

Devon SSA #43 Commission Meeting
Wednesday, July 9, 2025 noon
Republic Bank - 2720 W. Devon Ave.



COMMISSIONERS ATTENDING:

Commissioners present: Irshad Khan, Richard Trumbo, Robert Taylor, Sanhita Agnihotri, Maura Levit, Pete Valavanis

Commissioners absent: Mohammed Junaid

Others present: Cindy Plante, Sandi Price, & Hiba Zakai -Rogers Park Business Alliance

Ald. Debra Silverstein & Keith Solokowski, 50th ward office
Stacy Katsibaros - Little Angels Daycare (prospective commissioner)
Rehan Memon - Spinzer (prospective commissioner)
Sneh Sukhadia - Sukhadia's (prospective commissioner)

I. **Call to order**

A quorum being present, the meeting was called to order at 12:04pm.

II. **Public comment**

Cindy suggested a round of introductions since there are several first-time attendees joining the meeting. SSA commissioners and staff from RPBA and the 50th ward introduced themselves. Others attending include Sneh Sukhadia, whose family owns Sukhadia's. He has attended before and may be applying to join the commission. The restaurant also had a recent break-in. Stacy is the owner of Little Angels Daycare on Devon. Rehan owns Spinzer restaurant.

Richard thanked the 50th ward office for helping to get bollards installed at his corner due to frequent crashes where cars have jumped the curb and hit his storefront.

Pete asked if there were any updates about the loss of the Chicago Sculpture Exhibit piece that was destroyed at Devon and Artesian. Cindy has been in contact with CSE about this; they picked up and removed the remnants of the sculpture soon after we were notified that it was damaged. Nobody knows exactly what happened but it appears to be a total loss. Cindy has also spoken to Officer Dankha at the 24th district police station to look into whether there were any crash reports submitted for that corner that could explain it but they didn't find any, so our best guess is it was a hit-and-run.

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Sanhita distributed copies of the budget for the Indian Independence Day Parade on August 24; they're requesting an event sponsorship of \$25,000; the budget sheets distributed show a budget of \$38,000.

Cindy reminded commissioners that the SSA's event sponsorship program caps sponsorship at the lesser of \$8000 or 20% of total event budget. Sandi added that based on the spreadsheet provided, the maximum sponsorship would be \$7200 under the program guidelines.

Sanhita said that the full event budget is actually over \$100,000, and this information has been shared at a previous meeting where a vote on this request was postponed.

The parade is scheduled to start at 11:30am, with a mela (festival) to follow in the Republic Bank parking lot in the afternoon.

Richard asked about how it's been financed in past years - Sanhita says they get sponsorships from area banks and other companies; different businesses and organizations have floats in the parade.

Robert added that Republic bank has been part of this in past years with a float and allowing use of parking lot, and distribution of promo items - not a cash sponsorship, though they do a lot of work with getting people to be on the float and distributing promo items.

Pete is concerned that we're getting the request so late and asked what organization sponsors the parade. Sanhita said it's FIA, the Federation of Indian Associations, which has organized the parade for decades.

Pete asked if the SSA can have a float? Sandi said no because of the time commitment and expense.

Robert is concerned that last year's parade wasn't well attended. Sanhita says it actually wasn't held last year but acknowledged that attendance was down the year prior. This year organizers are doing more advertising and expecting improved attendance this year.

Pete moved approval of the maximum allowed under program guidelines, Maura seconded.

Approved 6-0

Cindy reminded Sanhita of program requirements that the organizers provide an accounting of actual spending on the event, and give us any flyers or promotional graphics several weeks before the event so we can advertise it on social media. Cindy will ask the Admark team to attend and do photography and social media content day-of.

Sanhita asked about making a banner w/ SSA branding to include at the festival or on a float. Cindy will make a draft in Canva and send it to Sanhita for printing.

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Sanhita added that the Indian Independence Day festivities will also include a flag raising ceremony at Daley Plaza on August 15 and a banquet in Schaumburg at India Hub.

Sneh asked if anything was being done to get additional camera trailers for Devon, as there has been an increase in robberies and break-ins at businesses. Cindy says she's included funding for this in the 2026 draft budget under public safety, on top of funding for business camera rebates.

Sandi added that just got pricing for this from Joe Brennan's company to rent these for Devon. She's currently working with them to determine how to handle permitting putting camera trailers on the street. The quote provided lists a monthly rental rate of \$3,000 a month if signing a 3 month lease, \$2500 a month if signing a 6-month lease, or \$2000 a month if leasing for a year.

Irshad asked if it would be more cost-effective to buy the equipment instead. Cindy has looked into this and determined that it wasn't because we would still have to pay monthly fees for internet service, software, and maintenance on top of the cost of assembling and outfitting the trailer.

