

Howard Street Evanston Special Service Area #10
Ward Eight - 629 W Howard Street
Wednesday, July 15, 2026 at 2 pm
Meeting Minutes



Members present: Jeremy Denny, Shelley Carillo, Barbara Carlson,
India McKay

Members absent: Monica Picchietti

Others present: Cindy Plante & Sandi Price, RPBA
Paul Zalmezak, City of Evanston

1. Call to order

A quorum being present, the meeting was called to order at 2:07pm.

2. Public comment

Shelley and India asked if there were any updates on Callan Plaza completion timeline and expressed concerns about landscaping.

Paul shared that while most of the hardscape work is complete, bids on the lighting installation came back way over budget, so they're making design changes and seeking new bids. He's not sure about the landscaping and will look into it.

Jeremy shared email signup sheets from the Main Street Fair and asked Cindy about setting up an email list for Howard Street events and volunteer opportunities. Cindy will get the data entered and connect with Ana about setting this up. Shelley asked about having Carrie Jackson do it. Cindy responded that email marketing isn't currently part of her contract scope, though we could ask about this for next year. Cindy asked Jeremy if he had any trouble getting into the storage unit and whether we need to order more fans or stickers for the Callan Plaza block party on 8/15. Jeremy said that there are still fans left but stickers are gone. India shared that she found more tote bags in storage at Peckish Pig, so we don't need more of those either.

3. Approval of last meeting's minutes

India moved approval; Barbara seconded.

Approved 4-0.

4. 2026 events

a. Callan Plaza block party

Cindy shared that she has submitted an event permit application for 8/15 from noon to 5 as discussed at last month's meeting and hasn't heard anything back from the city yet. The proposed site plan includes space for an inflatable water slide, games, and the Howard Street tent. Cindy asked India if there's a hose on the back patio of Peckish Pig that we may be able to use for the slide. India said that there is but they've been having some concerns about water pressure and high water bills the last few months. Cindy suggested including a reimbursement for water as part of the event budget to account for this. Jeremy asked if the giant jenga set belongs to the city. Paul said it is. Shelley asked if we can hang onto it for now to use for the event on 8/15. Paul said OK. Cindy needs the link to login and reserve additional Enjoy Evanston equipment for the event also.

India asked about food and beverage plans for the event. Shelley said that last year they had C&W Ice Cream provide ice cream and cook out food for the first 100 people, at a cost of around \$1,000; if we'd rather have Peckish Pig do food instead, we could have C&W do ice cream only. Cindy is open to this but didn't have the information so it wasn't included in the permit application, which will have to be amended. Shelley expects to see the C&W owners later today and will ask about availability. Jeremy asked about providing liquor at the event. Cindy asked Paul about requirements, he isn't sure. This is another thing that wasn't on the original permit submission that will have to be added. Cindy will reach out to the City to follow up on the permit submission and necessary updates, and will also send around a signup link for volunteer shifts for the event.

b. Halloween Trick or Treat event 10/30

Cindy has secured licensing through Swank Pictures for Hocus Pocus in Callan Plaza on October 30 and submitted a special event permit application for the plaza, with the site plan including the movie equipment, Howard Street tent, and photo backdrop for the costume contest. Shelley would like to incorporate some sort of food giveaway, possibly

Taffy Apples. India suggested reaching out to Sweet Temptations to see if they might be interested in doing something for this. Jeremy would also like to be able to offer drinks for the parents. Cindy will look into updating this permit application to account for food and beverage also.

c. Turkey Giveaway 11/22

Cindy hasn't submitted an event permit for this yet because it wasn't clear whether a street closure would be needed since the event took place in a parking lot last year. Shelley and Jeremy suggested either sticking with a parking lot or using only the parking lane to allow for drive-thru turkey pickup. Shelley would like to start getting quotes for turkeys soon. Sandi asked how many there were last year - Shelley said last year there were 125, purchased from Jewel, but they're open to sourcing from other vendors. Jeremy has a contact at Sysco that he can ask about this.

d. Small business saturday 11/28

India shared that last year's Small Business Saturday event didn't really happen because it snowed, though the plan was to have it be a walk or self-guided tour to the various businesses, some of them hosting live music and giveaways. Sandi suggested a goodie bag giveaway, which is what RPBA does in other area SSAs. Shelley would like to do a passport stamp incentive, which was part of the plan for last year. Cindy suggested following up on this and other holiday events after the Callan Plaza event and budget meeting in August to firm up plans.

