

Devon SSA #43 Commission Meeting
Monday, July 11, 2022 2:30pm
Devon Bank, 6445 N. Western Ave. 2nd fl.
Zoom: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/87341468102>
call-in: 312-626-6799 Meeting ID: 87341468102



MEETING MINUTES

Commissioners Present: Irshad Khan, Maura Levit, Mohammed Rameez, Sanhita Agnihotri, Pete Valavanis

Others Present: Sandi Price & Cindy Plante, RPBA;

Called in: Debra Silverstein - 50th Ward Alderman.
Ellen Doppelt - JNDC
Jay Shewakramani, SSA commissioner

I. **Call to order**

Meeting was called to order at 2:48

II. **Public comment**

Several commissioners asked about pothole repair - Ald. Silverstein shared that pothole repairs and street resurfacing are delayed due to a strike at the asphalt plants.

Maura shared that she's interested in creating a pop up playground or public plaza on one of the area's vacant parcels - Wilmette has something similar in their downtown, and something like this would be a great offering for families with kids to encourage them to spend time on Devon. Someone suggested the Crawfords site since it's centrally located. Ald. Silverstein said that the site has a new owner but hasn't heard any updates as to what they plan to do with it. Irshad heard it's a neighboring business looking to use it for parking.

Pete agreed that this is an interesting idea worth looking into. We discussed different locations, but couldn't come up with a site within the SSA.

Jay asked about the status of the parking garage on Devon - it still hasn't opened, but the 100 spaces are sorely needed now that traffic is returning to Devon.

Ald. Silverstein shared that she spoke to the Department of Buildings about this yesterday - they're still working with the fire & sprinkler company to get work finished and pass inspections.

III. **Event Sponsorship Request from JNDC**

Cindy introduced Ellen Doppelt from Jewish Neighborhood Development Council to present a sponsorship request for an upcoming photography exhibit featuring historic photos of the neighborhood.

Ellen presented the request - JNDC is requesting \$1,000 sponsorship for an exhibition of historic photos of Jewish life in West Ridge. The exhibit will be at the Northtown Library on Western starting with a reception on October 23, and will run for 4 weeks. They're still selecting photos but at least a few feature businesses and buildings on Devon since it's the main commercial corridor of the neighborhood. The event is expected to draw

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visitors to the business district from around the Chicago area. As an event sponsor, the OnDevon logo and branding would appear in promotional materials and at the event.

Pete asked who else is sponsoring.

Ellen is still early in the process of recruiting sponsors but so far has commitments from Ald. Silverstein, State Sen. Villivalam, Devon Bank and several individual businesses.

Rameez asked about the location for the event.

Cindy said it's at the Northtown library, which is technically just outside of the SSA boundary, but we wanted to defer to the commissioners on this, particularly since it's expected to include photos of Devon buildings and businesses. Sandi added that it is permissible to sponsor if commissioners decide to do so.

Maura moved approval of \$1,000, Jay seconded.
Approved.

IV. Approval of the minutes from last meeting

Maura moved approval, Pete seconded.
APPROVED.

V. Mandala Arts Events Sponsorship Request

Cindy shared that Pranita from Mandala Arts wasn't able to make it to today's meeting, so this item will be moved to the August meeting agenda.

VI. Approval of 2023 budget

Cindy presented the draft budget, including minor updates based on feedback from the last meeting. We've increased the frequency of sidewalk power washing from 3x a year to 4, and have shifted to a new landscaping contractor for 2023.

Jay and Irshad asked if it's possible to powerwash the garbage cans, and asked to increase the frequency of litter removal service on weekends from once per day to twice a day.

Cindy will reach out to Cleanslate to ask about the garbage cans and litter removal. Rameez suggested that they do the second cleaning as late in the day as possible since evenings are the busiest time for Devon businesses and foot traffic.

Irshad asked about the status of the lights and metal light pole banners.

Cindy has been in contact with Ellen at CDOT about the metal banners - they're waiting on a new contract for this since it has to go through CDOT as part of streetscape. The

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lights have been ordered and paid for, but have been delayed by repeated covid lockdowns in China where they're being manufactured.

Ald. Silverstein offered to reach out to CDOT about the metal banners and crosswalk art - asked for an email followup as she has to leave early.

Pete asked about the status of murals.

Cindy shared the concept art that was developed last year around a bollywood theme. When we went back to property owners about getting murals painted they didn't like the art so we weren't able to move forward. Since then we have been in contact with Croatian Cultural Center about sponsoring a mural on their building but haven't yet received a proposal from them.

Rameez suggested that inclusion of faces may be considered offensive to some, and the movie poster theme is a bit dated. Suggested focusing on abstract designs, or themes like food, jewelry, landscapes, etc. Sanhita agreed. Commissioners will send Cindy ideas to put together a mood board for reaching out to artists to commission new designs.

Sanhita asked if the new budget includes funding for BIP rebates.

Cindy reported that it does - no changes to the program are being made.

Maura asked about getting art on the windows of vacant storefronts. Sandi said we've commissioned temporary art on windows in the past, including at the RPBA office. It's an affordable option but requires consent from the property owner, which has been the biggest hurdle.

**Pete moved approval of the 2023 budget as presented. Maura seconded.
Approved 5-0**

VII. TukTuk Updates

Cindy shared updates on the TukTuk art project - we currently have 9 businesses confirmed to participate, hoping to get it nailed down this week so we can get an insurance certificate and secure permits for installation. Fabrication of the TukTuks is wrapping up this week and we're meeting with BigBuzz in the next few days to iron out next steps for handing them off to artists for painting. The unveiling date will most likely move back into August.

Irshad asked if artists will be painting them on Devon or elsewhere, and whether they're going to be bolted to the ground.

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Cindy reported that painting locations are yet to be determined, but as of now the plan is for them to be weighted rather than surface mounted into the sidewalk, as the city generally doesn't allow this, but I'll ask when we meet this week.

VIII. Adjournment

Sanhita asked if anything could be done about aggressive panhandling on Devon, particularly west of California Ave.

Cindy and Sandi suggested calling the police if they're threatening people, but generally there isn't much that can be done and it's been an issue throughout the City. Sandi will bring this up with the police at the next 24th district advisory council meeting .

Adjourned at 4:00 pm

Next Meeting: August 15, 2022, 2:30 pm