



MEETING MINUTES

Commissioners Present: Irshad Khan, Maura Levit, Pete Valavanis, Mohammed Junaid

Commissioners Absent: Jay Shewakramani, Mohammad Rameez, Sanhita Agnihotri

Others Present: Sandi Price & Cindy Plante, RPBA; Sunanda Rana - Mandala Arts;

I. Call to order

Meeting was called to order at 2:40pm

II. Public comment

There was no public comment

III. CCC Mural Ribbon Cutting

Cindy reported that the mural at the Croatian Cultural Center is almost done and we're working on identifying a date to do a ribbon cutting - most likely May 30 or 31 based on the artists' & Ald. Silverstein's availability, but we want to include SSA commissioners too to the extent it's possible to do so.

Several people are out of town that week. Irshad prefers the 31st. Cindy will see about moving forward with a time that afternoon.

IV. SSA Strategic planning

Sandi brought a copy of the SSA strategic plan that was created in late 2019 after a consultant came and led a strategic planning retreat with the SSA commissioners - this was supposed to be a 3 year plan, and now it's 2023. Sandi suggested doing a new strategic planning retreat or updating the existing plan. Several action items from the old plan are things we've actually done, including online marketing and pigeon abatement. Some unfinished items that were in the plan included parking shuttles or valet service, and boosting participation in the BIP rebate program.

Pete and Irshad want to continue focusing on public art, snow removal, cleaning, and streetscape furniture. Pete is especially interested in adding bike racks - he has lots of customers that bike.

Sandi and Cindy will reach out to the city about getting more bike racks.

Pete is skeptical of hiring a consultant and asked to do strategic planning ourselves in house. Cindy and Sandi will add this to the June agenda.

V. 2024 budget brainstorming

Cindy asked commissioners to start thinking about what to add or change for next year's budget.

Irshad and Pete have heard a lot of positive feedback on the tuktuks and would be interested in expanding it.

Pete asked about restoring the intersection stamps.



Cindy talked with CDOT last week about this - the product that was used for the 3 mandalas in place now is no longer used because it doesn't hold up especially well as we all know. They use two different products for these types of installations now - the first is what was used for the pride flag intersection at Morse and Glenwood, which is estimated to cost about \$150,000 for each of the 3 intersections on Devon. The second product, which is more durable, is what was installed on Pulaski and also the Clark and Chase intersection - it's estimated to cost over \$200,000 for each intersection because installing it requires resurfacing the whole intersection.

Sandi added that the permitting and approval process for projects like this takes a really long time - another project we're working on that was approved for funding in 2018 still has yet to break ground.

Cindy added that CDOT suggested crosswalk art as an alternative or in addition to the intersection stamps - this only costs about \$40,000-60,000 per intersection and can include different colors or designs. Sandi shared photos of a recent installation of crosswalk art near the Rogers Park metra station.

Several commissioners are interested in looking into this further and also asked staff to find out from the ward office if there are any plans in the works to do street resurfacing on Devon in the near future that intersection stamps could be added to.

Junaid also likes the tuktuks and would like to see more movie nights.

Cindy reminded commissioners of last month's discussion on putting the decorative mandalas back up on light poles - the quote for installation with new mounting hardware came to \$22,000 - commissioners agreed that we should still move forward on this.

Sandi asked about tree grates - the city planted some new trees on Western but there aren't tree grates on those tree pits. The estimated cost to add them is \$10,000 each. Cindy suggested looking into lava rocks as an alternative to keep pests out and protect tree roots. We did this a year or two ago on side streets and it was way more affordable than tree grates while still keeping a lid on weeds and rat activity in the tree pits.

VI. Approval of meeting minutes from April

Pete moved approval, Maura seconded.
Approved.

VII. Mandala Arts sponsorship request

Cindy introduced Sunanda from Mandala Arts - they're requesting funding from the SSA for the Mandala Makers Fest. Since the last meeting, they've secured additional donations and sponsorships, so the request is now for \$9,000 for equipment rental and sound/lighting tech. The event is still scheduled to be held in the Republic Bank parking lot on two consecutive Sundays, June 4th and 11th. They're sticking with Sundays in order to avoid religious conflicts for artists and attendees, and had to split into two dates in order to fit all the performers on the schedule.

Irshad asked about what efforts were made to schedule around prayer times and how long the program runs each day.



Sunanda responded that it's scheduled to include 4-5 hours of programming for each of the two days.

Irshad asked about inclement weather.

Sunanda said they are renting a large tent for the Republic Bank lot for the event, but have a backup plan to host performances at Indo American Center if that doesn't work. It's important to the organization to host the event outside in order to try and draw in walk-in attendees.

Junaid asked about the marketing plan for the event.

Sunanda said that they're working with a PR company and have started to put out press releases to promote the event. There will also be online advertising, and many of the participating artists and performers also promote it on their own social media. Last year's attendance was estimated to be several hundred when the event was held in Indian Boundary Park. The event is free to attend and got grant funding from DCASE, which is being used to pay artists and performers.

Pete asked about the feasibility of leaving equipment at Republic Bank between the two Sundays to avoid having to pay for set up and pick up twice.

Maura said it might be a good thing to have the event on multiple weekends so word-of-mouth can help attract more folks for the 2nd week.

Sandi asked how the SSA could be recognized as a sponsor if some of the promotional materials have already gone out.

Sunanda said online advertising hasn't gone out and can be easily updated to include the SSA logo and info.

Pete asked Sunanda for posters to promote the event at area businesses. He's generally in favor of sponsoring the event, particularly since we don't have to organize or manage it.

Irshad remains skeptical about having it spread over two weekends.

Maura moved to approve the request for \$9000. Pete Seconded.

Irshad suggested adopting standards for the sorts of events we want to fund or sponsor moving forward. It sounds like the event is going to happen with or without our sponsorship if they're already promoting it. Cindy agrees that adopting an official sponsorship policy is a good idea.

Pete and Maura asked if there are any pictures or video from last year's event that might show what attendance was like.

Sandi found some photos on social media but most only include performers rather than crowds.

Irshad suggested sponsoring the event at \$5,000.

Junaid was on board for the requested amount but is now skeptical since there aren't photos showing how many people attended.

Maura's motion for \$9,000 was seconded and needs to be voted on first.

The motion for \$9,000 passed with 2 voting yes, 1 no, and one abstaining.

VIII. Adjournment

Devon SSA #43 Commission Meeting
Monday, May 15, 2023 2:30pm
Wheels of Chicago, 6229 N Western Ave



meeting adjourned at 3:47

Next Meeting: Monday, June 12 at 2:30pm