5. Landscaping & sidewalk maintenance

Paul shared that Ald. Rogers wanted to talk with the group about having the SSA do more landscaping and sidewalk maintenance on Howard Street moving forward. The alder was planning to attend today's meeting to talk about this but wasn't able to make it. Currently it's not clear whether there will be funding in the city's 2027 budget to fund this kind of work on Howard, though they have identified some city funding to do a bit of cleanup work on Howard this year. India pointed out that this sort of maintenance work wasn't really part of the scope of SSA

services discussed during engagement meetings with Teska about setting up the SSA and Cindy agreed. India shared that she and her mom have been frustrated by the timeline on planter installations this year, which were supposed to be done by the city's vendor but were substantially delayed to the point that Peckish Pig ended up doing their own.

Cindy shared that the SSA on the Chicago side of Howard Street has a landscape contract that costs about \$20,000 a year, and the scope includes three seasonal planting rotations for 30 planter pots and about a dozen in-ground planting areas, plus tree pit weeding twice a year, spring mulching, and weekly watering. Some of the weeding and mulching work has been delayed because of staffing challenges, and Cindy has been hearing from peers at other organizations that lots of them are having similar issues with many different landscaping vendors around the city. Sandi added that the Rogers Park SSA's only do spring, summer and winter plantings because fall planting rotations tend to have a comparatively shorter life span of only a few weeks, so it's not worth the expense. Sandi asked Paul if the city has an inventory of the number of planters and planting areas on Howard Street that would need to be included in a landscape contract so we could get accurate bids. Jeremy shared that he has a contact that might be interested in bidding for this work. Shelley does also. Cindy asked that they share those contacts for when we release an RFP. Sandi asked Paul who the city and other Evanston SSA's are currently using for landscaping contracts. Paul said that the City is currently using Landscape Concepts Management; Downtown Evanston is using Brightview, and the city has used them in the past also. Paul mentioned that the Brightview contract also includes sidewalk cleanup. Cindy and Sandi said that most of the Rogers Park SSA districts share costs for an in-house maintenance team that does trash, with the exception of Devon Avenue, which outsources this work to Cleanslate.

Sandi asked Paul how much room there is to increase the SSA levy to add the kind of landscaping and maintenance services being contemplated here for 2027. Cindy said that Katie had shared the statutory tax cap number previously, but we don't have an estimated district EAV

figure - we need to multiply district EAV by cap percentage to identify the maximum potential levy when we go to draft the budget for next year.

6. One Howard Street Updates

Paul shared that demolition is expected to start soon on the 727-729 W. Howard Street building. The city is still waiting for a no-further-remediation letter for the site from IDNR, but this isn't needed for demolition, only residential or mixed-use redevelopment of the site.

Cindy shared that she and Katie met with artists last week about potential timeline and contracts for the Metra viaduct mural. Once funding is approved, hopefully by the end of this month, they'd execute contracts for installation in 2027, with community engagement on design themes this fall, possibly including a joint meeting of this group and the Chicago SSA commissioners in September to discuss design.

India asked if there were any updates on the viaduct lighting project.

Paul said that CTA is only allowing the city to do the Central viaduct for now. Metra has been more cooperative, but the City is prioritizing viaducts outside of TIF districts for now because ARPA funding has to be used up first, while TIF funding could be used for the Howard Street one.

7. Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 3:15pm.