

Devon SSA #43 Commission Meeting  
Monday, March 15, 2021 2:30 pm  
Zoom: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/87341468102>  
Dial in: +1 312 626 6799 meeting ID: 873 4146 8102



## MINUTES

Commissioners Present: Pete Valavanis, Maura Levit, Irshad Khan, Sanhita Agnihotri  
Jay Shewakramani, Rebeca Vasquez  
Commissioners Absent: Mohammed Junaid, Avi Bereliani,  
Others Present: Cindy Plante, Ana Bermudez & Sandi Price - RPBA  
Ald. Debra Silverstein - 50th Ward Alderman  
Amanda Berios - The Silverman Group

### **1. Meeting called to order at 2:38pm**

Pursuant to the applicable law and this meeting is being held on zoom due to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic.

### **2. Public Comment**

There was no public comment

### **3. Approval of minutes from January 2021**

Sanhita moved approval  
Maura seconded.  
APPROVED.

### **4. Social Media Audit**

Cindy introduced RPBA Marketing & Events Manager Ana Bermudez and Amanda Berrios from The Silverman Group to provide a report on social media performance for the OnDevon facebook, twitter, and instagram & provide recommendations for social media marketing for Devon moving forward.

Amanda presented the findings of their recent social media audit, which identified the top performing social media posts and categories for each platform for 2020. The top posts and content categories are different on each platform - top performing posts on facebook were ones about patio season. The top instagram post was about the Doshi architecture exhibition. The top post on Twitter was about the WRCC Samosa Contest where they tagged a media personality that was participating.

The top category of posts for facebook was covid relief efforts, but also links and media mentions, and events with dates. Also "leisure" category covering things like pictures of outdoor patios at restaurants. Top instagram posts were about

national days - things like Pizza Day, Pi Day, etc., and content about ethnic heritage, celebrations, and questions for followers to answer and interact with. Top posts on twitter were media mentions and questions, and also content about relief efforts and events.

Twitter doesn't provide demographic data anymore, but for facebook most followers are English-speaking women in Chicago. Instagram skews younger. The facebook page is fairly new and doesn't have a huge follower count but there's a lot of room for growth through promotion.

Jay asked if we've paid for facebook ads or boosted posts.

Amanda said that the report is focused on organic rather than paid reach, but we did do two paid ads in 2020, one for a general ad encouraging people to follow the page and one a boosted post for giving tuesday with a media mention from Eater Chicago. Those two contributed pretty significantly to our follower count.

The recommendations for social media moving forward call for content in line with the categories that perform well. Currently we're doing 2 posts per week per platform per the scope of the existing contract, which doesn't include engaging with other users, tagging other pages, or interacting with influencers or anything.

Ana asked for clarification on what's meant by influencers.

Amanda said it's general people with high follower counts, and could be focused on a specific niche like lifestyle or travel. Amanda presented a few examples of people who have done geotagged posts on instagram, one featuring a meal she had at Khan BBQ. engaging with them could help draw more followers to OnDevon. Another person posted a selfie standing in a crosswalk on Devon and it got 1200 likes. The examples show that there are people out there creating content on and about Devon that we could engage with without having to create content or rely on businesses to send us stuff to feature.

Recommendations also call for increasing frequency of posts - most high performing posts do 2-3 posts per week minimum on facebook and instagram, but 4-6 posts per week is ideal. Twitter posts and instagram stories should be 3-6 per day given their short lifespan.

Ana added that the main RPBA facebook page posts 2-3 times per day, twitter can be 5 times per day, but it's easier to do because there are so many businesses that are active on social media that we're able to promote and share content

from. More work is needed for Devon because so many businesses aren't active on social media or don't do it consistently.

Jay asked about how the recommendations compare to what's being done currently.

Amanda said that the scope of work in the current contract calls for 2 posts per week per platform; the recommendations call for more frequent posting - 3-6 posts per week. Plus interacting with other users/pages.

Ana asked about current follower counts.

Amanda said we're at 1060 followers on facebook, 338 on instagram, and 84 on twitter.

Ana stressed that the recommendations to increase posting frequency and putting more into ads and boosted posts to draw in additional followers. Doing so will require spending time to create content for social media. Could also consider reaching out to influencers.

Amanda agreed, adding that influencer partnerships don't all need to be paid, could be exchange or meals.

