



**Special Service Area #61  
SSA Board of Commissioners Minutes  
Tuesday, March 24, 2026  
Polsky Exchange North – Jackson Park Room**

**Present:** C. Casey, S. Karim, A. Marks, CJ Mimee, C. Newsome, J. Nurss, M. Rogel, G. Rumsey.

**Absent (excused):** L. Brown

**Also Present:** Rod Sawyer (SSA Program Manager), Peter Cassel (MAC Properties), Veronica Markham (MAC), Kenny Newman, Naomi Thompson (SECC), Seyi Kuku (HPCC), Diane Burnham (SECC), Jeffery Tan, Dave White (NPAC), Bennie Currie (CollaBOOration), Ernestine Key (Chief of Staff, 5<sup>th</sup> Ward Aldermanic Office)

Chair Newsome called the meeting of SSA #61 to order at 11:08am with a quorum being present.

**Reading/Approval of the Minutes:**

The minutes for the January 27th meeting were accepted as presented.

**Questions and Comments from Guests: *(limited to 3 minutes due to length of agenda)***

D. White (NPAC) – The 2025 4<sup>th</sup> on 53<sup>rd</sup> celebration was well attended and supported despite the inclement weather. This year in recognition of 250<sup>th</sup> anniversary, the Council would appreciate the support of SSA61 this year. Funding needs are stabilizing and the ask this year is the same as the previous year, in spite of the anticipated increase in expenses. A 2025 report and the flyer for this year's event was shared with the attendees.

B. Currie (CollaBOOration) – This year the holiday is on a Saturday, and the committee has discussed extending the footprint of the experience to include Kimbark/Kenwood streets. Working with civic entities (city, park district, police department, alderman's office, etc) to ensure a safe environment. Support from SSA61 and the business corridors would be appreciated and is essential in having positive experience. K. Newman expressed that extensive monitoring of the area to control the crowd is highly necessary.



P. Cassel (MAC) – Thanked the body for welcoming Ms. Markham as the to be newly appointed commissioner. Inquired if the status of the commissioner’s applications can be shared for transparency. R. Sawyer, PM, SSA61, asked for more clarification on his question/statement as the SSA receives information on the pending applications via email simultaneously as the commissioner applicant does. Currently, there are 8 commissioners, 3 outstanding awaiting approval.

**SSA Financials – Chair Newsome, R. Sawyer, Program Manager**

Financials were accepted presented.

- Budget Tracker
  - 2026 tax collections have not come as of the date of this meeting.
  - Commissioner Rogel questioned the purpose of Category 6.10 (Meetings). Rod stated that category covers expenses related to 1:1 meeting with commissioners, committee members, special event planning, recruitment.
  - Commissioner Rumsey noted that the YTD total wasn’t included in the report and needs to be corrected.
- 2025 Audit – Due to the late tax collection the city audit date will be pushed back, and Rod will provide the new date once he is notified.
- Workplan Modification – SSA61 has anticipated receiving approximately \$134k in additional funding, which has not been worked into the current budget. Monies from late loss will have to be worked into this year’s budget. A motion was presented to approve the modification of the workplan and was moved and seconded by Commissioner Rumsey and Chair Newsome respectively. The vote for the Workplan Modification:

Angie Marks	Yes
Charles Newsome	Yes
Mary Rogel	Yes
James Nurss	Yes
Suni Karim	Yes
George Rumsey	Yes
Christy Casey	Yes



- Due to SECC – Authorized to reimburse the Service Provider \$5885 of the outstanding balance. \$4446 of unresolved expenditures will have to be written off by the Service Provider due to the lack of documentation that accounts for the amount. Commissioner Rumsey suggested taking the funds from the Master Plan category line item.

