



**Special Service Area #61
SSA Board of Commissioners Minutes
Tuesday, December 10, 2024
Polsky Exchange North – Jackson Park Room**

Present: L. Brown, S. Karim, A. Marks, C. Newsome, J. Nurss, G. Robnett, M. Rogel, G. Rumsey, E. Thompson

Absent (excused): N. Stanek

Also Present: Rod Sawyer (SSA Program Manager), Peter Cassel (MAC Properties), Kenny Newman

Chair Rumsey called the meeting of SSA #61 to order at 11:04am with a quorum being present.

Reading/Approval of the Minutes:

The minutes for the September 24th meeting were accepted as circulated.

The minutes for the October 22nd meeting were accepted as circulated.

Questions and Comments from Guests:

K. Newman – concerned with the lack of direction in the community from University of Chicago. There are several empty storefronts, and the real estate is not being utilized effectively. Has asked that the Commissioners engage the UC property owners to work in conjunction to fill the spaces. Believes there are more practical ways to shop such as mom/pop business and corporate entities can operate as well as be invested in Hyde Park. Chair Rumsey responded no representative from the UC is present at this time to address the matter, however the body continues to work with everyone.

P. Cassel – thanked the body for all the hard work they have done and thinks Hyde Park/community is thriving.

K. Newman- also shared he expects the Quantum Computer Project should positively impact the area and more housing options are needed.



SSA Financials – Chair Rumsey, R. Sawyer, Program Manager

Financials were accepted presented.

- **Budget Tracker** – Chair Rumsey noted a few corrections:
 - Category 6.03 (Bookkeeping) – there was no expense for this line item for the month of July
 - Category 6.06 (Office Supplies) – this line item is not budget approved, so the expenses need to be recategorized.
 - Noted the expense detail sheet should equal to the budget tracker
- Chair Rumsey noted there was \$35k in funds remaining to be spent by the close of the fiscal year. PM shared the Finance Committee does a deep dive on the financials monthly and wants to make sure the body has a clear understanding of the spending.
- Ninety percent of the tax collection has been received, which results in higher revenues than anticipated. The Carryover of \$106k will be lower than expected due to outstanding expenses.

Chair Rumsey: Where do we stand on the new accountant? Service Provider stated to date no one had been selected from the last pool of candidates. A new RFP will be reissued after the holidays.

Program Committee Report – Commissioner Rogel, Chair

The Viaducts Project is on schedule and the opening/dedication will be in the Spring due to the weather.

Mural – project is hold. The artist couldn't secure the necessary insurance. In addition, the expenses were higher than anticipated, which would result in cost overruns. The artist determined the project was too large to take on. After work began, it was determined by the artist the workspace requires more preparation work than anticipated. The artist also inquired about the duration of time the mural would last under the exposure and recommended panels. The artist's suggestions will be included in the revised RFP.



Both parties mutually agreed to close the contract, and the process will begin again. Program manager will provide the termination letter and an agreement for a small stipend of \$1k for the work that was done on the project. Monies paid will be returned to the Service Provider and secured in a separate bank account to be used for the new project.

SSA Program Manager Report – R. Sawyer

- Winter/Holiday Market – Service provider received grant from Choose Chicago to further support the success of the event such as the garland on the 46 light poles within the commercial area among other things. Mayor Johnson is expected to attend and both Alderman Robinson and Yancy offices have been invited and notified. Detailed information is available on the website.
- Recording Secretary – this is the last meeting for the current recording secretary provided by the service provider as it is not approved in the 2025 budget. SSA 61 will need to have a secretary in position by the January 2025 meeting.

Chairman Updates – G. Rumsey

Hyde Park Hollydays (deferred to A. Marks) – A great community event that was well attended. Ice skating rink in Harper Court for the first time, ice sculptures, reindeer in the shopping center and the local business were highlighted. Also shared there are a number of businesses opening this month in spite of the fact there is a 15% vacancy rate outside of the downtown area. This is a reflection on the changing trend in shopping patterns/habits.

Local news – Hyde Park Produce has no plans to close. Commissioner Newsome shared the property owners in west Hyde Park would like to actively participate in revitalizing that area.

Reminder the Program Committee meets on February 4th at 10am, no January meeting.

The next meeting SSA 61 Commissioners meeting will be held on Tuesday, January 21st @ 11:00am.



Questions and Comments from Commissioners

None

The meeting was adjourned at 11:47am

Respectfully submitted,
Raymonde Vance, SECC