



MEETING MINUTES

**Commissioners Present:** Pete Valavanis, Sanhita Agnihotri, Robert Taylor  
Richard Trumbo, Irshad Khan, Maura Levitt

**Commissioners Absent:** Mohammed Junaid,

**Others Present:** Sandi Price, Cindy Plante & Hiba Zakai, RPBA;  
Ald. Debra Silverstein & Keith Sokolowski, 50th ward  
Ellen Doppelt, JNDC  
Sneh Sukhadia, prospective commissioner

**I. Call to order**

Meeting was called to order at 12:03 pm

**II. Public comment**

Larissa from the West Ridge Chamber spoke about their upcoming food tour, scheduled for September 14. WRCC is requesting a \$5,000 sponsorship from the SSA, as they intend to feature Devon restaurants for this year's event. Based on last year, they expect about 30 attendees to participate in the ticketed trolley tour of 6 restaurants. The event budget includes \$1,800 for the trolley and \$300-400 paid to each participating restaurant for providing food, plus expenses for staff, marketing, and entertainment. The SSA would be included in promotional materials as a sponsor if funding is approved. The press release for the event will be going out later this week.

Irshad asked if there are any other sponsors on board yet. Larissa said there aren't yet but that they will be starting to promote the event and sponsorship opportunity this week. She hopes to get enough sponsors to add capacity and have more than one trolley since this event sold out quickly last year.

Irshad asked if WRCC has been made aware of the SSA's event sponsorship program guidelines. Cindy shared the link with Larissa and let her know that the program guidelines cap SSA sponsorship to the lesser of \$8,000 or 20% of total event budget. Because the total budget submitted was \$5,000, the cap would limit the SSA contribution to the \$1,000 level rather than the full \$5,000 requested. This sponsorship request wasn't on the agenda because it was received late yesterday, but the event date falls before the September meeting.

Larissa left the meeting.

Maura moved to approve \$1,000.

Sanhita asked how much the total request was.

Cindy reported that WRCC had requested \$5,000.

Sanhita moved to approve \$1,500.

Sandi pointed out that the cost for one trolley as proposed in the budget was \$1,800.

Pete moved to approve \$1,800.

Maura seconded.



APPROVED 6-0.

III. **Approval of meeting minutes from June 2024**

Pete moved approval, Robert seconded.

APPROVED 6-0

IV. **YTD financials update**

Cindy gave an update on YTD spending and balance sheet, which was provided to commissioners via email on Monday. The SSA still has a bank balance of over \$1m, but we're hoping to commit some of those funds to restoration of the intersection stamps and purchasing replacement and additional sidewalk benches - Cindy is waiting on quotes for both of these items from vendors.

V. **2025 Budget & service provider**

Cindy presented the draft budget and explained the columns on the budget summary page. For 2025 there aren't many changes compared to the current year budget, and levy increase is only 2.91%, due largely to increased costs for things like utilities, equipment, and office supplies now that we're back to in-person meetings and staff are spending more time at the office. We're also proposing updates to the website, which is due for a refresh.

Irshad asked about the proposed reduction in budget for pigeon abatement.

Cindy replied that this is based on a falloff in demand for pigeon abatement services from property owners - fewer are signing up, and those that are have been repeat treatments. Efficacy of pigeon bait treatment has been limited by improper trash disposal and the fact that people continue to feed pigeons on the sidewalk. Past efforts to discourage this with signage and frequent street cleanup have been similarly unsuccessful, as the existing city ordinance about feeding birds isn't being enforced.

Keith shared that he's working with Streets & San on a multilingual flyer about trash and pigeons to be distributed in the neighborhood.

Cindy asked Hiba to follow up with Keith on this and assist in distribution to businesses.

Sanhita has been unhappy with district landscaping, particularly plants on the blocks around Devon and Francisco. Pete thinks they look great.