#### **Program Committee Report – Commissioner Rogel, Chair**

- Master Plan – A RFP will be distributed to hire a consultant to craft the master plan. Committee will review the previous five initiative for the future projects and asked the body to think about what they would like to see done in the area and the projects can by multiyear. The areas to keep top of mind are (1) Viaducts (2) Lake Park Medians (3) Nichols Park (4) Eastend of 55<sup>th</sup> Street and (5) Westend of 53<sup>rd</sup> Street (Kenwood/Kimbark westward).
- Contracts – Two contracts require approval from the body: CEI Media Group, and Cleanslate. Commissioner Marks asked how the social media platforms were monitored by CEI Media Group. They use Google Analytics and other software and provide a monthly report. Rod will provide that information to the Commissioners. Regarding the Cleanslate proposal, Commissioner Rumsey wanted to ensure that the snow removal at the crosswalks is included in the section of other services provided as this was previously discussed. Commissioner Nurss also wanted to know does this include the cleaning of the viaducts and Commissioner Karim stated there was an increase in the cost of services for this contract. Rod stated there is an increase in service of approximately \$90/monthly and Commissioner Casey stated that the services questioned were in full contract as the one provided for your review is a snapshot. A motion was made for the CEI Media Group contract and seconded by Commissioners Casey and Nurss respectively; and motion was made for the Cleanslate contract and seconded by Commissioners Casey and Rumsey respectively. Motion carried. CJ Mimee asked the relationship between SSA61 and CEI Media Group. Diane Burnham, Executive Director, SECC shared the service provider has been working with the company since 2010/2011. Commissioner Marks stated that monitoring content was essential to remain relevant.



- Request for Proposals – Artist Services and Landscape Services
  - Artist Call for Services RFP – For the design and installation of a permanent outdoor mural at 52<sup>nd</sup> and Lake Park Avenue. Questions presented asked what the process for would be selecting an artist? How would the RFP be distributed? The consensus was that the notice would be distributed through social media, websites, and Chicago Public Art Group (CPAG). The proposal is an open application for whomever wants to apply (i.e. not restricted by location of artist). The artist will be asked to submit sample/samples of the proposed rendering. Commissioner Rumsey suggested that the selection process be inclusive for transparency and that the Program Committee needs to meet again to discuss and outline a process. A number of things to consider: (1) will artists be required to include digital content with the application? (2) who will be reviewing the applications, a special committee? Program Committee may consider revisiting the process for the Harold Washington Mural. Also, keep in mind the commissioners have the authority to override the selection of the Program Committee should it be considered appropriate. Per Commissioner Rumsey’s suggestion the RFP votes were tabled until the Program Committee reviews the questions/comments and provides an update.
  - Landscape Services RFP – A motion to accept the proposal as written was made by Commissioner Rogel and seconded by Commissioner Karim, with one abstention, Commissioner Rumsey. Commissioner
  - RFP Schedule – Current projects are in place for Fall/Winter 2026 and will be implemented in Q1 2027. Under the Master Plan, the rodent control and refuse bins are on hold. Commissioner Casey emphasized rodent control needs to top of mind.

#### **SSA Program Manager Report – R. Sawyer**

- Financial Interest Statements for Commissioners – Program Manager will provide more information regarding the ECTD training per the directive of the City. To Rod’s knowledge, most have received their information via email and let commissioners know that the forms/trainings are to be completed no later than May 1<sup>st</sup>.



**Chairman Updates – C. Newsome**

Appreciates all the support he has received in his new role for SSA61 and looks forward to the reward of the hard work from this body.

Local news – Commissioner Karim inquired as to why Hyde Park Produce was closed and if that is it permanent. Commissioner Marks shared the business is dealing with State of Illinois issues and once resolved things can move forward. Chairman Newsome visited Midwest Express which is now open and asked those present to stop by for a visit and say hello/welcome to the community. Dr. CJ Mimee expressed that she has utilized their services and the business is great!

The next Commissioners' meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, April 28, at 11:00 am. The meeting was adjourned at 12:33pm

Respectfully submitted,  
Raymonde Vance, Admin