Ald. Silverstein has also been talking with the 24th district police to see if there are any locations on Devon where they recommend installing more pod cameras.

Cindy reminded the commission that SSA43 has sponsored installation of pod cameras in the past, but it's very expensive to do because of city contract requirements. A camera project in 2018-2019 cost 80,000 for 3 cameras, which didn't have license-plate reading capability.

Sneh asked for an update about the parking garage on Rockwell that has been closed since its construction. Cindy has been in contact with the property manager that they've resolved the building code issues that were preventing the garage from opening, and they plan to open public parking in the building later this summer. Ald. Silverstein has heard from him about this too. Robert added that the high demand for parking on Devon has also gotten him to work on opening up the bank lots for hourly parking. Cindy added that as part of her conversations with the property manager, the building has also been added to the list for pigeon abatement work this year. Hiba said that we need to print more pigeon posters to distribute in the district. Cindy will order more.

III. **Approval of minutes from the last meeting**

Pete moved to approve the minutes, Robert seconded.

Approved 6-0.



IV. 2025 YTD financials update

Year to date financials were distributed to SSA commissioners via email and a printed copy is included in the meeting packet along with the proposed budget for 2026.

Irshad asked if commissioners could be provided a more detailed table of how much has been spent in each budget category compared to the current year budget. Cindy says the accountant is working on this.

V. FY2026 budget & service provider agreement

Cindy presented a budget summary of the proposed budget for 2026, which has to be submitted to the City by July 15. Commissioners have been provided a budget summary sheet as well as the executive summary, which details out any budget items that vary 20% or more compared to the current year budget. The largest of these is the public art budget, which is decreasing dramatically because it was abnormally large this year in order to pay for the intersection art restoration project.

Ald. Silverstein asked if there was any update on the status of the intersection project. Cindy reported that they've submitted all the documentation to CDOT and are awaiting a Make-Way-For-People agreement for signature, which CDOT needs to get from the Law Department. Once that agreement is executed, all the documents get submitted in the online portal for a permit.

Cindy called out several other budget items that have increased, including:

- monthly dumpster service - although RPBA collected bids for this in December, the current provider was still the low bid even though the cost has gone up.
- Bank fees, which is a new item this year that has been added because RPBA has had to add Positive Pay to all accounts due to several recent incidents of check fraud. We're also pressuring and encouraging our vendors to implement online payment options, though these usually also come with fees. For those that still require checks, we either hand-deliver or ask them to pick up checks at our office. Robert asked Sandi to follow up with him about this because Republic Bank does not charge fees for Positive Pay.
- Public Safety; as discussed earlier, we're proposing an increase here in order to allow for purchase of the additional mobile camera units.
- Pigeon and rat abatement is increasing due to increased interest from businesses and building owners and availability of new products for rat abatement.
- Annual audit costs are increasing as professional service providers are increasing their rates.
- Storage is a new item that has always been part of the admin budget despite it

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not having its own budget line in prior years. Storage costs are shared across all RPBA SSAs and the storage space houses holiday decorations, equipment and supplies for events, and equipment and supplies for the maintenance crews.

Sanhita moved approval of the budget, Maura seconded
Approved 6-0.

Pete moved to continue to have RPBA as service provider, Maura seconded
Approved 6-0

Robert would like to revisit this again at some point in the future as he would prefer to have a service provider agency that is located in the SSA district.

VI. Banners

Cindy acknowledged that the light pole banners need to be replaced soon. Before reordering the same ones again, do commissioners want to change or update the design?

Irshad suggested rotating in new photography or changing colors.

Maura would like to move to something more permanent like metal or fiberglass. Cindy and Sandi have looked into this in the past and were told by our contacts at CDOT that the metal ones are typically only installed as part of a larger streetscape renovation, and that they cost over \$10,000 each. We've seen other products at conferences that use fiberglass instead of metal which would be more durable than the vinyl we've been using but lighter and less expensive than metal ones.

Ald. Silverstein is willing to help work with CDOT on permitting issues for a new product if that's what's needed. Cindy and Sandi will revisit the fiberglass banner option and get pricing.

VII. 2331 W. Devon - Spinzer Sign Removal application - \$900

Cindy presented the request - our lowest quote for the removal of several blade sign poles from the side of the building was over \$900 and requires a vote.

Sanhita moved to approve the request, Pete seconded
approved 6-0

VIII. Sukhadia's - Criminal Damage Repair Rebate

Cindy included this after hearing from Sneha about the recent break-in at the restaurant but hadn't received quotes or invoices yet for the board-up and window replacement.

Sneha is holding off on this and combining it with a larger insurance claim for the

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safe and other items that were stolen from the business in the break-in. The incident also made him aware that the cameras at the business weren't working properly, so he does plan to submit an application for the camera rebate in the future.

