

Howard Street & Jarvis Square Special Service Area #19
Factory Theater -1623 W. Howard St
Wednesday, February 18, 2026 at 9 am
Meeting Minutes



Members present: Jenni Smith, Charlotte Walters, Dave Skora, Tim Amos

Others present: Cindy Plante, RPBA; Zach Joseph, 49th ward office

1. **Call to order**

Meeting called to order at 9:04

2. **Public comment**

Jenni asked if anyone has referrals for tile repair - she's looking to restore the mosaic address in the sidewalk in front of RPH. Charlotte will send her a contact.

Charlotte asked if anybody else has gotten notice from the county about noncompliance with ethics training. They've sent her a letter about fines but she had no notice of the requirement. Cindy asked her to send a copy of whatever letter or notice she received; annual ethics disclosure forms for both City and County are due May 1 every year. Charlotte said this was something else that was due December 31, which Cindy wasn't aware of either. If anyone else gets one of these notices send it to Cindy.

Charlotte is also concerned about continued loitering and drug use under the CTA viaduct on the Evanston side. Cindy will follow up on this with the City of Evanston.

3. **Approve meeting minutes from last meeting**

Charlotte moved to approve the minutes; Tim seconded.

Approved 4-0.

4. **2025 YTD & 2026 Financials update**

Cindy provided a summary of the financials for 2025 and the first month of 2026, which were shared with commissioners via email. The 2025 statement reflects that SSA19 received only 43% of the approved levy for last year - our budget was \$518,435 and we got \$227,249. Dave asked whether the shortfall is due to the delayed tax bills or delinquencies or both. Cindy thinks it's probably both, and

pointed out that the January 2026 report shows us getting \$105,312, which is late payments coming in, but not close to filling in the entire gap. The balance sheet shows \$64,000 in the bank in January after paying some of the bills we've been sitting on.

Charlotte asked about the scope of work for landscaping and snow removal, which seem to be the biggest outlays in 2025. Cindy explained that the snow removal spending included the months of January-March of 2025, which wasn't much snow, and also November & December of 2025, which unexpectedly had a lot of snow. Since we shifted to pay-per-push instead of a retainer, this actually put us over budget on snow, though we're still under budget overall in the public way aesthetics category.

The landscaping scope includes three rotations of plant materials plus mulching, watering, and periodic weeding. This contract was bid out in the last few years and our current vendor was the low bid from that RFP process.

Jenni asked if there was data available showing what percentage of the total levy is paid by Jarvis properties and Howard ones. Cindy will look into this - we definitely have a list of PINs from when we did reconstitution in 2020 but there's not a dollar value assigned to each one. va

5. SSA officer elections

Cindy said that the SSA bylaws actually require us to elect a new chair every 2-3 years, which we've forgotten to do. Charlotte is the current chair. The chair has to sign the budget sheet every year when we submit it to the city.

Jenni nominated Charlotte to continue as chair. Tim seconded.

Approved 4-0.

6. Chalk Howard Street

Cindy shared that even though the SSA finances are still being impacted by the instability in Cook County property tax collections, we're still looking to bring back Chalk Howard Street using grant funding. We got an updated proposal from Criterion Events, which was the winning bid when we collected proposals last year. The proposal was for about \$71,000, an increase over the previous proposal due to an increase in the city's tax on rental equipment. Charlotte was concerned that this seems expensive; Jenni said based on her experience producing events on Jarvis it's not actually that

bad considering the larger scope. People don't realize all the moving parts and expenses that go into producing a street festival - city permitting, street closure, insurance, security, EMS, porta potties, barricades, generators, renting stage and sound equipment, plus licensing for any participating food or craft vendors, and paying performers - it adds up. Dave suggested reducing the scope - maybe eliminate live music and have a DJ instead since this wouldn't need as much equipment. Cindy is open to this and will look into it. Dave asked if it would be possible to hire more photographers so that people would be able to have professionals take their pictures with the completed 3d chalk art, and then hand out printed photos with our logo on them somewhere. Cindy cautioned that professional photographers aren't cheap either - usually a couple hundred dollars an hour, and on-site printing would require additional power and equipment. Jenni suggested seeking corporate sponsorships for photography or art. Charlotte and Dave both asked about shifting the festival footprint east and potentially including Willye White Park. Cindy cautioned that including the park will require a separate and additional event permit from the park district; the festival footprint is also somewhat constrained by the need for bus rerouting on Howard; all of this may also be impacted by construction at Howard & Paulina starting this summer. Although we can look into this, these limitations mean the footprint isn't likely to change.

7. One Howard Implementation items

- a. Kiosks - Cindy has been in contact with both CDOT and the manufacturer about updating drawings and submitting for permits.
- b. Intersection art - Gallagher Asphalt is preparing drawings and pricing for installation so we can submit to CDOT for installation permits this summer. CDOT has already seen the designs and signed off, so we're basically waiting on documentation to submit.
- c. Viaduct lighting - Evanston is still taking the lead on this; there haven't been any additional community meetings or anything; they're working with the transit agencies and getting design specifications ready to collect bids for installation.
- d. Murals - since we still have some MacArthur funding available for murals and haven't had much success getting building owners to work with us for some of the priority mural

sites, we're looking at potentially refurbishing or replacing the existing mural on the south side of the metra viaduct and adding one on the northern side.

8. Adjournment

Zach mentioned that while there aren't any updates about the Howard/Ashland site, the RFP may be reissued again later this year.

Cindy added that she's been talking with The WasteShed about potentially relocating to Howard Street; they need to leave their current space in Evanston and are interested in Rogers Park.

Jenni shared that there are a lot of potholes in the alley alongside the CTA tracks on Jarvis that are becoming a safety concern. Zach will add this alley to the list for maintenance; they're waiting on the weather to warm up before starting.

Meeting adjourned at 10:05.

Next SSA Commissioners Meeting: Wednesday, Mar 18, 2026