

Howard Street & Jarvis Square Special Service Area #19
Factory Theater -1623 W. Howard St
Wednesday 6/17, 2026 at 9 am
Meeting Minutes



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

Others present: Cindy Plante, RPBA
Zach Joseph & Lauren , 49th ward

1. Call to order

Meeting called to order at 9:05am.

2. Public comment

There was no public comment.

3. Approve meeting minutes from last 2 meetings

Tim moved approval of the minutes, Charlotte seconded.

Approved 4-0.

4. 2026 YTD Financials

Cindy provided a summary of the year to date financials, which were shared with commissioners by email. Although the SSA is currently in the black, we've gotten word that 2nd installment property taxes are being delayed again until at least October, making this the third year in a row that property taxes have been delayed. Also of note is the fact that much of the money we have taken in so far this year is actually money from last year's second installment that we didn't start receiving until early 2026, so on top of the delayed payments, we also haven't been receiving all of our approved levy.

Charlotte and Jenni both shared that they're awaiting property tax refunds from the county that are also being delayed.

5. 2027 preliminary budget discussion

Cindy shared proposed changes for the 2027 budget draft as prepared by staff so far; most of which are due to general cost increases for things like dumpster service, audit, utilities, office

supplies, and maintenance staff. We are expecting some savings on social media after switching from A5 to Carrie Jackson and taking website work in-house.

Dave would like to see more regular reporting on social media analytics, which we used to get from A5. Cindy noted that part of the reason we stopped monthly reporting was because of the extra costs. Cindy will ask Ana if we can do basic reporting in-house from the meta business suite; Jenni added that it would make more sense to wait a few months before really looking at analytics to give the new contractor time to get up and running. Dave would like to have Carrie come to a future meeting to meet the commissioners and give updates. Cindy did ask her to come today but she wasn't available; we'll try another time.

Charlotte has identified several more banners that need to be replaced. Cindy reported that Brandon had prepared a list of damaged banners that were removed about 3 weeks ago when the Chalk Howard Street Banners were put up and asked for photos and specific locations. Charlotte also said that the current landscape vendor hasn't been maintaining the in-ground planting areas around Howard/Rogers/Greenview and that she hired her own contractor to turn the soil and mulch in front of her property. Cindy will follow up with the landscaping company about this.

Dave asked about removal of a tree in front of the laundromat at Howard/Rogers/Greenview and said that several tree pits also appear to have been filled in with rocks.

Cindy reminded commissioners that parkway tree maintenance is done by the city's department of forestry, which is part of CDOT. They've been doing a lot of tree trimming and removals lately because of recent storms, so this may have been a tree that was damaged and flagged for removal. Rocks in the tree pits are usually lava rocks, which are used for rat abatement to prevent them digging. Zach agreed that the tree may have been damaged in the storm and will follow up with CDOT for more information.

Cindy shared that she's also proposing an increase in the 2027 budget for public art to assist with mural work on the metra viaduct and potential window art like Clark Street did. Charlotte would like to see more community engagement around the metra mural.

Cindy agreed - since we're doing the project with the City of Evanston it won't get started until 2027 at the earliest, and funding will be coming from both sides of the street, including grants.

Charlotte appreciates the increased level of police presence on Howard Street so far this year and would like to have the SSA write a letter of gratitude to the 24th district commander.

Jenni shared that since the police presence increased on Howard she's seeing more of the Howard Street regulars on Jarvis, and drug activity has followed, which she's been in touch with the police about. Cindy reminded commissioners that there is a beat meeting tonight for Howard and Jarvis at 7 at Willye White.

Jenni shared that she's also heard that the owner of several area liquor stores has expressed an interest in opening a location in the laundromat plaza on Jarvis, which the adjacent business owners oppose due in part to the increased loitering that's already happening. Zach added that he's gotten several inquiries from folks interested in the plaza, all with very different ideas and proposals, and noted the concerns raised about a liquor store specifically. Cindy asked if there's a moratorium or any additional requirements in place at that location for packaged goods licenses. Zach isn't sure offhand.

Charlotte is still concerned about gambling machines at Around the Clock on Howard and has been hearing that they're still staying open past midnight. Zach has been in contact with owners and management about this and they were cooperative initially but if the issue continues they'll reach out about it again. Charlotte suggested that even covering the windows or putting the machines in another part of the store where they're not visible from the street would be an improvement. Tim added that the gas stations all seem to have them all now too. Cindy asked about the status of pending legislation at the city council about gambling machines. Zach reported that council is scheduled to meet today and there is a proposed ordinance to allow the machines for any business with a liquor license. It's a controversial issue because it does generate needed tax revenue for the city, though the mayor and many alders oppose it because of these sorts of public safety concerns. Jenni agreed and said she's been getting approached constantly by gambling companies about putting machines in at RPH, which she refuses to do.

Charlotte asked if anyone has heard anything about American Islamic college - are they still planning to open on Howard?

Cindy and Zach both met officials from the organization at a meeting last fall and Cindy has included them on the last two ribbon cutting lineups only to have them pull out. Zach isn't aware of any delays due to City issues, noting that it may be something internal.

Dave asked for an update on the Willye White Park splash pad installation. Zach shared that he's been told that installation has now been pushed back to summer 2027, but the park district has selected a design.

6. Chalk Howard Street Updates

Cindy reminded the commission that Chalk Howard Street is scheduled for Saturday 8/22 and will have the same footprint as in previous years, including Howard from Paulina to Ashland plus Marshfield from Howard to the Gale parking lot. We're using grant funding for most of the expenses this year, and shifting from live music to DJs. Applications for food and artisan vendors are open until July 15.

Charlotte asked when postcards and posters will be going out. Cindy shared that they usually get printed in July once we have artists and vendors confirmed so we can promote them.

7. Adjournment

Cindy shared opening & closings updates - Aspen Dental has closed, Rainbow is now open, and the property management company at Gateway Center is taking over leasing from CBRE.

Charlotte asked about Redz. Cindy shared that they've started the licensing process with Evanston for the former Harold's Chicken space on Howard and there is a coming soon sign up now. Gateway management also shared with us that the currency exchange will be moving across the street to the former North Shore Optical space at Howard & Paulina.

The meeting adjourned at 10:00 am.