



MEETING MINUTES

Commissioners Present: Pete Valavanis, Sanhita Agnihotri, Robert Taylor
Richard Trumbo,

Commissioners Absent: Mohammed Junaid, Irshad Khan, Maura Levitt

Others Present: Cindy Plante & Hiba Zakai, RPBA;
Keith Sokolowski, 50th ward (by phone)
Sneh Sukhadia, prospective commissioner
Ashmi Mridul, Mandala Arts

I. Call to order

Meeting was called to order at 12:34 pm

II. Public comment

Sneh says he's having continued problems with fly dumping behind his business. The inspector came and says he's on the hook for the fines unless he can prove someone else is doing it.

Keith will follow up with him, but recommends installing cameras there to discourage fly dumping and provide evidence if it continues

Cindy reminded commissioners that the SSA does have a security camera rebate program and alley-facing cameras are eligible.

Sanhita also is concerned about fly dumping behind the Republic Bank parking lot and said there's trash back there now outside the fence. Keith and Robert asked where specifically and what kind of trash it is. Sanhita clarified that she's referring to the parking lot on the south side of the street across from the bank itself and provided the address. Keith said to report these things to the ward office, preferably before 2:30pm so the ward superintendent can look at it and get it cleaned up.

Keith said he's also been in contact with Cindy about the SSA obtaining an additional camera trailer for use in SSA43 and wanted to ask commissioners which locations they'd want to park it at before looking into the permit requirements for this. Sneh suggested blocks with jewelry stores since they're being targeted for smash-and-grab raids. Sanhita suggested Devon and Washtenaw.

III. Approval of meeting minutes from July 2024

Pete moved approval, Sanhita seconded.

APPROVED 4-0

IV. YTD financials update

Cindy gave an update on YTD spending and balance sheet, which was provided to commissioners via email on Monday.

V. Mandala Arts sponsorship request

Cindy introduced Ashmi from Mandala Arts to present the event sponsorship request. Her slide deck was emailed to SSA commissioners and Cindy provided a hard copy of the sponsorship application form to commissioners in attendance at the meeting.

Ashmi provided background information on the organization and the funding request.



Mandala arts is requesting \$2,000 to fund additional marketing for a series of 3 fall events on Devon: the first is a 3-part Abhinaya dance workshop at Sabka Sahara Church on 9/27, an outdoor dance performance “Dancing with Architecture” on October 5, and Garba/Daniya performance at Shree Ganesh temple on October 18. The total budget for the three events is \$10,000, with most of the funding coming from state grants and other sources. This \$2000 would be for additional marketing, including posters, social media and printing.

Richard is concerned that these events are coming up really quickly and asked about the specific marketing timeline. When was the request submitted?

Cindy says the request was timely - the program guidelines require at least 2 weeks before the event but recommends longer due to the SSA meeting calendar - in order to be on the meeting agenda it has to be submitted at least a week before the meeting.

Ashmi says that Mandala will be participating in the Sabka Sahara festival on 9/21 at Republic Bank and will be promoting their upcoming events to attendees at this event in addition to digital marketing and flyers.

Sanhita moved approval. Pete seconded.

Approved 4-0.

Sanhita asked about the date of the soonest event. Ashmi replied that the first one is September 27 at Sabkha Sahara at 7pm.

Hiba encouraged Mandala Arts to do more to accurately track attendance numbers - she felt like attendance at their June event looked sparse. Ashmi estimates that the Mandala Makers Fest event in June attracted over 700 attendees, but people were coming and going throughout the day so the total number present at any given time was much smaller.

Sneh suggested widening marketing efforts to include the suburbs.

VI. Public Way projects

a. benches

Cindy reported that we’ve placed an order for 6 benches - 3 of the long ones and 3 of the single seat version. Delivery isn’t expected for 6-10 weeks, but these will replace damaged street furniture that was removed at Artesian and Sacramento, and leave us with a few extras for next time damaged benches have to be replaced.

b. supplemental landscaping

Cindy reported that Patch Landscaping was out earlier this month to clean up the in-ground planting areas at intersections. They also installed additional perennial plants to fill in gaps, which should help prevent rat activity and litter accumulation. Richard asked about tree maintenance.

Cindy reported that this is no longer a request that can be submitted in 311 now that the City has shifted to a citywide tree trimming schedule.

Keith added that if there’s storm damage or tree limbs hanging on a building or the street he can put in emergency requests, but otherwise there’s no other way to request or get tree trimming.



Richard reported that there is a damaged limb hanging down at 2925 W. Devon and asked Keith to look into it.

c. CitiBins

Cindy reported that the bins have been ordered and right of way use permits have been applied for. We don't have an installation timeline yet.

d. Intersection stamps

Cindy has been in contact with Gallagher Asphalt about restoration of the intersection stamps. They have a product that can be applied to the existing intersection art without having to dig up the street, and which can have color added to it, so we're working on design - keeping the logo the same but adding color to it. We'll share possible designs soon. Hoping to move forward in 2025.

e. pigeon & spit signage

Keith reported that he's been looking into this since the last meeting, and recently received letters from a number of businesses complaining about tobacco and paan spit on the sidewalks on Devon. While the city has a catalog of public way signage that they can produce, there is no signage available regarding spit. It turns out that the city actually repealed its ordinance prohibiting spitting on the sidewalk in 1997, and as a result, there's no city signage that can be installed for this since it isn't illegal. There is standard signage about not feeding pigeons, which can be ordered. There are a few of these signs in place already around Devon, but they're only available in English and effectiveness is clearly limited. Keith asked about pigeon abatement through the SSA.

Cindy reported that this has been something we've funded in the past and have included in the budget - the SSA hires an exterminator to do rooftop bait applications on buildings with large pigeon infestations. Building owners have to request it and provide roof access. When we've done this in the past it typically results in pigeons going away temporarily, but when people resume feeding pigeons at these locations they come back. The exterminator has told us that his services are unlikely to be effective long-term if people continue to feed pigeons at these locations, which includes not only the sidewalk but also apartment windows and balconies in some buildings.

Richard suggested adding signs to the corner behind Croatian Cultural Center - people feed the birds there.

Cindy said that the Croatian Center building was one of the ones where we've had the exterminator apply bait - it's another example of the problem of people feeding the birds.

f. Murals

Cindy shared a draft request for proposals with commissioners via email. This draft is based on the RFP for a recent mural project on Clark Street. The intention is to avoid drama and indecision that has plagued past mural projects by issuing specific guidelines and a theme to artists, and allowing the SSA commission and property owner to select a mural from multiple artist submissions. Cindy has reached out to Bhavesh Patel about possibly including the wall on the side of Annapurna, which was the proposed site for the Chicago Kasam mural earlier this year. We're awaiting word back from him about this as he had to check with other family members. We wanted feedback from SSA commissioners about the

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Republic Bank - 2720 W. Devon Ave.



theme for this.

Richard has to leave for another meeting, but encouraged consideration of themes that reflect the full spectrum of diversity on Devon rather than only focusing on the South Asian community and culture.

Hiba suggested south asian truck art and provided several examples.

Sanhita suggested having the theme of each mural be something reflective of the business that's there.

Pete also needs to leave.

No consensus was reached - this will be back on the next meeting agenda.

VII. Rebate workshops

Hiba is planning to bring back a series of town hall workshops to educate Devon businesses about the various SSA rebate programs and provide an opportunity to network and meet neighbors, and is looking to hold the first one in October. More information will be available soon.

VIII. Adjournment

Meeting adjourned at 1:15pm

Next Meeting: Wednesday, November 20 at Republic Bank at noon.