



SSA Commissioners Meeting
Wintrust Loyola, 6420 N. Sheridan Rd.
2pm, Tuesday, October 14, 2025

Commissioners present: Sara Lukens, Jennifer Clark
Commissioners absent: Cesar Coronado
Others present: Cindy Plante, RPBA; Zach Joseph, 49th ward

1. Call to order

The meeting was called to order at 2:08

2. Approve minutes from July meeting

Sara moved approval; Jennifer seconded.

approved 2-0

3. YTD financials

Cindy gave a summary of the YTD financials, which were shared with commissioners via email. We're still waiting on funds from second installment property tax bills, which still haven't been sent out yet, and nobody seems to have any idea when to expect them.

The only major project we have for the rest of this year is holiday tree lights.

4. Porkchop landscaping update

Jennifer shared updates regarding porkchop landscaping. The total cost for the project was over \$200,000, including replacing all the irrigation plumbing and repairs to the area; the university is sharing the cost with CDOT. They expect to install fall plants soon.

Cindy asked if there was a specific timeline for installation. Jennifer reported that they're waiting on plant selections.

Sara asked about trees, and plans for a bee hotel that was mentioned in a Block Club article about the project. Jennifer reported that all plants had to be chosen from a list of pre-approved plants provided by CDOT; part of the reason for CDOT's involvement in clearing the porkchop and redoing all the landscaping was that the trees that were there

before were creating safety problems in the intersection by limiting visibility. The bee hotel is not the same as a bee hive; rather it is a smaller installation, more like a birdhouse where bees can take refuge temporarily in bad weather.

5. Maintenance crew longevity pay (\$1/hr raise every 6 mo)

Cindy presented this request, which is being made to all SSA's in the RPBA service area, to provide a \$1/hr raise to maintenance crew workers that stay on the job longer than 6 months. This is to recognize the people that stay on the job longer than 6 months. Historically, there's frequent turnover because it's a part-time, minimum wage job, and primarily outdoor work. Many leave for better pay or hours elsewhere, but we also sometimes have people ghost, or get fired for cause. As a result we don't expect this will apply to very many people, but we do need to get approval from each SSA commission to adopt this policy.

Sara shared that she's been generally happy with the in-house maintenance crew and had a positive interaction with one of the guys recently.

Sara moved approval; Jennifer Seconded.

Approved 2-0.

6. 2026 Chicago Sculpture Exhibit participation

Cindy shared background information on the Chicago Sculpture exhibit, which puts out a call for property owners, community organizations & SSA's every year to sponsor temporary outdoor sculpture installations by professional artists at a cost of \$4000 each. The Chicago Sculpture Exhibit organization takes care of all the insurance and permitting, and sponsors are involved in selecting pieces and installation locations. Other SSA districts in Rogers Park signed on last year and there are current installations on Clark Street by the library, across from Morse Fresh Market, and at the corner of Howard/Rogers and Greenview. The Devon Avenue SSA in West Ridge sponsored sculptures as well.

Sara asked if we have funding for this in the 2026 budget.

Cindy said that there is public art funding in the 2026 budget to allow for up to 2 sculptures if commissioners want to move it forward.

Sara was somewhat skeptical about the potential impact of temporary installations.

Jennifer was somewhat concerned that this may contribute to a feeling of too much clutter on Sheridan Road sidewalks, but could be a benefit if the locations are chosen intentionally.

Zach agreed about the importance of selecting good locations for sculptures; the one on Morse doesn't stand out as well as some of the others due to its location and the wall behind it, but the ones by the library and on Howard are noticeable for both drivers and pedestrians. Zach suggested considering a site near the CTA station for a sculpture.

Cindy agreed and asked Jennifer if the university would be amenable to a sculpture on Sister Jean Plaza. Jennifer will look into this. Zach also suggested the block in front of the Granada Center building because it has wider sidewalks. Cindy added that the porkchop might also work. We don't have to select locations right away, and payment won't be due until 2026, but we do have to let them know by December if we want to be included as a sponsor, and how many.

Jennifer would like to do 2 sculptures

Sara moved approval; Jennifer seconded.

Approved 2-0

7. **Mama's African Kitchen BIP application**

Cindy reported that the new African restaurant that recently opened in the former Bulldog/Honeyberry space has submitted an application for new signage. He has submitted the application, drawings, and one quote; he was hoping to have the second quote today but hasn't gotten it back from the 2nd sign company yet. This is on today's agenda because it's the last meeting of the year. We've previously approved BIP applications in situations like this by approving it conditioned on him turning in the second quote before proceeding. Based on the one quote submitted so far, the rebate

amount would be a max of \$3578.

Sara moved approval pending submission of a second quote; Jennifer seconded.

Approved 2-0

8. **2026 meeting calendar**

Cindy presented the draft schedule of meeting dates for 2026, with meetings generally held on the 2nd Tuesday of the last month of each quarter: March 10 (2025 for audit), June 8, July 14 (annual budget), September 8; and December 10 (all-SSA annual meeting).

Jennifer moved approval. Sara seconded.

Approved 2-0.

9. **Public comment**

Sara asked what RPBA and other SSAs are doing or could do to support businesses during the ICE and potential military activity in the neighborhood.

Zach encouraged people to save the ICIRR reporting hotline and sign up for text alerts.

The ward office and RPBA are both distributing whistles, door signs, and Know Your Rights resources.

Cindy is encouraging people to support impacted businesses by ordering takeout and shifting a portion of grocery shopping to international stores; other SSA's and community organizations are doing the same.

SSA commissioners spent some time sharing their experiences and brainstorming potential solutions to research further.

Cindy reminded attendees that the all-ssa annual breakfast is scheduled for Thursday, December 11 at 9am; the location is not yet confirmed but will be in Devon SSA43.

10. **Adjournment**

Meeting adjourned at 3:01.