

Devon SSA #43 Commission Meeting

Wednesday, August 13, 2025 noon
Republic Bank - 2720 W. Devon Ave.



MINUTES

Commissioners Present: Irshad Khan, Sanhita Agnihotri, Robert Taylor, Richard Trumbo

Commissioners Absent: Pete Valavanis, Maura Levitt, Mohammed Junaid

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

Larissa Tyler, West Ridge Chamber of Commerce

Ald. Debra Silverstein & Keith Solokowski, 50th ward office

Nana Ahmed, Agents of Hope (prospective commissioner)

Joe Ukonga, Devon Sport (prospective commissioner)

Kazi Ahmed, Universal Electronics

Marina Cimarusti & Terri Champelli, BigBuzz Idea Group

I. **Call to order**

A quorum being present, the meeting was called to order at 12:05 pm.

II. **Public comment**

Attendees and commissioners introduced themselves

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

Sanhita moved approval; Robert seconded.

Approved 4-0

IV. **2025 YTD financials update**

Cindy provided a summary of the financials, which were emailed to commissioners ahead of the meeting.

V. **Arts on Devon event on 9/7**

Since Larissa is running late and the BigBuzz team is here already, this agenda item was moved up in the order.

Cindy introduced Marina and Terri from BigBuzz Idea group, the team assisting with plans for the Arts on Devon event planned for September 7 from 3-8pm. Terri reported that so far they've received 15 performer applications for the lineup, up from 10 yesterday. In addition to performances on stage, we're also planning to have chalk artists, face painting, kid's activities, and a trolley shuttle on Devon.

Irshad asked how many acts are expected to be part of the lineup. Marina reported that it will depend in part on how many people apply. The deadline is Friday so we'll be working on this next week. Irshad asked if most of the applicants are locals or if they're from all over. Can those based in West Ridge be given priority? Marina reported that most submissions so far are people from the neighborhood and surrounding parts of the City.

Devon SSA #43 Commission Meeting

Wednesday, August 13, 2025 noon
Republic Bank - 2720 W. Devon Ave.



Irshad asked if the event includes a street closure.

Terri and Cindy reported that this year's footprint is limited to the bank parking lot due to the quick turnaround time on planning the event - there wasn't time to pursue a street closure permit for Washtenaw but we hope to do it next year as the event grows.

Robert asked about the planned location for the chalk art.

Cindy and Marina are hoping to have this on the sidewalk in front of the bank, outside the parking lot fence, because the sidewalk is wider at this location and it can help draw people in from the street.

Irshad asked for a copy of the site plan; Marina and Terri will share this with the commissioners next week.

Richard asked about restaurant participation and if there are other activities or activations planned besides on-stage performances.

Terri reported that the event will also include childrens' craft activities, chalk art, face painting, and henna. We're also hoping to have a live mural painting activation.

Regarding food, Cindy responded that we won't have food vendors on site at the festival, partly due to space limitations, but more importantly because our goal is to encourage attendees to order food from restaurants on Devon. To that end, we do plan to have on-site signage promoting menus from nearby restaurants and facilitating online takeout and delivery orders. Hiba is reaching out to restaurants to let them know that the event is happening and identify a few that are willing to be featured restaurants willing to offer a menu of portable festival-friendly offerings that people can get and walk around with.

VI. **West Ridge Chamber Dinner Crawl Sponsorship Request**

Larissa introduced herself and provided a history of the West Ridge Chamber's food crawl event and sponsorship request. This year's event is scheduled for Saturday, September 20, and is the third year for this event, which SSA43 helped to sponsor last year. The total event budget this year is \$6300, most of which is paid to participating restaurants and performers, plus the trolley bus for the tour.

Irshad asked how long the tour would be. Larissa said that it will include stops at 6 restaurants and starts at 3pm.

Richard asked how restaurants are selected? Larissa reported that they prioritize those that are members of the West Ridge Chamber before opening it up to others, who are encouraged to join.

Nana inquired as to whether catering businesses in the neighborhood that don't have their own brick-and-mortar restaurant could also participate, potentially by serving hours d'ourves on the bus. Robert agreed that this sounds like an interesting idea and he and Larissa will follow up with Nana.

Devon SSA #43 Commission Meeting

Wednesday, August 13, 2025 noon
Republic Bank - 2720 W. Devon Ave.



