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**Special Service Area #61 – Hyde Park**  
**SSA Board of Commissioners Minutes Tuesday, December 9, 2025**  
Polsky Exchange North — Jackson Park Room

**Present:** L. Brown, C. Newsome, C. Casey, A. Marks, J. Nurss, G. Robinette, M. Rogel, G. Rumsey

**Absent:** S. Karim, E. Thompson

**Also Present:** Rod Sawyer (SSA Program Manager), Diane Burnham (SECC Executive Director), Isaac Green (Accountant), Peter Cassel (MAC Properties), Veronica Markham (MAC Properties), C.J. Mimee, Kenneth Newman

A quorum being present, Chair Rumsey called the meeting of SSA #61 to order at 11:05 am.

**Approval of the Minutes.** The minutes for the October 2025 meeting were accepted as corrected.

**Questions and Comments from Guests.** No comments were offered from guests in attendance.

**Financials.** Isaac Green, accountant for SSA 61, presented the financial summary through October. No income was reported, as the tax levy is once again late. Program Manager Sawyer reviewed the monthly budget tracker through October, noting that we were basically on target, with some budget modifications needed. He then explained the need to do a more major budget amendment through City Council in 2026 because of the large carryover that will need to be re-allocated for the new program year.

Sawyer also presented the renewal contract for Isaac B. Green & Associates to continue as the SSA auditor for another year. Commission Newsome moved to accept the contract, and Commission Rogel seconded. The contract was unanimously accepted by the Commission.

**Program Committee Report.** Commissioner Rogel, chair of the Program Committee, briefly reviewed current and outstanding projects. Sawyer discussed the proposal to provide an additional 7 trash bins (and service) to Nichols Park along 53rd Street, at a cost of \$34,808, which seemed rather high to the commissioners. Further discussions will be held with the Nichols Park Advisory Committee as the group continues to explore the options.

Sawyer also discussed his efforts to improve and restore the lighting in the 55th Street and 53rd Street viaducts. This is an ongoing effort involving aldermen, Metra, the City, and others.

**Program Manager's Report.** Rod congratulated Commissioner Marks on the very successful Holly Days event held last weekend. It was well attended and the weather cooperated. He hopes the "Holiday Makers Market" sponsored by the Hyde Park Farmers Market will also be a success. It will be held Saturday, 12/20 from 9 to 2 at the Promontory.

Manager Sawyer then discussed this year's Halloween problems on 53rd Street. Despite the best work

of CollaBOOration volunteers, there were still significant problems, including some fighting and vandalism. The commissioners agreed that this is a difficult event to manage, and that Hyde Park hasn't found the right solution so far. Squadrons of police and security didn't work, manning the street with volunteers didn't succeed, music and entertainment events haven't kept the crowds of teenagers under control. All involved need to continue thinking about how to deal with this night for next year.

**Chair Updates.** Chair Rumsey reminded the Commissioners that officer positions will become vacant at the end of 2 years (March 2026). Commissioners are encouraged to take on the roles of Chair, Vice Chair, Secretary, and Treasurer. Any who are interested in a role should notify the chair. The new officers will be elected at the January 2026 meeting, taking their role at the March meeting (the start of the SSA program year).

Rumsey then discussed with the Commissioners the poor level of sidewalk cleaning and snow removal in the business district during the past two weeks. He noted that Nichols Park (Park District), Hotel Sophy/Mesler, Vue53, Citibank (under construction), Pizza Capri and Chant were all negligent in maintaining safe sidewalks. This was a bit surprising, as many of these places are usually very responsible. The suggestion was raised to call 311 and report them, with the result ultimately being fines if the businesses fail to follow their civic duty.

Commissioner Rogel pointed out that the cross-walks at intersections were even worse, with snow being piled into small mountains that are difficult to cross or to shovel. Both Rogel and Rumsey thought that the SSA's contract with Clean Slate (which picks up trash in the footprint) called for them to clear intersections of snow and requested Manager Sawyer to review the contract to see if this was accurate.

Rumsey also pointed out that some Commissioners probably had terms that would expire shortly. Manager Sawyer said there were four—two would be returning as Commissioners, and two current Commissioners would leave, including Commissioner Robinette and Commissioner Thompson. Commissioner Robinette (in attendance) was thanked for his contributions to the SSA.

Manager Sawyer also recognized Silas Ritzema (SECC intern) who is completing his internship and thanked him for his hard work supporting the SSA. Diane Burnham, Executive Director of the South East Chicago Commission, also noted that the SECC has a new board chair, Darrel Newell, and she will invite him to our next meeting.

Burnham also announced that the SECC will be subletting a 3-room office (with parking space) adjacent to their office. Anyone interested can contact Diane for more information.

The next Commissioners' meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, January 27, at 11:00 am. The meeting was adjourned at 12:30 pm, with holiday best wishes to all.

Respectfully submitted,  
George W. Rumsey, Chair