

Howard Street & Jarvis Square Special Service Area #19
Factory Theater -1623 W. Howard St
Wednesday, January 17, 2024 at 9 am



Commissioners present: Tim Amos, Renee Labrana, Dave Skora
Jessie Eisner-Kleyle

Commissioners absent: Charlotte Walters

Others present: Sandi Price & Cindy Plante, RPBA

1. Call to order

Meeting was called to order at 9:15

2. Public comment

Cindy shared that the first CAPS beat meeting of the year is tonight at Willye White field house at 7.

Tim shared that Factory Theater's new show Party at the Pantheon opens February 19, and the launch party is this Friday evening, and is pay-what-you-can. Cindy asked him to share any flyers or promotional materials so we can help promote it on social and the Howard website.

3. Approve meeting minutes from November 2023

David asked for an amendment to the minutes regarding property tax payments - he would like to add that he requested that the tax delinquency list be used to try to anticipate future revenue shortfalls.

Sandi said that we get reports from the City monthly on SSA tax collections, which is more frequent than the tax sale list.

Jessie moved approval as amended, Tim seconded. Approved 4-0

4. Financial update

Cindy shared the City's update from December - we did receive about \$130,000 after the 12/1 property tax deadline, but much of that is going to unpaid bills and repaying the SSA's debt to RPBA. In addition to the payments being moved later in the year, we also got less than half of our approved levy. This was why we tried to cut back the scope of holiday lights and have held off on replacing the banners.

Sandi added that although there's \$90,000 in the SSA19 account currently, SSA19 currently still owes RPBA \$185,000 for covering SSA expenses in 2023 when the tax due date was moved.

Cindy reported that due to the shortfall we've also scaled back the scope of work for A5 - they're now only doing 3 social posts per week, and we've shifted website updates in-house, so any event flyers for the website should be sent to Ana.

Renee asked how much longer their contract goes, and if we can get a new proposal when that time is up. Sandi said it's 6 months.

David complemented the social media content Renee puts out for Jarvis. Renee said thanks - they had previously hired someone but have since brought more of it in-house.

David asked for more detailed financials to be presented moving forward.

Cindy said that we only get those reports from the CPA during the 2nd half of the year - the first half they're working on closing out the prior year and preparing the audit, which will be on the agenda for the April meeting. The most recent report we have is through October 2023, which we have some copies of, though they're kind of hard to read. Cindy emailed the report to commissioners during the meeting also.

5. 2024 event sponsorship policy

Cindy shared background and history on the event sponsorship policy adopted by Devon Ave SSA43, which was shared in the email to commissioners along with the agenda and minutes. The idea behind it was to help encourage events that will bring people to our districts, and to make sure that there's clear guidelines and a level playing field for evaluating these requests. Funded events would be required to be held in the district, and they'd be required to send us marketing flyers and links ahead of time for website and socials, and they'd also be required to send photos and a post-event report after. We can make changes to the maximum sponsorship amounts and things like that, and probably will need to give budget limitations. Carolina is planning to do something similar with SSA24.

David asked how this would be promoted to organizations and businesses in the SSA.

Cindy says it will be posted to the website, similar to the BIP application, and once adopted, we'll most likely also share it on the North of Howard Together email list - most of the event sponsorships we've gotten in the past have come from organizations in that group, like Howard Area, AJH and the park advisory council. Cindy asked how commissioners feel about numbers - event sponsorships for Devon are capped at 20% of event budget up to a max of \$8,000, a lower amount for SSA19 was suggested, maybe \$2,000?

Commissioners were generally comfortable with this and asked Cindy to bring an updated draft policy to the February meeting.

6. **BIP funding request**

Cindy reported that Neighborhood Tap wasn't ready to proceed yet, but Lenice Levy has submitted a BIP application for signage for her building at 2017 W. Howard (the former Dearborn Wholesale building) which she's renovating for use as a banquet hall - 7 star banquets. Based on the quotes submitted, she's requesting the maximum rebate of \$5,000 - Cindy passed around drawings of the proposed signage.

David asked which of the logos presented she's planning on moving forward with.

Cindy said Lenice likes the 2nd one from the left on the drawing. David and Renee said they preferred the round one.

Tim asked for more info about Neighborhood Tap. Cindy said she's been in contact with him and he is planning to apply in the future - Badou is also preparing an application for his new space on Howard; he'll be moving into the former Such a Jerk space.

Jessie added that Andy, the owner of Neighborhood Tap has existing locations in Uptown and Lakeview and is interested in getting involved. He's hoping to open in March.

Tim asked about approving a lower amount than the \$5,000 maximum rebate due to the budget problems.

Cindy acknowledged the concern, but personally would prefer to prioritize direct assistance to businesses opening and investing on Howard Street ahead of things like banner replacement.

Sandi says it's ultimately up to the SSA commissioners, but there is precedent for approving

smaller BIP amounts due to budget shortfalls - SSA24 has done this in the past when necessary and reduced the cap to \$2,500 for a time. SSA19 does need to make cuts, particularly since we didn't cut enough on lighting or snow removal.

David asked for information on what else can be cut and suggested canceling or scaling back Chalk Fest.

Jessie moved approval contingent on funding being available when the project is complete.

Renee moved to approve \$2,500. Jessie seconded. Approved for \$2,500 - 4-0.

Cindy asked Sandi if we can or should require applicants to also apply for the 7th district grant if they're eligible. Badou said he was working on applying.

Sandi reminded everybody of this opportunity - our State Senator got funding from the state for a small business grant specific to our district, which includes Rogers Park Edgewater and Uptown. They have to be brick and mortar businesses that were operating before 12/31/21. The deadline to submit is coming up in February. Lenice might be eligible to apply for her current location.

Jessie will pass this on to Becovic's commercial tenants - sounds like Neighborhood Tap would also be eligible at his current location in Uptown.

Tim asked if it would be possible to give BIP applicants the remaining \$2,500 in the future if funding becomes available.

Sandi said that's ultimately up to commissioners, but yes.

7. Reschedule 2/14/24 meeting

Cindy is out of town on 2/14 and asked about rescheduling the meeting.

Jessie said she already has it on her calendar for 2/21; so does Renee.

Everyone is good to move forward for 2/21 - that will be our next meeting date.

8. Adjournment

Meeting adjourned at 10:30am.

Next SSA Commissioners Meeting: Wednesday, February 21 Zoom. 9am.