



SSA Commissioners Community Meeting

Zoom: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/81407861002>

Dial in: +1 312 626 6799 ; Meeting ID: 814 0786 1002

Thursday, January 21, 2021 at 9am

Members Present: Sara Lukens, Tony Fox, Jennifer Clark, Nick Andersen

Members Absent: Chris Bell, Heather Hill

Staff Present: Cindy Plante, RPBA

1. Call to order

Meeting was called to order at 9:07

Due to the ongoing Covid19 pandemic the meeting is being held in a virtual format.

Public comment

There was no public comment.

2. Approve minutes from December

Tony moved approval of the minutes; Nick seconded.

APPROVED

3. Announcements & updates

a. snow removal

Cindy shared that there haven't been any complaints or inquiries about snow removal for SSA54 and asked commissioners if they had or had heard of any feedback now that we've had our first snowfall.

Tony said it was fine, most building owners seem to be handling it fine and are taking care of their own snow removal.

b. farmers market

Cindy shared that Loyola will not be doing the farmers market in the CTA plaza this summer but has indicated that the university may seek to become a vendor at Glenwood Sunday Market in 2021, which will most likely stay at the lot on Pratt this season, but may need to move in the future if the site is redeveloped.

Tony asked why they're not having the market on Glenwood.

Cindy responded that due to Covid the City is continuing their policy from 2020 of not allowing farmers markets on streets or public property for the 2021 season, so it has to be on a private lot still. Vendors also liked the lot setup though because they were able to pull up trucks directly onto the lot for setup and there's some indication that they may prefer a lot moving forward.

Tony asked what's going on with the Pratt lot.

Cindy shared the link to Ald. Hadden's webpage about the development proposal for the site; the owner is proposing apartments but will need a zoning change. Community feedback so far has been skeptical.

Tony asked about Loyola students returning.

Nick said that the return of students has been noticeable at the hotel, but it's still slow. They got more PPP funding, though the hotel industry as a whole isn't expecting to fully recover until 2025.

c. SBIF applications open in June

Cindy shared updates to the SBIF program from the city; rather than announcing districts opening the month before, they've announced the schedule for the whole year so people have more time to plan projects. The Devon/Sheridan TIF is scheduled to open in June, so we want to make sure to get the word out if anybody has projects they're wanting to seek funding for.

4. Landscaping

Cindy shared that the RFP for 2021 landscaping contracts will be going out this week to ensure that we have a contractor onboard for spring plantings. The RFP includes all 4 of RPBA's SSA's.

Sara and Nick weren't impressed with the plants from last year and would like to see more of a wow factor with landscaping this season.

Cindy spoke with the contractor about this concern previously, we were told that the first year was going to be mainly oriented toward planting perennials and getting those established before adding supplemental annuals in subsequent years, which is where we are now, but we'll be sure to have that conversation with them again, and can potentially invite a representative from the winning firm to join us at the March meeting.

Sara agreed, said that the plantings should be visible to motorists driving through the district to signal that it's a cohesive district. Asked about the possibility of Loyola contributing to landscape plantings since they have greenhouses and grow stuff.

Tony suggested reaching out to Mary Bay - a local resident that's got a group of folks that distribute perennials when it's time to divide them.

Nick asked about the parking lot west of the EI station - it was mentioned at one of the community meetings last year as an eyesore - is there anything we can do to program or beautify this space - adding park benches, bringing in food trucks, or something to create a point of interest and draw visitors.

Cindy is pretty sure this lot is owned by the university, so they'd need to be involved in an effort and would ultimately have the final say if it's their property, but agrees that it's not visually appealing as you approach Sheridan from the west, though it's not really visible to motorists on Sheridan.

5. Promotions

Cindy shared that we're still organizing and analyzing data from the annual Live Love Shop program, but should have more info to present at the next meeting. In the meantime, the next promotion we're working on will be a weekly raffle going on

throughout the month of February. People will be able to submit receipts from local businesses to enter weekly raffles to win giftcards for local businesses. RPBA will be purchasing the giftcard prizes because we don't want to be asking businesses for free stuff during a time when businesses are struggling. If anybody else has any ideas for promotional campaigns for this year, do share.

Nobody really had any ideas at this time but will give it some thought.

6. public art / bellawrap

Cindy is awaiting feedback from CDOT on the bellawrap pilot installation - hoping to hear from them soon as to when we might be able to start the process to expand beyond the initial intersection.

Nick suggested involving Loyola art students in programming and promotions - maybe an art exhibition at the CTA plaza.

Jennifer said that there aren't actually that many visual art students at Loyola, but there are working artists and art students from other schools living in the neighborhood.

Cindy asked about interest in murals.

Tony shared that he recently hired an art student from Columbia to do a mural on another building at Rogers; she's interested in doing additional projects in the area.

Jennifer shared that Loyola may have some walls that would be good for a mural, and might be more willing to approve something now, especially if there's a racial justice theme since the university just added a new center on racial justice and reconciliation.

Cindy will follow up with Jennifer on potential mural sites/artists.

Nick and Tony also shared some frustrations about this year's holiday lights not working well, which we should revisit before next season.

7. Adjournment

Meeting adjourned at 10:08

Next Meeting: March 18, 2021