IX. BIP rebate applications

a. 2331 W. Devon – Spinzer- \$8000

Cindy introduced the request, the application was complete and included two quotes and drawings for the proposed signage. Hiba passed around an iPad to display renderings of the new signs, which are lit channel letters on a black background on both sides of the corner building. Because both quotes were over \$16,000, the applicant is requesting the maximum rebate amount of \$8,000.

Robert moved approval

Sanhita asked what vendors he's using. Rehan said it was Shabazz; he's in town and has done several other business signs on Devon. Irshad asked if the proposed sign includes an awning as it wasn't clear to him from the rendering. Rehan says there's no awning.

Sneh had questions about the rebate program, Cindy provided a summary and will follow up with him later.

Robert moved approval, Maura seconded

Approved 6-0

b. 2322 W. Devon - AAdam Hair Cuts - \$5700

Cindy presented a summary of the request, which is also for a lit channel letter sign. Hiba passed around the iPad to show the rendering. Irshad asked where this business is. Rehan says it's next to Pak Sweets, east of Western.

Hiba has his documentation and added that the current sign is just a banner, and the applicant is looking to get a permanent sign.

Sanhita asked why the sign is so expensive. Cindy said that it's comparable to other projects she's seen, and the higher costs are usually due to the need for electrical work to install the lit sign.

Richard moved approval, Maura seconded

Approved 6-0

c. 2448 W. Devon - Ali Nihari

Cindy kept this on the agenda because the applicant was waiting for a

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quotes. Since we still haven't received them, we'll push this back to the next meeting.

d. **3109 W. Devon - Quetta Farms**

This is another instance where Cindy has only received one quote, no drawing. The lone quote so far was for \$18,000. There is precedent for the SSA voting to approve the request conditioned upon the second quote being submitted before installation begins.

Irshad moved to delay to next meeting, Maura seconded approved - Cindy will put this back on the next meeting's agenda for approval to allow for the applicant to get a second quote.

X. **August meeting**

Due to ongoing work on planning the September arts festival and increased volume of BIP rebates needing to be voted on, Cindy proposed adding an August meeting to the calendar. Assuming we keep to the 2nd Wednesday of the month, this would be August 13.

Commissioners all agreed to add the additional meeting.

XI. **Project updates**

a. **September arts festival event**

Cindy and Sandi are working with BigBuzz to assist in producing the event due to their history working on Devon for Devon's Got talent. We've identified September 7 as the event date, which will include live music performances, arts demos, and kids activities outdoors in the bank parking lot. We're not planning to include food vendors because we want to drive business to surrounding restaurants on Devon.

Robert reported some past success at a West Ridge Chamber event where they posted QR code menus from restaurants around the venue to encourage attendees to order takeout or delivery.

Sanhita and Ald. Silverstein asked about adding a trolley shuttle on the day of the event. Cindy agrees that it's a good idea and will work with BigBuzz to get quotes.

b. **decorative lighting**

Cindy reported that the controllers and light strips that had been ordered from China have arrived and were installed, though the contractor

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identified several poles that didn't have power for the light strips. Keith has been in touch with CDOT's electrical operations team about getting power restored on poles that weren't working.

Sanhita is disappointed that the newly-installed lights still don't display consistent colors or patterns from block to block. Cindy will follow up with the contractor about this. There are issues with a few blocks not having power.

c. **intersection stamps**

As discussed earlier, we're still waiting on an agreement for signature from CDOT; they're waiting to get it from the Law Department. Ald. Silverstein has also asked and reminded CDOT that we're waiting on this.

Cindy is still aiming to get it resolved in order to secure permits to allow for installation this year.

d. **pigeon abatement**

Cindy reported that rooftop pigeon abatement work has been scheduled and several new buildings have been added this year in addition to some repeat treatments in problem areas.

e. **BIP & sign removals**

Hiba reported that she's working with several more businesses to put together applications for sign removals and facade renovations.

XII. Adjournment

Irshad asked about sidewalk power washing and said he hasn't seen anybody power washing in a while. Cindy will call cleanslate about this, as this year's contract increased the frequency of powerwashing from quarterly to monthly. Pete suggested asking them for a list of scheduled dates.

Several commissioners asked about landscaping due to concerns about sidewalk and tree pit weeds and rats in inground beds. Cindy has been in contact with Patch Landscaping about this and was told the first available time they could schedule it would be the week of the 15th.

Rehan asked for clarification as to when the next commissioners meeting is scheduled, as the September 20 date listed on the meeting agenda falls on a weekend. Cindy apologized for the typo on the agenda; the September meeting date is on the 10th, and we're adding a meeting on August 13.

Meeting adjourned at 2:15.