

Howard Street & Jarvis Square Special Service Area #19  
Factory Theater -1623 W. Howard St  
Wednesday, February 21, 2024 at 9 am



Commissioners present: Tim Amos, Charlotte Walters, Dave Skora  
Jessie Eisner-Kleyle

Commissioners absent: Renee Labrana

Others present: Sandi Price & Cindy Plante, RPBA

Andrew Pillman, Rogers Park Taproom & Coffeehouse

Kyle Ryan, 49th ward

Samantha, Northwestern journalism student

**1. Call to order**

Meeting was called to order at 9:04

**2. Public comment**

Samantha introduced herself - she's a sophomore at Northwestern studying journalism and is part of a team doing a class project reporting on the business climate in Rogers Park - here to observe.

Andrew introduced himself - he's opening Rogers Park Taproom & Coffeehouse in the former Sol Cafe space. This will be his 4th location.

Cindy asked about the opening timeline - Andrew says he's hoping to open sometime in April.

Dave encouraged him to consider providing quicker coffee service than the previous coffee shop to make it easier for folks to get coffee to go on the way to the train in the morning.

Sandi asked if he's using the former Howard Street Brewing space or just Sol Cafe.

Andrew is just working on the Sol Cafe space.

**3. Approve meeting minutes from January 2024**

Jessie moved approval, Tim seconded.

APPROVED 4-0

**4. Financial update**

Sandi shared updates on the SSA's current finances - the books haven't been closed yet for FY2023 and probably won't be until audit time, but a recent upgrade from quickbooks desktop to

quickbooks online allows her more access to the financials than before, which allows for sharing a more updated P&L statement, which was emailed to commissioners. The current P&L shows that SSA19 is still about \$157,000 in debt to RPBA, but received \$157,000 in property tax revenue during the month of December because of the postponed property tax deadline. Cindy submitted several outstanding invoices this week for payment, but we're less in the hole than before.

Sandi explained to Sam and Andrew that the SSA is funded by property tax, and when the county pushed back the property tax deadline last year it messed up SSA finances. In addition to the delay, we also didn't receive the full amount of tax revenue that we were supposed to - it ended up being around 72% of the total.

David asked about the impact of people appealing property tax bills - is that causing the shortfall?

Sandi says they're supposed to still pay bills by the deadline even if an appeal is pending, or they get late fees. If they win they'd get a refund, but people still might not be paying.

David asked for more info on whether and to what extent other SSAs are seeing shortfalls like this and if there's an average or some other figure we could get from the City or county to better predict shortfalls like this.

Charlotte asked about getting the light pole banners replaced and would like this to be prioritized because they're in rough shape. There's also a need for sidewalk power washing.

Jessie asked if it would be possible to have businesses pay for banners so they can get replaced faster.

Cindy said that other organizations do have sponsorship programs for banners, but SSAs aren't allowed to have other income besides the property tax revenue, so they'd either have to pay through RPBA, or directly to the banner company. We know that banners need to be replaced, and have updated designs from A5 that were created last year with new photography before we had to freeze spending.

Sandi asked Cindy to get an updated quote for banner replacement and come up with a list of the ones most urgently in need of replacement.

Jessie said she might be able to assist with future photography needs since she has a background in photography and fine art.

Sandi added that this year's property taxes are including Jarvis for the first time, so that should help with revenue. Property tax bills have gone out on time for first installment bills, with payment due in March, so we should see some of that funding come in soon.

Dave wants to know how much money specifically is coming from Jarvis compared to the Howard Street PINs.

Cindy says the city doesn't give us that level of detail - they give us one amount for the whole district.

## **5. BIP Applications**

Cindy shared that Badou is still working on getting quotes for his project and will move his application to the March meeting. For this meeting, we have a complete application from Andrew for signage at the former Sol Cafe space, including renderings. The project includes lit channel letters above the window and vinyl letters on the window itself. Based on the estimates submitted, the maximum 50% rebate fits within the reduced \$2500 rebate cap adopted at last month's meeting.

Jessie asked Andrew about operating hours. He said he hopes to open at 7am, and is looking at closing at 8pm. Might look at staying open later for Factory Theater shows.

Jessie praised Andrew for being a good neighbor and adapting to community needs at his other existing locations.

Dave moved to approve the BIP funding, Charlotte seconded.

APPROVED 3-0-1 with Jessie abstaining.

## **6. 2024 event sponsorship policy**

Cindy shared a summary of the event sponsorship policy, a copy of which was shared with commissioners in a previous email. Based on the existing event sponsorship policy adopted by

the Devon Avenue SSA last year, which was copied from Wicker Park Bucktown, it sets a maximum event sponsorship at 20% of event budget, not to exceed \$2,500. Event hosts have to be a nonprofit, community organization, or a group of two or more businesses in the district. As a condition of SSA sponsorship, they have to include the SSA logo on promotional materials and share promotional materials for promotion at least 2 weeks in advance of the event so it can be promoted on the website and social media. They also have to share event photos with us after.

Sandi asked if the guidelines require that event sponsors apply for event permits when required.

Cindy says yes, that language is included in the guidelines.

Dave asked about commissioner discretion - can commissioners opt to approve a lower amount or none at all. Cindy says this is in there as well, but political fundraisers and religious services are specifically excluded from eligibility.

Jessie moved approval, Charlotte seconded.

APPROVED 4-0.

Charlotte asked about the ambassador program on Howard Street.

Cindy and Sandi reported that the contract ended on December 31 and we opted not to renew, hoping A Just Harvest applies directly if the City opens up applications again.

## **7. 2024 key dates**

Cindy reminded commissioners that the April meeting will include presentation of the annual audit report, so it's important that we have a quorum. After that we have to hold our budget meeting in early July.

Annual city and county ethics forms are also both due on May 1 - it is the same information, but you do still have to fill it out on both websites, and there are fines for forgetting or being late.

Tim asked if anybody has gotten a reminder email from the city or county about this yet. Nobody has. Cindy will ask when these can be expected to go out, but if you have your login info from last year you should be able to log in and do them now.

Jessie asked about vendor recruitment for Chalk Howard Street, which is on the calendar for August 24.

Cindy reported that we've been sharing the vendor signup form in our weekly newsletter and with past vendors and participants in the Jarvis artisan market, as well as folks that have been reaching out to us to inquire about the Storefront Activation Program. Food businesses are always a priority, and they tend to do really well even though it's only a one-day event because there's not many brick and mortar restaurants in the area. Some of the Jarvis businesses expressed an interest in doing it this year which is exciting, plus Badou coming back.

Andrew asked about beer for the festival. Cindy said that in prior years we haven't gotten a liquor license for the festival, but since the street is closed, Howard Street Brewing would sell in plastic cups during the event so people could take drinks outside - There was no objections to Andrew doing the same this year, but we urged him to plan ahead for this, since the previous tavern sold out of beer during the fest in prior years.

Sandi shared some updates from a call she had last week with the broker marketing spaces in the Gateway Center building at Howard and Clark.

Charlotte asked about updates on resurfacing Hoard and Rogers. Kyle left early but Cindy will reach out to him to ask.

## **8. Adjournment**

Meeting adjourned at 10:04am.

Next SSA Commissioners Meeting: Wednesday, March 20, Factory Theater. 9am.