

Devon SSA #43 Commission Meeting  
Tuesday, March 10, 2026 noon  
Republic Bank - 2720 W. Devon Ave.



## MINUTES

### **commissioners present:**

Irshad Khan, Robert Taylor, Richard Trumbo, Pete Valavanis

### **Others present:**

Ald. Debra Silverstein & Keith Solokowski, 50th ward

Cindy Plante, Hiba Zakai & Sandi Price, RPBA

Shazia & Sara - Nayab Mart

Sabrina & Darakshan - Muslims for a Just Future

### **I. Call to order**

called to order at 12:09

### **II. Public comment**

Attendees introduced themselves.

Sabrina asked about the process of business consultations and relationship between RPBA and the West Ridge Chamber.

Cindy reported that Hiba has been doing in-person small business consultations with Devon businesses, particularly around the existing facade and camera rebate programs and special events. RPBA is also a Small Business Development Center and we're starting to try to market those services to Devon businesses more.

Sandi added that a few of our SSA commissioners are current or past board members of West Ridge Chamber. Richard added a correction that he and Robert are no longer on the board.

Sabrina shared that her organization has been doing canvassing and hosting iftar events as part of organizing efforts in the neighborhood; they're trying to research the impact of federal immigration enforcement on business in the Devon corridor. Darakshan added that we know foot traffic is down and businesses are struggling but there aren't numbers to quantify it. Their long-term goal is to develop a 25-year plan for investment.

Sandi shared that it's often difficult to get businesses to share financial information; some don't have good recordkeeping. This isn't specific to Devon.

Irshad suggested visiting businesses with someone that already knows the businesses and building owners; our experience has been that it's difficult to get people to attend extra meetings or events, and generally need to be

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introduced by someone they know.

Keith asked if the organization has a physical location on Devon - Sabrina says they don't.

Irshad asked how they're funded. Sabrina said they're a 501c3, mostly grassroots funded.

Sandi asked how they found out about this meeting - Sabrina said they'd found out about it through Hiba, as she had attended one of the iftar events. Sabrina also met Larissa from the West Ridge Chamber at a previous know-your-rights training they held at the bank.

Darakshan shared that their recent iftar event brought in several thousand dollars for participating businesses by bringing in customers for a ticketed event, which has helped getting people to share data. Sabrina is the first Chicago hire; the organization is based in the DC area, but Darakshan lives in the area now and they've been doing canvassing and outreach in the community for the last year. Cindy is interested in meeting with Sabrina and Darakshan in the future to talk more about collaboration for Devon avenue.

Irshad asked about updating storefront program guidelines to specify that people have to use one of the quotes they submit for approval. He's been hearing from local sign companies that they're providing quotes for peoples' projects only to have them switch to an entirely new vendor at the last minute; there are concerns that this is happening because new vendors swoop in at the last minute to offer discounts or kickbacks. Cindy and Sandi will look at making changes to the program guidelines ahead of the next meeting. Hiba will also pass this along to applicants she's working with.

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

Robert moved, Richard seconded.

Approved 4-0

### **IV. Financials update**

Cindy shared that SSA43 has a positive bank balance and has been receiving second installment tax proceeds from last year. This year's first installment bills are out and have an April due date, so we expect to begin receiving those dollars soon. Next month's meeting next meeting will be the annual



audit which is due May 1. Sandi added that we're working with a new audit firm this year for all of our SSAs, so it will be a new auditor preparing the report and presenting at the next meeting.

**V. BIP & Camera rebate applications**

**a. Taj Jewelry - 2609 W. Devon - Sign - \$7750**

Irshad asked about the address and who owns the building? Cindy reported that the address is listed as 2609 on all the documentation and Bhavesh Patel or possibly his father is the property owner. Irshad is concerned that although the landlord page is signed, the section for landlord contact info hasn't been filled out, so approval of the application will be contingent on the applicant filling out this section. Cindy agreed.

Irshad also has concerns about the underlying facade - are they doing anything to the wall other than the sign. After reviewing the scope of work on the submitted quotes, Cindy reported that it is only for the lit channel letter sign.

Robert moved, Richard Seconded.  
Approved 4-0

**b. Spinzer - 2331 W. Devon - Cameras - \$2000**

Irshad asked about the number of cameras proposed - Cindy reported that the provided quotes both include 6 cameras, plus the hard drives and underlying storage and electrical equipment. The storefront is on a corner so it has a lot of frontage to cover. Both quotes were over \$4000, making the project eligible for the maximum rebate of \$2000. Irshad is concerned that the proposed 8tb hard drive is too small, only providing a week or less of recording time and asked Cindy and Hiba to ask him about this. Hiba will do so; Cindy wonders if he might also be including some sort of monthly cloud backup in addition to the local drive.

Robert moved, Richard Seconded  
approved 4-0

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### c. **Nayab Mart - 2449 W. Devon - facade - \$8000**

Irshad asked for clarification on the scope of work - does it include the sign only or is there work being done on the underlying wall also? Sandi pointed out that one of the quotes includes aluminum panel backing, while the other calls for stucco.

Irshad pointed out that the current sign looks the same as the proposed. Why is it being replaced?

Sara reported that they're upgrading because birds nested in the back of the current one and did some damage, and they also want to upgrade to LED lighting. Irshad asked if they've considered changing the sign design to something new - the applicants are up for considering it. They'll come back with an updated proposal at the April meeting.

### d. **MAH Designer Boutique - 2452 W. Devon - cameras & facade**

Cindy is awaiting clarification and additional documentation from the applicant about the project scope, and since Robert has to leave early, we won't be voting on this today.

## VI. **Arts on Devon**

Cindy shared that the call for proposals for an event production company that we issued after last month's meeting yielded two proposals, and BigBuzz was the only qualified applicant. The event is tentatively scheduled for September 27.

Ald. Silverstein pointed out that September 27 is the Sukkot holiday and suggested shifting the date back to October 3.

Cindy had proposed October 3 originally but it was a conflict with Lincoln Square Apple Fest, which BigBuzz also produces. All of the other Sundays in September are holidays for the Jewish community, and RPBA will be working on Chalk Howard Street in August, so Cindy will confer with the BigBuzz team about shifting to October 11. Ald. Silverstein confirmed that there are no religious holidays in October.

Robert asked to see a copy of the proposal. Cindy will provide these via email.

Richard asked if Ajanta Chakraborty of [bollygroove.com](http://bollygroove.com) has been contacted

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- he'd like to try to include her organization in some capacity in the event.  
Cindy will follow up.

### VII. **Ethics filings reminder - City & County Due May 1, 2026**

Cindy reminded commissioners that City and County ethics filings are both due May 1, commissioners will get emails about this from the City soon if they haven't already.

### VIII. **Adjournment**

meeting adjourned at 12:44

Next Meeting: Tuesday, April 14, 2026, Republic Bank (noon)