren't part of the OEMC system but the police can view footage and ask businesses to share it if there's an incident.

Nick shared that the police request security camera footage from the hotel's cameras every so often as part of investigations, and feels it's valuable as a deterrent, but felt that the OEMC cameras were way overpriced compared to systems in place at businesses.

Tony was also interested in adding cameras due to an increase in graffiti and vandalism of landscaping.

Cindy shared that we are including \$5,000 in the proposed budget in the safety tab because this was where the city directed us to put any allocations intended for use for covid recovery projects like rebates, signage, and PPE purchases, but if we decide later to add a camera rebate, we might also be able to do it out of here too.

6. Landscaping

Cindy shared that Brightview was out in June to install plantings and asked for feedback.

Commissioners felt that it wasn't immediately obvious where and what plants were installed and asked to get photos and reports from the vendor. Cindy will reach out to Brightview. Sandi also asked Brandon to take some pictures while he's out.

7. 2020 Holiday Decorations

Cindy introduced Scott to talk with the group about holiday decorations - he's been our vendor for the last few years and works on other SSAs in the area as well. Holiday lights came up a lot on the community survey, people prefer the tree lights and noticed their absence last year, but we wanted to talk through options and logistical challenges around power access, or identify alternatives.

Scott shared that there is at least one block consisting of mostly residential buildings where power access is a problem, and others where outdoor outlets are GFCIs that cut off any time it rains. Adding temporary non GFCI outlets could solve that problem and keep lights on. Wrapping fences in white lights could be done but isn't as visible due to on-street parking, and is difficult to keep consistent since they're only on the west side of the road. He recommends going back to the tree lights or putting something else up in the trees for sake of visibility.

Tony opposes removing GFCIs due to code requirements and liability concerns, but agrees that tree lights looked fantastic in the first year, but wasn't impressed with subsequent installations where it looked sparse.

Scott asked if there were specific trees or blocks where it was an issue. None were identified.

Heather asked about wrapping tree trunks instead - Scott said this could be done but isn't preferable due to concerns about vandalism - if they're within arms reach they might be damaged or disappear.

Chris shared that the real problem wasn't sparseness of the lights but power access, pointing to a particular tree near her shop that went out regularly and wasn't fixed quickly in prior years. Asked if it would be possible to get a guarantee or factor in maintenance.

We know certain buildings, including one at Farwell and another at North Shore that were refusing to participate due to the power access issue. We can't commit to doing tree lights without power.

Sara asked who reached out to buildings. In the past it's been RPBA staff. Sandi confirmed that this was the case and would be again. One of the residents from one of these buildings actually joined us for the community meeting on renewal earlier this week.

Scott suggested working with building owners to install dedicated outdoor outlets with bubble covers that could power trees, particularly along the main dead zone between North Shore and Columbia.

Nick asked about the possibility of getting the City to add receptacles to light poles like on Howard and Devon.

Cindy shared that they don't allow that as a one-off project; CDOT only does this if it's part of a larger streetscape project, which we're not likely to see here anytime in the next few years. Sandi offered the example of the Vision Clark Street plan which was done in 2017, and we're just now getting into the planning process for construction to start in 2022.

Chris asked to have RPBA reach out to building owners to get a sense of who would be willing to participate and/or add outlets and come up with a plan from there. Cindy agreed but reminded commissioners that the next regular meeting isn't until September, so an additional meeting in August may be required. Commissioners agreed to an extra meeting; Cindy and Sandi will reach out to building owners, particularly around Columbia, North Shore, Pratt and Farwell; Scott will prepare bids for installation of LED tree lights and maintenance.

Heather indicated that 6741 N. Sheridan (at the corner of Columbia and Sheridan) would be willing to participate and have their tree lit. Tony also said there was power available at The New 400 and Rice Thai.

Scott asked about color preferences for lights, but suggested white since it's easier to maintain and keep consistent. Commissioners agreed. Scott also asked Cindy to check on one of the outlets on Howard near the public storage building at Howard and Ridge that stopped working last year.

8. Public Art / murals / BellaWrap update

Cindy provided an update on BellaWrap - we're waiting on an updated legal agreement from the City; once we get the agreement and get it executed, we can apply for permits. We're still trying to get the project done this year since we weren't able to complete installation last year, but it's taking a while due to covid and the fact that we'll be the first time this product is being used in Chicago. The 49th ward has also shared with us that they're getting a lot of inquiries from artists and community groups looking to collaborate

on murals, particularly on some of the larger multi-story walls near some of the patios on Sheridan if the SSA is interested in issuing an RFP for public art.

Cindy also shared some opening and closing updates - the new restaurant taking over the Royal Coffee space will be a Mexican restaurant and is hoping to open later this summer. Halal Guys has also announced plans to open in the former 5 Guys space. Caffe Arriva Dolce had announced plans to close this month but walked it back after plans were announced for students to return to Loyola in August.

Jennifer added that Loyola has since updated the plan and moved most classes to an online format except for things that need to be done in person like science labs and research. Students in those classes will still be moving back to campus with dorms assigned to one student per room. The university is also working on hiring students to serve as social distancing ambassadors to go around the campus and surrounding neighborhood reminding people to wear masks and not congregate in large groups.

9. Adjournment

Cindy reminded commissioners that own properties in the district to complete SSA renewal signature forms.

Tony asked for a pin list - Cindy agreed to send Tony a list of his pins.

Meeting adjourned at 10:11am.