Irshad asked about the sponsorship amount being requested.

Larissa acknowledged that the usual event sponsorship policy includes limitations on the amount, but would like for the SSA to fund the entire \$6300 budget based on the discretion of the commissioners, but would appreciate any amount that the SSA could provide for sponsorship.

Cindy reminded commissioners that the event sponsorship program guidelines include a cap on sponsorship requests of 20% of the total event budget, up to a maximum of \$8,000, but commissioners do have discretion to approve a large amount if desired. Last year's sponsorship was \$1,800.

Richard moved to approve \$4,000 for the event; Robert seconded.
Approved 4-0.

VII. BIP applications

a. 2454 W. Devon - Ajwaah sweets - \$8000

Hiba presented drawings of the proposed facade changes at Ajwaah sweets. Cindy reported that the two written quotes were for \$28,000 and \$18,000 for the proposed scope of work, making the applicant eligible for the maximum rebate of \$8,000. The project is somewhat urgent and was made necessary by a partial collapse of the stone cladding on the current facade, which will be removed as part of this project.

Sanhita asked if the new sign will be lit. Cindy isn't sure and the quotes don't appear to specify. Irshad thinks it isn't but it's hard to tell from the drawings submitted.

Robert moved approval of the \$8,000 rebate. Richard seconded.

Approved 4-0.

b. 2925 W. Devon - Music House - \$6345

Hiba presented the drawings of the proposed sign and awning updates at Music House. Cindy shared that the larger of the two quotes submitted for the project was \$12690; the other was \$11,250, so the request is for \$6345.

Irshad asked about additional recent facade work at music house. Richard reported that there were other facade upgrades in addition to this that have already been paid for and completed. Although the awning and facade work hasn't yet started, he has put down a 50% deposit for the first \$6345, and would like

c. 2459 W. Devon - Universal Electronics

Hiba presented illustrations of the proposed signage at Universal Electronics, which is a lit channel letter sign. Cindy reported that the two written quotes for the project were for \$7,000 and \$8,322, so the maximum rebate being requested is \$4161. The second

Devon SSA #43 Commission Meeting

Wednesday, August 13, 2025 noon
Republic Bank - 2720 W. Devon Ave.



quote wasn't received until after the agenda was posted. Kaziah added that the project actually is two lit channel letter signs because of the store's corner location - one sign will be on the Devon frontage and the other will be on the side street side.

Sanhita pointed out a typo in the sign on the drawing - the A in appliances should be capitalized, and it should say electronics instead of electronic.

Robert moved approval conditioned on the error being rectified. Sanhita seconded.
Approved 4-0.

d. **Other pending BIP applications**

Cindy reported that the remainder of the BIP applications listed on the agenda are not ready to be voted on today because they're waiting on 2nd quotes,, but were included on the agenda to allow them to be voted on in case they were able to submit the missing paperwork after the agenda was posted on Friday.

These include:

- i. 2448 W. Devon - Ali Nihari
- ii. 3109 W. Devon - Quetta Farms
- iii. 2114 W. Devon - Quetta Sajji House
- iv. 2553 W. Devon - Mazhar Jewellers
- v. 2322 W. Devon - Ali Salon

VIII. **2025-26 snow removal**

Cindy reported that our snow contractor has reached out to ask if we intend to renew the per-occurrence contract from last season for 2025-26.

Robert moved to approve the contract. Sanhita seconded.

Approved 4-0

IX. **Project updates**

a. **intersection stamps**

Cindy reported that the installation of our new intersection stamps has been completed at Leavitt, Rockwell, and Sacramento.

Irshad would like to do more of these next year and others agreed, especially regarding Western and possibly California. Cindy doubts that we'll be allowed to do Western due to its size, and it may be State right of way. There's also interest in decorative crosswalks. Sanhita likes the stamped brick ribbon crosswalks. Cindy will look into this.

Richard suggested decorative projection lights that he's seen in other locations. Cindy asked him to send any information he has about who has done it and what vendors were used.

Devon SSA #43 Commission Meeting
Wednesday, August 13, 2025 noon
Republic Bank - 2720 W. Devon Ave.



b. **pigeon abatement**

Cindy reported that pigeon abatement work is ongoing and provided a list of buildings being included this season.

X. Adjournment

meeting adjourned at 1:03pm

Next Meeting: Wednesday, September 20, 2025, Republic Bank (noon)