

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

Wednesday, March 15, 2023 at 9 am
Meeting Minutes



Members Present: David Skora, Renee Labrana, Jessie Eisner-Kleyale, Tim Amos, Charlotte Walters

Others Present: Cindy Plante, RPBA; Juliane Allen, A5 Branding & Digital

1. Call to order

Meeting called to order at 9:03 am.

2. Public comment

There was no public comment

3. Approval of meeting minutes from February 2023

Renee moved approval, Jessie seconded.
APPROVED

4. Broker Open House 3/16

Cindy reminded commissioners about the broker open house event tomorrow at 5pm at the Makers' Studio Space. The business attraction committee does one or two of these a year in different business districts, and this time we're doing it on Howard Street since we have the Makers Studio Space, and so we can include folks from the Evanston side. Everybody should have gotten an email invite, and it was in our newsletter - if anybody didn't see it let me know. We'd love to have SSA commissioners join us, but we are asking folks to RSVP since we are getting food and drinks for the event.

David asked if RPBA has an email list of brokers to promote this to. Cindy said that we do - there's a few dozen folks on that list, including folks at Becovic. We also shared it with people we know who are looking for space for their business so they can hear from businesses and connect with brokers.

Renee didn't see an email and asked Cindy to add her Jarvis Square tavern email address to email lists in the future. Cindy will update it after the meeting.

5. Howard Street Makers Studio

Cindy shared updates on the Howard Street Makers Studio - building management has notified us that they have a permanent tenant so we have to be out of the space by 3/31. They haven't shared with us yet who the new tenant is for the space. We're looking at doing a closing reception on Saturday 3/25, similar to the opening reception we did back in December. In all the program was really well received, sessions have had consistent attendance and lots of folks are interested in either keeping it going or doing it again, and we're still looking at opportunities for doing that, it will just have to happen in a different space. It sounds like the city will be offering the storefront activation grants again in the fall for the holiday season, and another department may also be doing a spring one.

David asked about doing a media alert or press release about the closing reception and the success of the project. Cindy will ask Ana about this, but it's probably too short of a lead time for a press release, and they usually don't do it for projects that we've already done media for previously. I am compiling all the info on attendance and number of sessions and everything for city reporting and year-end.

6. Rise Grant Update

Cindy shared that the steering committee held its first of 3 meetings last week. In the coming weeks we'll be launching the website and recruiting folks for a series of listening sessions on several key themes - public safety, housing, business development, etc. We're also working on plans for a larger public meeting, most likely on or around 4/22. In addition to this project, the City of Evanston will be releasing the Evanston Thrives Retail Plan later this week, which includes sections for each of their commercial corridors, including Howard Street.

David asked for this to be sent around by email to commissioners once it's released. Cindy will send an email once it's posted.

Renee asked about how Evanston's business districts are structured. Cindy replied that they have 3 different SSA districts, each with their own board of commissioners - Downtown, Central Street, and Main-Dempster. They're in the process of creating an SSA for their side of Howard Street, working with Teska, the same consulting team that did our SSA renewal back in 2020. There are a couple other smaller retail corridors that don't have an SSA but have less formal merchant association groups. The report will probably provide more detail on it when it comes out.

7. Social media & website update

Juliane presented slides with updated statistics on website and social media performance. Posts about the Factory Theater's current show Kelly Girls have done particularly well in this reporting period. The deck also includes a link to audio of the broadcast promotions that were done with Loyola Basketball. We expect additional data from Loyola soon. Cindy will send around the slides to commissioners later today.

Cindy added that we're targeting March 29 & 30th for the next round of photography, and we're working with an RP-based photographer this time, Daryl Wilkerson.

Charlotte praised the Loyola advertising and said she's been seeing more Loyola students coming to the store, and asked Jessie if Becovic also advertises to Loyola students for apartments. Jessie said the university doesn't do housing fairs anymore but they do still advertise to students at Loyola and Northwestern.

Renee asked about ethics filings. Cindy is pretty sure that the City has sent out emails to folks about this recently because several commissioners on other SSAs have been reaching out to let us know that they've completed it already, though the deadline isn't until May 1 there's no harm in getting it done now. Several commissioners report that they got the email but not everybody. Tim posted the link in the chat for those that missed it.

Charlotte asked about rat abatement for the in-ground planting areas - it's been reported to the city but the rat activity seems to be increasing. Asked if there's anything else we can do about rats in planters - maybe feral cats?

Cindy encouraged everybody to keep reporting this to 311. I'll also reach out to our landscaping vendor about the issue and see if there's anything that can be done as part of spring planting. The City generally doesn't allow us to do baiting or extermination in alleys and parkways. There

are a few property owners in the area that have feral cat colonies through Treehouse but don't know that it's something we could pursue as a district, though I'm happy to ask. Renee added that even if it's allowed, there would likely be pushback from birders.

Tim encouraged people to come to the Factory Theater - they've added shows on Thursday nights.

Renee asked about the status of the Beachview building - she's reported broken windows there to 311 but it doesn't look like anything is being done. Cindy asked if she has pictures and will follow up on it with the ward office.

8. Adjournment

Meeting adjourned at 9:48

Next Meeting: April 19, 2023, zoom