

Howard Street Special Service Area #19
Zoom: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/88205418899>
dial in: +1 312 626 6799 Meeting ID: 88205418899



Wednesday, September 21, 2022 at 9 am
Meeting Minutes

Members Present: Charlotte Walters, David Skora, Renee Labrana, Jessie Elsner-Kleye

Others Present: Cindy Plante, RPBA; Karen Forte, City of Chicago;

Sal Moldovan, area property owner; Kyle Ryan, 49th ward office;

Tim Amos, Factory Theater, John Harris & Julie Allen, A5 Branding & digital

1. Community meeting on 2023 Budget

Cindy presented the budget via screenshare. The City requires that if the SSA budget is calling for a levy increase of 5% or more compared to the prior year, the SSA has to designate a commissioner meeting as a community meeting in order to explain the increase and take questions. The adopted budget for SSA19 next year actually includes an increase of over 30%, due primarily to the increase in budget for sidewalk maintenance staff, which has been doubled in order to expand coverage and improve recruitment and retention. We're also adding in quarterly sidewalk power washing. In addition to this, we're still dealing with the delay in 2nd installment property tax bills in the current year, which has left us without reserves to use for carryover.

Charlotte asked about homelessness and loitering on Howard, which has been a major factor in the need for expanded sidewalk cleaning - is there no other city funding that can be made available to deal with this since it's the root cause of the litter problems?

Cindy and the RPBA team previously applied for funding for a corridor ambassador program to include extra staffing and cleaning, but we weren't selected - we continue to keep an eye out for any other grants or funding that we could pursue for this.

Charlotte asked about working more closely with Evanston to ensure that their side's entrance to the CTA is kept clean.

Cindy communicates with the City of Evanston regularly about Howard Street and we're moving toward working more closely with them on maintenance. We've actually been talking about either expanding the existing SSA to include their side or alternatively having them form an SSA for their side that RPBA would also manage, which would allow for more consistency and economies of scale.

David asked about timing on receiving the delayed tax revenue from the city/county, and paying back RPBA for covering SSA expenses during the delay.

Cindy says we don't know yet for certain when and how much we'll be getting - it's usually a little bit over time rather than one lump sum, but we'll ask our CPA to give us reports on it to share at future commissioners' meetings.

Charlotte asked about street resurfacing.

Kyle doesn't have any updates yet as to timing - you'll know when we know.

2. Call to order

Meeting called to order at 9:21 am.

3. Public comment

There was no public comment

4. Approval of meeting minutes from July

Charlotte moved approval, Jessie seconded.
Approved 4-0

5. SSA Service Provider Agreement

Cindy forgot to include this on the July agenda so it's on this one - SSA commissioners are asked to take a vote on whether to continue to retain RPBA as SSA service provider agency.

Charlotte moved approval. Jessie seconded.
Approved 4-0

6. Legacy Barber College Mural Sponsorship Request

Cindy presented a mural sponsorship request submitted by Legacy Barber College. The request is for \$588 to cover supplies. They have retained an artist and agreed on draft artwork to be painted on the west elevation of their building alongside the alley - it will be visible in the park and for folks driving east.

Charlotte moved approval, Renee seconded.
Approved 4-0.

7. Chalk Howard Street Recap

Cindy shared a recap on the Chalk Howard event held on August 27. We had good weather and attracted an estimated 3,000 attendees. Most of the food and beverage vendors sold out by the end of the day, and the event came in under budget, thanks in large part to bulk equipment rental rates and support provided by Star Events, which we hired kinda last-minute after finding out that our previous event company wasn't available.

David asked about event photos.

Cindy is expecting to get the files soon from the photographer.

David wants to see a dedicated space on the website for event photos.

Cindy and John agree that this is the plan once we get the files.

David asked about designating rain dates for next year in case of bad weather.

Cindy said that we haven't historically done this and it isn't recommended, as dates depend on artist availability and travel schedules.

Renee added that if we did do this we'd most likely have to book and pay artists for both the event itself and the rain date in order to hold the dates on their calendars.

Charlotte asked for more specific information on the budget.

Cindy responded that the budget set aside \$75,000 for the event based on the 2019 event total, but this year we actually only ended up spending around \$57,000, even though we actually had more artists this time. The retainer for Star Events was comparable to what the prior event

company was paid, but because they do so many events around the city they were able to give us bulk rates for stuff like security and equipment rentals, which helped keep costs down. We already had a post-event debrief and started talking about how we might expand the event for next year.

8. Social media and website reporting

John & Juliane presented slides on website and social media analytics for the Howard Street website and socials. This report doesn't include the Jarvis site and socials, which can be added in the future. Both the website and social media saw big jumps in traffic before and during the Chalk Howard Street event.

Charlotte wants to do more advertising at Loyola and Northwestern moving forward.

Cindy had been talking with Lizzy before she left about coming up with a comprehensive plan and schedule for paid advertising outside of social media and will revisit that with John ahead of next meeting. Part of the challenge historically has been that Loyola Phoenix just never returns anybody's calls, but there are other ways to connect now that students are back. Our community relations contacts there are working on plans to bring back the Business Spotlight program, and we can get Howard Street businesses connected for that.

9. Beat meeting reminder

Cindy reminded attendees that the monthly beat meeting for Howard Street and the north part of Jarvis is tonight at 7pm at Willye White field house. The police have communicated to us that due to staffing issues these meetings will be the only public meetings they do moving forward, so it's really important for people to attend as it's the only opportunity to engage with them in a forum like this.

Cindy also shared that we were awarded \$99,000 in state funding for development of a corridor plan for Howard Street, including the Evanston side from Sheridan to Western. We're meeting with the City of Evanston folks tomorrow to start drafting a consultant RFP. The process will be similar to what was done for Vision Clark Street a few years ago, and Elevate Devon more recently, though the scope will be a bit broader. We'll be reaching out to recruit folks to be part of a steering committee and working with consultants to gather data and conduct community outreach in the next few months.

Cindy also recently submitted a grant proposal to the City for funding for vacant storefront activation on Howard Street - the proposal calls for installation of art on and in vacant storefront windows and establishment of a temporary pop-up art studio in one of the vacant storefronts. We expect to hear in a few weeks whether or not we've been selected - the program guidelines require implementation by mid November.

10. Adjournment

Meeting adjourned at 10:03.

Next SSA Commissioners Meeting: Wednesday, October 19, Zoom. 9am.