

Howard Street & Jarvis Square Special Service Area #19
Factory Theater -1623 W. Howard St
Wednesday, March 20, 2024 at 9 am



Commissioners present: Tim Amos, Charlotte Walters, Dave Skora
Renee Labrana

Commissioners absent: Jessie Eisner-Kleye

Others present: Cindy Plante, RPBA
Kyle Ryan, 49th ward
Ashaki McClaine, A Just Harvest

1. Call to order

Meeting was called to order at 9:03

2. Public comment

David asked about the ambassador program. Cindy reported that the contract ended December 31st - RPBA opted not to renew it because of the difficulty involved in being a middleman between the City and A Just Harvest. We're hoping they open up a new RFP that AJH could apply for directly to bring it back.

Renee asked about the Beachview Liquors building - she's submitted several 311 tickets about broken windows on the storefront and nothing seems to be moving. Kyle reported that the landlord is involved in an administrative hearing process with the department of buildings about this - the building is on the city's problem building list for its many code violations.

3. Approve meeting minutes from February 2024

Charlotte moved approval, Tim seconded.

APPROVED 4-0

4. Financial update

Cindy provided a summary of the most recent balance sheet, which was shared with commissioners via email. Although the SSA does currently have a positive bank balance after receiving some property tax funding earlier this year, we also still owe money to RPBA for paying SSA bills during the property tax delays the last two years. We also have bills coming up for existing contracts like lighting, snow, and landscaping.

Charlotte asked about the snow contract - did they come out at all this year?

Cindy thinks if they did snow removal it wasn't more than one or two times - they actually always come out anytime there is a snow event because they send photos to document whether the snow accumulation was over 2" or not. The contract specifies that they only clear snow on Howard if it's more than 2". Devon Avenue has a more expensive contract that has them clear snow if it's over 1" - we opted not to do that because of the tax shortfall last year, but it was important to people to keep doing a sidewalk snow contract for SSA 19 because of the high vacancy rate and large population of seniors and disabled residents. If people want to revisit that, we can discuss it further when we get into budget season.

David asked for a report on how much revenue the SSA has actually gotten for the last 4-5 years.

Cindy doesn't have this data now, but will check with the accountants - some of this will also be covered in the audit report next month.

5. BIP Applications

Cindy included this as a placeholder because it wasn't clear whether Badou was going to be ready to proceed with his application - his request will be presented at a future meeting, possibly next month. He is planning to reopen in the new space in the next few weeks.

For the year to date, we've approved rebates for Lenice for the new banquet hall at 2017 W. Howard, and Andrew for the former Sol Cafe space. He's hoping to open later this spring.

Keith from Pete's Grill has also expressed an interest and may be submitting an application at a future meeting, either for Petes or for his new business that will be opening soon west of the metra tracks.

6. Sponsorship request from A Just Harvest for Howard Street Carnaval April 27

Cindy introduced Ashaki who presented the sponsorship request for Carnaval on April 27. The event is intended as a celebration of African and Caribbean heritage. The event will include a parade down Paulina and then Howard Street for a festival in the park with vendors and musical performances in a large heated tent they'll be putting up for the event. The biggest expenses for

the organizers have been tent rental and security. They're not charging vendor fees for local businesses, and are interested in adding light pole banners.

Kyle added that the team working on this event has done a great job on planning and permitting, as this event includes a parade permit through the city plus a tent permit and a park district event permit.

David asked about how the Howard SSA logo will be incorporated into event marketing materials since flyers are already being distributed in the neighborhood currently.

Ashaki said that sponsor logos will be able to be included on the event t-shirts which are being ordered soon, and can also be added to the website and social media ads.

Cindy asked about the total budget and how many other sponsors are on board so far.

Ashaki said that they have 5 main sponsors currently, and the biggest expenses in the project budget are for the tent in the park.

Cindy asked about following up with area restaurants regarding interest in being food vendors for the event - Badou had asked but I wasn't sure who specifically to refer him to at AJH for signing up.

Renee asked for some flyers for businesses on Jarvis.

Tim might be interested in volunteering.

Charlotte moved to approve the funding request for \$2,500, Tim seconded. Approved 4-0.

7. 2024 key dates

Cindy reminded commissioners that we'll be doing the 2023 annual audit at next month's meeting, so it's important that we have a quorum.

Renee has a conflict and isn't able to attend the April meeting.

Cindy reminded commissioners that City and County ethics forms are also due by May 1.

Renee and others have questions about this; Cindy will follow up with them on this later.

Charlotte asked about the new mini mart across from Jewel - would like to see them get rid of the burglar bars because it's not a good look. Cindy will follow up with the City of Evanston folks on this, as the business is on their side of the street - we don't have any jurisdiction or

enforcement power over this, though I've heard that they have a really good sandwich counter there.

Charlotte also asked about enforcement or messaging regarding people riding bikes on the sidewalks - it seems to mostly be migrants, and has been a problem for the elderly & folks with disabilities. Kyle will pass this on to Jeff, who's been doing outreach with the newly-arrived migrants in the neighborhood.

Charlotte asked Kyle about the timeline for the road resurfacing at Howard and Rogers.

Kyle doesn't have specific dates yet but says it will be happening this year.

David asked about getting rid of the fence and expanding the community garden at Howard and Ashland.

8. Adjournment

Meeting adjourned at 10:04am.

Next SSA Commissioners Meeting: Wednesday, April 17, Factory Theater. 9am.