Special Service Area #61
SSA Board of Commissioners Minutes
Tuesday, September 22, 2026
Polsky Exchange North – Jackson Park Room

Present: S. Karim, A Marks, V. Markham, CJ Mimee, C. Newsome (Chair), J. Nurss, M. Rogel, G. Rumsey, E. Valdez

Absent: C. Casey

Also Present: Rod Sawyer (SSA Program Manager), Diane Burnham (SECC Executive Director), Seyi KuKu, Ryan Greenlaw

NOTE: *A last-minute meeting room change was made to host the meeting in the Washington Park Room at Polsky Exchange North by the facility.*

Meeting called to Order: Chair Newsome called the meeting of SSA #61 to order at 11:05am with a quorum being present.

Reading/Approval of the Minutes:
The minutes for the July 7th, 2026, meeting were approved with the necessary corrections.

Questions and Comments from the Guests:
Attendees heard from Ryan Greenlaw, Aldermanic candidate for the 5th Ward.
NOTE*: Mr. Greenlaw was permitted to speak beyond the comment period in his capacity as a former SSA/Business Improvement District (BID) Liaison from Chicago's Department of Planning and Development.*

Finance Report – Rod Sawyer
The following financial materials were listed for review:

- **August SSA #61 2026 P&L Report Summary** – due to SECC is on track; nothing past due.
- **August SSA #61 2026 Budget Tracker Report** – 2nd tax installments are forthcoming. $309k should have been collected; however, SSA61 has only been disbursed at approximately $143k and is currently working with a deficit of $88k. Line of Credit (LOC) [*note: money in the SSA bank account not allocated to any budget]* - Commissioner Rogel questioned considering this and is any interest owed. Rod informed her no because we are essentially borrowing from ourselves. [*note: The issue is that loans from restricted funds must pay interest at the market rate – even though we are borrowing from ourselves*]. Commissioner Mimee asked [are] the funds expected to be received prior to

the closing of the calendar year? Is this normal for the disbursement of funds? And should we anticipate receiving or spending $166k? What is the carryover amount? 25%? Response – The LOC [*note: money in the SSA bank account not allocated to any budget]* was for 2025. We didn't receive all the 2025 funds until 2026. If we carry over more than 25%, it sends a message that taxpayers are being overcharged. Commissioner Rumsey asked should we anticipate receiving only the percentage of funds we received for the 1st installment? Response (Rod) – not sure but we spend only what we have on hand, not what we anticipate we will receive.

- **SSA #61 2026 Workplan Budget** – TIF is currently in effect, which goes against state statues since TIF's are for 23 years maximum. SSA61 should have a better idea of what it will receive for the remainder of the year by October 1st. Chair Newsome question Rod as to whether the proper authorities are communicating with him (Rod) regarding the matter. Rod follows up on his own as there are various levels of governing bodies involved. Commissioner Mimee wanted to know if there are any outstanding contracts for 2026. Rod informed them there are 5 to 7 contracts outstanding, and they do not include snow removal. However, there are funds in other categories that can be shifted into that line item. Ryan Greenlaw asked can the LOC be used if need be. Rod stated it could, however SSA61 doesn't anticipate asking the service provider to tap into it because as previously stated, SSA 61 doesn't spend what it doesn't have.

  Commissioner Rogel asked for an update on the new accountant and was informed that the Service Provider will be retaining the services of the current accountant.

Program Committee Report - Commissioner Rogel Chair

- Lake Park Metra Mural Wall – Final stages of working on the contract language. Slowing down the process due to seasonal timing. The vendor will be paid for their design work and then complete the contracting process.
- Sponsorships and the 55th Street Block Party – SSA61 will support the event with a $500 sponsorship. The event takes place on Saturday, September 27th, 11am-8pm, on Cornell Avenue between 55th and 56th streets. SSA61 and SECC provide technical advisement to ensure the event doesn't grow outside the footprint.
- CollaBOOration Event – The committee has been planning all year. For 2026, Halloween falls on Saturday, and the plan is to have as many eyes on the street as possible and keep the business corridors safe as they are the financial hub of the community.

SSA #61 Program Manager's Report – Rod Sawyer

- **2027 Workplan Status**

All documents have been submitted, and the ordinance will be up for City Council vote in September or October.

- **HPFM 2026 Summer Finale**

The last day for the 2026 Summer season is Sunday, September 27th. There are two (2) markets planned for the fall/winter season – November 21st and December 12th. Due to the change in the use of the usual space, we will be touring an alternate location, former Ulta Beauty, on 52nd & Lake Park Avenue. We would like to take this opportunity to thank the University of Chicago for the use of the former Promontory location and for their continued support/mission of the Hyde Park Farmers Market (HPFM) and Special Service Area 61.

IDA 2027 Report

The conference provided an opportunity to engage with other agencies throughout the continental U.S. and abroad and to exchange ideas and solutions.

- Citibins / Nichols Park - Trash receptacles – To address the continuous overflow of trash within the business corridor, utilizing specialized trash bins during a 6-week pilot and an assessment can be done on the effectiveness.
- Light Pole Wrapping – Paint and heat-resistant decorative wrapping of the street poles. Graffiti can be washed off, and the wrapping is not permanent. Tape will not adhere to the wrapping and regarding cost it is cheaper to clean than to replace. Challenges are (1) the company is located out of the country (Canada); (2) the RFP process may be difficult.

55th Street Block Party

Sponsorship of $500 for the 2026 Block Party, scheduled for 11:00 a.m.–1:00 p.m. near Cornell Avenue and 55th Street. Coordination with SSA/SECC and event footprint/logistics.

HPKCC Fall Used Book Sale

The Fall Used Book Sale in Kimbark Plaza is on the weekend of October 10th and 11th and we encourage everyone to stop by and donate books if you have any. Donations are received at Hyde Park Bank, lower lobby area and the last day to donate is October 3rd.

As a body, we're doing the work. Thank you all and continue this path forward.

Commissioner Karim asked the body if they were updated/informed on the current safe housing initiatives by the city. Another group has a similar initiative; however, it isn't as financially taxing on landlords. It is referred to as the Protective Renters Ordinance.

Commissioner Rumsey shared Hyde Park Garden Fair attendees provided positive feedback on the Lake Park plantings. Chair Newsome stated it shows the SSA dollars are working. Rod commented that the two initiatives are coming to fruition.

Additional Guest comment: Ryan Greenlaw stated in response to the budget discussion that he believes the TIF wasn't extended and SSA should be made whole, he would be donating books for the book sale and will take a closer look at the Lake Park plantings.

The motion to adjourn the meeting was moved and seconded by Commissioners Marks and Rogel. Chair Newsome adjourned the meeting at 11:56am.

The next Commissioners' meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, October 27th, at 11:00am.

Submitted by
Raymonde Vance, Admin SSA 61