Cindy reported that we do have a new landscape provider this year after concerns about lackluster landscaping from the previous company across all 4 SSAs that RPBA works with. Cindy has met with the owner of the company and toured the Devon corridor with her to discuss landscaping needs and concerns - we agreed that spring plantings looked a bit sparse, but Summer plant rotations were installed 2-3 weeks ago in mid-June, which will be in place until it's time for Winter installations in November. We also talked about the need for more cleanup and maintenance of in-ground planting areas, including pruning of existing shrubbery, litter cleanup, and installation of additional perennials where there are gaps. That work should be starting soon if it hasn't already.

**Pete moved to approve the budget & service provider for 2025.**



Robert seconded.  
APPROVED 6-0.

**VI. Sign removal request for 2444 W. Devon**

Cindy reported that there was a request for sign removal for the old Rossell Cosmetology School sign at 2444 W. Devon. The low bid for removal was \$1,000. The sign removal program covers 100% of eligible sign removal requests, which includes this one.

Robert moved approval; Pete seconded.  
APPROVED 6-0.

**VII. Public Way project updates**

**a. Kasam Mural Sponsorship Request**

Kasam was invited to come back to present updated artwork for this request at the last meeting and Cindy included them in the calendar invite, but no one attended and no updates have been provided, so no action was taken on this item.

**b. Intersection stamps**

Cindy reported that she's been in touch with Gallagher about getting a proposal and quote for restoring the 3 existing intersection stamps. More to come on this.

**c. Landscaping & benches update**

Cindy was able to get product information from CDOT for ordering more benches and has reached out to the manufacturer to request quotes.

Cindy also toured the district with Patch landscaping to identify maintenance and planting needs in the in-ground planters throughout the district. Pruning and cleanup work should be starting shortly if it hasn't already.

**d. CitiBins**

Keith presented quotes for a pilot installation of 4 rat-proof CitiBin trash receptacles at two intersections - Devon and Oakley and Devon and Artesian. The total cost for these is \$12,000 including installation and vinyl wraps with district branding.

Irshad asked why they were so expensive and how are they different other cans? Keith pointed out that they're rat-proof, and have a roof over the top of the can that should help discourage people from disposing of household trash bags in sidewalk cans and prevent cans from overflowing. Unlike the bigbelly cans, they don't have mechanical parts that break and they don't need power.

Ald. Silverstein added that part of the reason the BigBelly cans were a failure was that the streets and sanitation crews emptying them needed keys, which didn't

## Devon SSA #43 Commission Meeting

Wednesday, July 10, 2024 12pm

Republic Bank - 2720 W. Devon Ave./Zoom



always get handed off to different crews working on a given day. In this case CitiBins would be emptied by Cleanslate when they come through.

Irshad suggested including signage discouraging pigeon feeding on the new cans.

Cindy asked about funding - is purchase of these first 4 cans going to be through aldermanic menu money or is the SSA being asked to pay?

Ald. Silverstein said that there isn't menu money available for this so the SSA is being asked to pay for the new cans.

Irshad asked if the product has a warranty.

Keith says the manufacturer includes a 2-year warranty.

Robert moved approval.

Sanhita asked about increasing the frequency of trash pickup in the district.

Cindy shared that our current Cleanslate contract has them coming to pick up trash 7 days a week; twice on weekends. Keith says streets and san also comes through Devon 6-7 days a week.

Richard added that he's concerned that businesses on Devon aren't paying for or maintaining dumpsters, which they're required to do. People are using sidewalk trash cans for trash from their homes and businesses. More education and enforcement is needed. Keith agreed and pointed out that they're working on signage and flyers for this. Hiba will be following up.

Sanhita seconded Robert's motion to approve the \$12,000 for installation of the 4 CitiBins.

Approved 6-0.

### **VIII. Adjournment**

Meeting adjourned at 1:08pm

Next Meeting: Wednesday, September 18 at Republic Bank at noon.