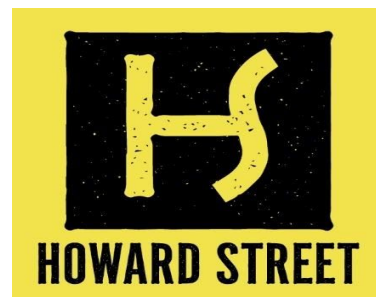


Howard Street Special Service Area #19
Zoom: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/86766143540>
dial in: +1 312 626 6799 Meeting ID: 867 6614 3540

Wednesday, July 15, 2020 at 8:30 am
Minutes



Commissioners Present: Charlotte Walters, Carrie Sullivan
Commissioners Absent: Gale Howard
Others Present: Cindy Plante, Sandi Price (RPBA), John Harris (A5)

1. Call to order

Meeting called to order at 8:31 am.

2. Public Comment

There was no public comment.

3. Approval of the minutes from June meeting

Charlotte moved approval of the minutes, Carrie seconded. APPROVED.

4. 2020 YTD financials

Cindy and Sandi presented YTD financials for the first half of 2020. We're not over on any budget categories for the year, though there may be some confusion because the document compares YTD spending against the first 6 months worth of budget, which is only 50% of the total.

Cindy proposed moving Chalk Howard and Marketing items to the top of the agenda because John has another call this morning and would like to present these items first. Commissioners agreed.

5. Virtual Chalk Howard

John presented analytics for the first three Virtual Chalk Howard video events. The goal of the event is to help increase the number of followers on the Howard Street instagram and help to promote participating businesses. The most recent one at Salerno's this past Friday had the highest number of live viewers so far, at over 125. The first two at Athena and Good to Go had fewer live views but had higher counts of people watching it later on. Next up is Badou this Friday the 17th. The final video at Lost Eras has been pushed back to August 14 because Nate's wife is expecting and is due the week it was originally scheduled.

Charlotte asked what could be done in person on the street to promote each video, suggesting cards or fliers or possibly store giveaways.

John said that we did print fliers and distribute them to businesses to post in windows and share with customers to promote the event, and could do so again given the break ahead of the rescheduled Lost Eras video and try to incorporate video or images of business storefront exteriors

Charlotte asked if it might be possible to have Nate do the video and artwork outside in front of the store, possibly with plexiglass or other barriers to ensure safe social distancing.

John said it would depend on weather and Nate's comfort level with the idea. Agreed that distributing additional fliers ahead of the next video for Badou makes sense.

Cindy pointed out that the fliers still list the old date for Lost Eras which has now been pushed back, so fliers and website will need to be updated to reflect the change.

6. Marketing/social media

John presented data on social media performance metrics. Since launching virtual chalk howard street instagram followers have increased by 35%, though there's still only a total of 449 followers on instagram. Facebook has plateaued somewhat, though there are examples of 8 recent posts that reached 1500 people or more. Web traffic is also up over the last 30 days, and google is giving all adwords customers a \$300 credit due to covid19. In addition to potentially adding some more virtual Chalk Howard videos in August, summer may also be a good time to develop a more comprehensive social media strategy.

Charlotte suggested a photography contest to generate followers and content for the instagram page.

Carrie asked about reposting or repurposing Chalk Howard videos for future use or posting elsewhere - maybe facebook and/or youtube.

John agreed that videos could be re-run starting in August and September, and might also benefit from being associated with promotions or offers at featured businesses upon rebroadcast. We also had planned to do another round of photo shoots in spring that we weren't able to do due to the pandemic, so that could also be rescheduled for summer in order to generate new content.

Cindy agreed, added that I'm Soul Hungry, Good to Go, and Athena Board Games had also asked about photography and potential inclusion in the next round of street pole banners, so we know there's interest from business owners in participating.

John shared that JCDecaux is running deep discounts on bus shelter ads for 3-4 week placements - we'd be looking at about \$300 for 3 weeks plus \$100 production costs, and they seem to be leaving ads up way longer than the 3 weeks - we know there are still some holiday Live Love Shop ads in bus shelters that were placed back in November. We'd be able to get stops on Sheridan with good traffic counts, but they could go anywhere in the city.

Charlotte asked about what messaging we would want to promote on bus shelter ads

John suggested food, art, creativity - encouraging people to visit the area and support local businesses

Commissioners agreed and voted to move forward with bus shelter ads.

A5 will prepare some drafts to share with commissioners.

7. 2021 Budget

Cindy shared the draft budget for 2021. There's very little increase from 2020 to 2021; most of the increases here are due to the potential addition of Jarvis to the SSA as proposed in the renewal application. Adding these properties results in an estimated 6% increase to EAV for the district, and we increased budget projections for recurring contract expenses like landscaping, holiday lights, and snow removal to account for the increased scope of work.

Charlotte asked about the increased costs and how this benefits Howard Street.

Cindy and Sandi responded that the Jarvis Square businesses are already pretty organized and have an established following, which can help promote Howard Street at minimal cost since we'll only be slightly expanding the scope of work for existing contracts. Adding Jarvis will also help fill some vacant commissioner seats.

Charlotte moved approval, seconded by Carrie. Approved.

8. Holiday decorations

Cindy asked if commissioners have any feedback or suggested changes on holiday lights for this year because we'll need to confirm everything with our vendor soon.

Commissioners were fine with keeping the format the same but suggested additional maintenance monitoring. Charlotte asked if Jarvis would be included this year - they won't because the renewal won't have been approved yet by the time lights get put up in October. They will be part of it in 2021.

9. Banners

Cindy shared that at least 3 businesses have asked about getting photos done for inclusion in the next round of light pole banners. There were several that were damaged last winter and had to be removed, so we're due to add new banners anyway. Sandi said Brandon will be out today to get an updated count on how many banners need to be replaced.

10. Public art

Cindy shared that the 49th ward office has had several inquiries from artists and community groups interested in doing additional murals in the area, so we wanted to ask if SSA commissioners were interested in doing an RFP for mural art and if there were any walls that might be good candidates to host a mural. Some that come to mind include the Dearborn Wholesale property and the wall by Hot Spot Grill, and possibly some walls on Paulina.

Commissioners agreed; Charlotte asked if anything else can be done to improve aesthetics on Paulina - more landscaping and street resurfacing due to the presence of a lot of pot holes.

Sandi responded that street resurfacing would likely need to be covered by 49th ward menu money or other City funding, since this isn't something the SSA is able to do. Landscaping had been intentionally removed because planters were collecting litter and being used to hide contraband.

Charlotte also asked about a bus stop bench at Rogers and Greenview that went missing - did the City remove it or was it stolen?

Cindy will reach out to Dan Murphy and look into this.

Sandi asked if Officer Santiago has been by visiting businesses lately. We've been asking the commander to have him introduce himself to Howard street businesses but it sounds like that hasn't been happening; we know there's been a lot of personnel changes lately at the 24th district.

Charlotte hasn't seen him.

11. Adjournment

Meeting adjourned at 10:32am.

Next SSA Commissioners Meeting: Wednesday, August 19