Cindy thanked Amanda for coming to present - she has to get to another meeting. Encouraged commissioners to review the written reports that were shared via email. Before we get to further discussion on social media, Sandi also has another meeting but wanted to ask for a vote on a budget revision for 2020.

## **5. 2020 Budget Revision**

Sandi provided background information on the necessary budget revision; the 2020 budget was written in spring of 2019 when Place Consulting was still doing SSA management, so their contract was in the "7.0 SSA Management" budget category. When SSA management was brought in-house we never changed it, so there was a shortfall in the "7.0 staff" category, so we need to move money from 6.0 to 7.0 in the 2020 budget, removing the \$33,000 from the Place Consulting line and moving the funds into personnel.

Pete moved approval.

Sanhita and Maura seconded.

APPROVED.

## **6. Social Media campaign planning**

Cindy asked commissioners about setting goals for social media and how best to use the videos and content being created by BigBuzz for social media.

Pete asked about replacing the street pole banners and lighting.

Cindy agreed, both of these items are provided for in the 2021 budget. Was hoping to have quotes back on the lighting replacement project by now but vendor is still waiting on figures and pricing from suppliers.

Irshad agreed that there's a need for more aggressive marketing for Devon and more photos and content but asked about costs.

Jay says his business is currently paying their social media person \$500 for graphic design and 1 post per day.

Cindy asked if that was \$500 a week or \$500 a month, and provided a summary of the pricing proposals from Silverman.

Jay said the \$500 cost is monthly - he provides a list of things to feature and they create content and schedule posts. He's unimpressed with the slow growth of the OnDevon page so far, feels like the numbers are really low, suggested switching to another vendor.

Ana says that the numbers are low but the scope of work for managing the page up to now is also low - the current \$1,000 a month only covers 2 posts per week, which makes it difficult to attract new followers and create new content. Creating images and captions takes time - sometimes up to 30 minutes for one post, before putting money into paid advertising or boosting the post. The few times that we did put money towards ads in 2020 we did see follower growth, in one case \$30 got us 125 new followers in a few days.

Jay asked how long Silverman has been working on the OnDevon page.

Ana said Gina set it up originally, partly because the prior contractor that was doing it wasn't doing a good job - there were typos in posts and poor timing of posts. Sourcing and creating content has been a challenge.

Irshad suggested hiring a dedicated part time person to just do social media for Devon.

Pete asked if we're voting on this today?

Cindy said we can but we don't have to, especially since we are missing several commissioners today. We do need to set goals for how we want to use and deploy the content that we're getting from BigBuzz.

Jay moved to hold off on making decisions today to allow commissioners to get quotes from additional vendors for a comparable scope of work. He'll reach out to his vendor and ask Junaid who he's using.

## **7. New Business/updates**

### **2020 Revenue / budget**

Cindy shared with commissioners that we did have a shortfall in the amount of revenue received in 2020 compared to what was budgeted. Most SSA's did, but Devon remains in a fairly strong position because we were also under budget on spending for the year. Encouraged commissioners to keep in mind that they've been good stewards of resources so far, but that there's limited utility in not spending money that's been budgeted.

### **BIP**

Cindy left this on as a placeholder because there are some businesses working on BIP applications, but none had quotes ready to submit for this meeting.

### **Mandalas/lights**

Cindy is waiting on pricing still for replacement of the decorative lights, which we hope to have next meeting. Regarding mandalas, the commissioners decided last fall to put them back up and leave them up indefinitely, but several of the mandala decorations fell during storms last week, which have been picked up, but the vendor is recommending taking them down.

Pete suggested asking him to come to the next meeting to talk through mandala issues and lighting. The reason for leaving them up was the labor cost on putting them up and taking them down.

### **Truck replacement**

Cindy shared that the truck Brandon uses for maintenance and supervisory duties in the SSAs died and needs to be replaced; he's using his own vehicle and tracking mileage for reimbursement right now. As in the past, the plan is to spread the cost of a new truck across all 4 Special Service Areas, with total cost not to exceed \$20-25,000.

Pete asked about whether the City allows SSAs to make purchases like this.

Cindy will confirm this with them and with Sandi - there are rules governing these sorts of purchases, but it is allowed and has been done in the past. Note: The truck will be owned by RPBA.

**8. Adjournment**

Pete moved to adjourn

Meeting adjourned at 4:07 pm