

Devon SSA #43 Commission Meeting
Monday, March 20, 2023 2:30pm
Zoom: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/87341468102>
call-in: 312-626-6799 Meeting ID: 87341468102



MEETING MINUTES

Commissioners Present: Irshad Khan, Maura Levit, Pete Valavanis, Avi Bereliani, Mohammad Rameez

Commissioners Absent: Jay Shewakramani, Mohammed Junaid, Sanhita Agnihotri,

Others Present: Sandi Price, Ana Bermudez & Cindy Plante, RPBA;

Javeria Sheeraz & Syed Mahmood - Admark Digital

Ellen Doppelt - JNDC

I. **Call to order**

Meeting was called to order at 2:42

II. **Public comment**

There was no public comment

III. **Choose Chicago Food Photography**

Cindy proposed shifting approval of the minutes to the end of the meeting because Ana has to leave at 3 but wanted to be here to cover the first few agenda items, including Choose Chicago. Choose Chicago is the City's tourism organization and they're looking to partner with local businesses to do food photography at no cost. They send a photographer to the business to take photos of food, drinks, and interior and outside of the space itself - shoots take about an hour, and the resulting photos get shared with the business to use for their own advertising and social media.

Pete might be interested. Javeria offered to connect with Usmania and Bundoo Khan. Avi might be interested but would prefer to wait until after a planned remodeling project - he's working on moving forward on a SBIF grant, working with Sholanda at Somercor. Cindy asked if we would just be giving restaurants contact info for Choose Chicago to sign up themselves or would they be signing up through RPBA?

Ana said we'd be providing Choose Chicago a list of who's interested, so interested restaurants would need to contact RPBA.

IV. **Tuktuk recap & feedback**

Cindy reported strong turnout and good media coverage for the tuktuk event over the weekend and thanked Pete for covering an interview about it earlier this afternoon with NBC5 - the segment is expected to appear on the evening news at 4, 5, 6, and 10. We did also hear from a local arts group accusing us of racism for not hiring South Asian artists. We did send an official response letter and apology, which was shared with Admark as well as Irshad and Ald. Silverstein.

Avi asked what they're specifically asking for.

Sandi said they requested an apology, which we issued, and asked us to change the wording on promotional materials, which we've also done. The letter also lets them know that SSA meetings are open to the public so they may come to a future one.

Service Provider: Rogers Park Business Alliance 1448 W. Morse Ave. Chicago, IL 60626
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Rameez mentioned that this group did a pop-up on devon once before and he met one of the organizers. Javeria asked for links to their website and social media and offered to promote any future events they may be doing on Devon.

Cindy added that we hope to have future opportunities to collaborate on additional arts programming, or maybe a mural. Rameez will reach out and ask if they're interested.

V. Food Crawl Event

Cindy has been looking into what it would take to do a restaurant crawl event sometime this summer, similar to what RPBA has done in other corridors (Clark Street Taco Crawl & Loyola Dinner Crawl for new students). Similar to the Taco Crawl, we'd plan to pay participating restaurants \$100-200 each to prepare samples for attendees, and additional budget would be needed for printing and promotional materials, but based on estimates from other recent events, it doesn't seem like it would be particularly budget intensive.

Avi asked if we should pay participating restaurants - wouldn't they want to offer free food as marketing?

Cindy feels that paying and ordering the food in advance helps to ensure that the restaurants follow through and are ready for the event. Also we want to support our businesses, especially with food prices going up, because it's the first time we'd be doing something like this.

Irshad suggested doing multiple days or multiple routes and inviting all the restaurants to participate. Suggested separating out veg and non-veg options.

Javeria has connections with lots of area restaurants and can assist with outreach.

Rameez suggested scheduling it to coincide with Eid. Cindy feels this would be too soon since Ramadan starts next week, and Irshad agreed that restaurants are already really busy around Eid.

Cindy asked about picking a date to target for the event. Irshad proposed reaching out to restaurants first to gauge interest. Cindy will work with Irshad to schedule some business visits, most likely in early April.

VI. Approval of February 2023 meeting minutes

Pete moved approval, Rameez seconded.

APPROVED unanimously.

VII. Upcoming events & reminders

Cindy reminded commissioners that next month's agenda will include review and approval of the annual audit report, which has to be submitted to the city by May 1, so it's really important that we have quorum for the April meeting. Commissioners are also reminded that city & county ethics filings are due May 1 - several people have already gotten emails from the city about this with the link for submitting online. If you haven't, let me know and I'll follow up with them. Rameez hasn't gotten the email yet - Cindy will look into it.

Rameez is also interested in working with restaurants to set up tables outside for Iftar during Ramadan. Cindy pointed out that setting up tables on the sidewalk typically

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requires additional permits, and a big lesson from the tuktuk project was that that permitting process can take a really long time. Restaurants that already have a sidewalk cafe permit could do it without needing to, but others would probably have to get some sort of sidewalk sale or right of way permit, so it's most likely not feasible to pursue it for this year, but maybe we could revisit it in 2024.

VIII. Adjournment

Pete moved to adjourn.
Meeting adjourned at 3:31pm

Next Meeting: Monday, Apr 17, 2023 at 2:30pm