

SSA Commission Meeting/ Special Service Area #60
Wednesday, March 11, 2015
5:30 p.m.
North River Commission Office
3403 W. Lawrence Ave Ste. 201
Chicago, IL 60625

SSA Commission Meeting Minutes

Attendance:

SSA Commissioners Present:

Andrew Levin (chair), Stephanie Fishel (vice chair), Jim Karagianes (treasurer), Angela Bowman (secretary), Saima Causevic, David Maletin, Frank Kern, John Tunnell, Mir Nagavi

North River Commission Staff Present:

Thomas Applegate (Exec Director), Duka Dabovic (SSA manager)

Other Attendees:

Carol Maher (resident), Ryan Cowden (33rd Ward), Tom Guagliardo (TRIP, Tano's Pizzeria), Erik Grossnickle (arborist, Bartlett Tree Experts)

Call to Order:

The meeting was called to order at 5:30

Item: Minutes

Jimmy moves to approve minutes; David seconds. All voted in favor.

Item: Financials

Frank moves to approve financials; Saima seconds. All voted in favor.

Item: Old Business

a. Security Contract

At last meeting we moved forward with Reliance. Before us now is the question of whether to have them armed and unarmed. Ald. Mell and the head of the local CAPS group both feel that the security should be unarmed. Andrew is also in favor of unarmed; he would hate to see something happen like what we have seen in Ferguson and similar situations.

Latest proposal from Reliance is to increase the number of officers (and have some in cars) from the original bid, the cost of which (\$98,208) is higher than the original (around \$78,000, for all foot patrols) . Question is whether to go with the proposal or to reduce the number of officers. Duka shows a map with proposal.

Stephanie asks whether we pay monthly? In other words, we could go with one number of officers at the start and change as we see fit.

For the sake of cutting the cost, Jimmy proposes removing one car from the proposal. Andrew proposes removing two cars from the proposal.

Jimmy moves to remove one car from the proposal, leaving us with three cars, one of which is driven by a supervisor. Beats 1 and 2 get one car; Beats 3 and 4 get another car; the supervisor car covers the entire area. Mir seconds the motion. All voted in favor of the motion.

Duka will get the revised estimate.

Angela moves that the officers be unarmed. Jimmy seconds. All voted in favor.

b. Facade Program Update

Duka has a brief update: so far we have received three applications. He is expecting a few more. He did have an inquiry from someone who can't participate in the program right now, but would like to use the program to improve the side of a building as opposed to the facade, since the side of the building is visible from the street.

The application deadline is March 27.

Item: New Business

a. SSA Tree Maintenance Program

Because of the extra money in our budget, Duka has suggested we spend some money maintaining trees in the parkways. Other SSAs do this; it is a more long-term project than litter abatement. You'll be able to see the effects for years to come.

Erik Grossnickle speaks: First thing is to do an inventory of the trees in the SSA, collecting 24 attributes of each tree, do some data crunching about how to achieve your goals. U of Wisconsin has some great research about the effects of trees on economic corridors.

His background: commercial arborist, handles 5 states for Bartlett. Has created management plans for Wicker Park/Bucktown, West Town, and Lakeview SSAs.

Main goal is to increase canopy coverage. Also eliminating trees that might be hazardous. Looks at other planning opportunities, such as disease and succession plan.

Service has three components:

- Inventory
- Tree pruning and removal, replacement
- Pest and soil management

Usually he will design a three-to-five year plan.

Angela's questions:

- What happens if we do nothing?

Erik says: we lose trees, they start to look worse. "Infrastructure Interaction" is the biggest problem (trees touching wires). You'll have an urban canopy that's there. Average life expectancy for urban trees in 3x3 area is 7 years.

- What are the biggest challenges that you expect to encounter?

Erik says: Tree loss, unsightliness. You can really tell the difference between a healthy tree-lined street and an unhealthy one.

First thing is collect the data: which ones are worth investing in? Which ones are at risk of failure?

Until you have the inventory data, he can't provide a cost estimate. He would have to spend some time walking the SSA.

Stephanie asks: how long have you worked with Wicker Park? Erik says: 2010.

Stephanie follows up: why did they decide to do this? They had a maintenance contract (with Christy Webber), but it didn't cover the trees.

The inventory would be its own contract. Andrew asks: once we pay for the inventory, can we then hire anyone we want to do the actual work on the trees? Erik says: yes. Basically, this information will allow us to put together an RFP.

It is a multi-step, multi-contract process.

Andrew wonders about the cost?

Erik gives example: Wicker Park has approx 1800 trees; they spend ~\$50,000/year to maintain them (approx 15 days of pruning). Their inventory cost around \$10k. Number of trees is the biggest factor in the cost, of course. He will discount the cost of the inventory.

Stephanie asks Thomas: is there grant money available for tree care? He says that NRC has been looking into this. Openlands tends to be taking up a lot of grant money, which they then put back out into the community. But they are overwhelmed. We are going to be seeing more deforestation as the ash borer infestation progresses. He says that they've been looking at money for residential areas; not sure if that money can be applied to commercial districts.

Erik: suggests conducting an inventory between spring and late summer. That gives us a few months to digest the information and then come up with a plan for any actual work. This is something that doesn't happen overnight.

Angela moves that Duka explore the process of conducting a tree inventory; Frank seconds. All voted in favor.

Duka plans to get an RFP together by April 8 meeting.

b. Permitting Ordinance Support Letter

Ald. Joe Moreno is sponsoring an ordinance that says that SSAs don't have to pay public way access permitting fees (for installing garbage cans, for example). This would mean there is a bundled permit for each SSA.

West Town SSA approached Duka asking for our support for this ordinance. This would be a letter of support from NRC.

Jimmy moves that NRC should write such a letter. Mir seconds. All in favor except Frank, who abstains.

Public Input

Carol speaks: At the last meeting she wondered if there was a way for the SSA to notify the community whether the snow shoveling is going to happen with a given snowfall (i.e. have we reached the 2"). It could be as simple as posting on a FB page. Duka says yes, he will post this on the NRC Facebook page/Twitter feed.

Adjournment:

Andrew adjourned the meeting at 7:03 p.m.