

## SSA Meeting Minutes: February 12, 2020

### ATTENDEES

**SSA Commissioners Present:** Mark Aistrope, David Maletin, Saima Causevic, Kareeshma Ali, Stephanie Fishel (phone)

**Staff Present:** Thomas Applegate, Alexa Schutz, Dalia Aragon, Carson Poole, Matt (intern)

**SSA Commissioners Absent:** Andrew Levin

**Guests/Public:** Carol Maher (resident), John Campos (Community Organizer for 17th District Police)

Meeting called to order at 5:32 pm by Chair, Mark Aistrope. **Quorum is achieved.**

**Approval of Minutes:** 1st Causevic, 2nd Maletin; all in favor, approved.

**Approval of Financials for December 2019 and January 2020:**

1st Maletin, 2nd Ali ; all in favor, approved.

Review and discussion of financials. We believe that the close out carryover for 2019 is \$22,000 with the adjustments made; auditor will provide a firm number next month.

Schutz reminded the group that income for the SSA comes from the tax levy, and we did not receive any levy income for the month January, which is typical based on past years for our SSA. Applegate explained that we have not made adjustments to the P & L for January, but we are on target to what was discussed back in September for carryover (although on the lower end). Cash flow wise however, financials show this is not enough money to carry us through the first months of the year. Aistrope asked how much cash is in the bank and Schutz explained that we have around \$5,000 as of today after accounting for expenses for January and future bills in February. Applegate explained that we are current on all bills, but, if need be, NRC has a line of credit we could use to fund SSA functions, should levy not come in for the upcoming months, since SSA's can't hold lines of credit. Causevic mentioned that there is a long list of unpaid property taxes for 2019 in the community (in and out of the SSA) and unsure if the SSA will receive the levy income after unpaid taxes are sold.

Ali asked why this funding problem did not happen before and Applegate clarified that while we see taxes increasing, our collection and revenue is not increasing. We must view our ideal carryover amount as an "expense" to be built into the annual budget; however, the challenge is that SSAs are expected to spend all the funds yet also set aside money for the first few months of the year.

**Our Great Rivers Grant:** NRC staff Carson Poole discussed the Our Great Rivers grant being funded through Chicago Community Trust and made a request for an official letter of support from the SSA and Commissioners. NRC is seeking grant funding through this opportunity and NRC plans to focus on a series of sites on Lawrence Avenue



and the North Branch of the Chicago River.

The project will begin with a collaborative planning process for the river-adjacent sites to envision them as a new “gateway” to

Albany Park, with programs on site that will activate and enliven the immediate area, and create positive economic benefits throughout the Lawrence Avenue commercial corridor and Albany Park community area. Other grant partners include Ronan Park/CPD, Global Garden Refugee Training Farm which is operated on City of Chicago-owned property, and Meeting Tomorrow. Discussion resulted in general support of this grant from Commissioners.

**2020 Meeting Dates:** group reviewed the proposed dates listed on the agenda.

**2019 Annual Report:** Schutz asked for feedback on the color and finish of the report to submit the final edits to LimeRed. It was clarified that the report goes out to all our pin-holders and business tenants.

#### **Facade Improvement Program: application update**

In order to better spread the facade funds around to more projects, create more competitive applications, and increase visual impact, staff are proposing to change the max refund to be \$15,000 for 2 or more storefronts (and retain \$7,500 max for 1 storefront). Currently the program states the rebate maximum is \$20k for 3 or more storefronts which we don't get many of these applications anyways. Staff also recommend that applicants seeking to do tuckpointing or cleaning of terracotta be required to do something additional that makes an impact to the public way aesthetics. Several Commissioners feel improvements are subjective, so it should be project-based and highly encouraged (not mandated) and that doing more than just tuckpointing would make it more competitive and have a higher impact. Staff echoed that the Facade Review Committee has also felt that projects only with tuckpointing have a lower impact on something that is typically maintenance. Staff will make facade application adjustments effective March 1, 2020.

**Motion to change the facade application rebate maximum for 2 or more storefronts to \$15,000 effective March 1, 2020:** 1st Maletin, 2nd Aistrope; all in favor, approved

#### **SSA Expansion**

It was discussed that there is a fair amount of ground work and research left to be done before moving forward with an SSA expansion. We want to get people from the other sections of the expanded SSA to the table. Staff were advised by DPD to apply early in order to avoid any challenges that come with expanding and reconstituting a SSA, and using two years to get the required signatures/support if need be. Otherwise, if the community won't support it, we can withdraw the expansion application and simply reconstitute for our existing SSA (including some small expansion on Irving Park, if need). Maletin asked who would make the final decision on SSA expansion/reconstitution? Applegate explained that there would be internal vote or veto but also input from aldermen and constituents. We need support from PIN holders to make this go! SSA



**Albany Park & Irving Park  
SSA #60**

**Albany Park & Irving Park  
Special Service Area (SSA) #60**

Commissioner Meeting

Wednesday, February 12, 2020

North River Commission, 3403 W. Lawrence

Commissioners play a role in these upcoming decisions but NRC leadership would also have to agree considering NRC is the direct service provider.



## **2020 Budget Analysis**

Applegate explained that we have been analyzing and discussing this financial challenge and are still in a corrective process and making adjustments. Staff provided a document outlining our financial position and projected cuts to follow along; seeking input on cuts.

- Less levy collection means less revenue: modeling \$30,000 in decrease levy collection for 2020 which was last year's amount; this is something we can't control but we can anticipate and make cuts to address it now.
- Budgeted carryover is too large: the larger the carryover, the less program delivery. We have been trimming down our carryover over the years in order to use these funds for programs/services, but less carryover from 2019 still impacts 2020. The budgeted carryover for 2020 was \$69k and we anticipate a \$22k carryover (until our auditor gives us the final number). Thus, we have \$47,000 less for 2020 to spend.
- Legislation plays a role in this problem because we are required to spend all the money in a budget but are also expected to have enough money for cash flow at the beginning of the year which is not stated in the budget. Overall that means we had \$114,000 to cut in our budget which affects our program delivery.
- Applegate explained that we are currently earmarking \$37k for this year's carryover into 2021 thus we can't spend that. We should view it as an "expense" to then be able to use these funds at the beginning of 2021 for expenses especially Q1 bills.
- Schutz directed the group to the cut column specifically our most popular yet expensive programs. It was discussed that these cuts are painful but necessary to meet our target for this year's budget. We will not vote on these cuts today.
  - trash removal services: we are proposing to do 5 days a week in the summer versus the 7 days we are used to. Coordinating with Streets and Sanitation so that they cover the SSA on Monday and Wednesday while our contractor will continue to cover Tuesday, Thursday, Friday, and Saturday. By not double dipping with the city and our contractor, it still allows for trash removal but not the sidewalk services.
  - snow contract: currently, we have had our trigger point set for 1" and are recommending changing that trigger point to 2". Fishel feels we do snow removal at 1" or not at all.

## **Public Input:**

- John Campos, community organizer for 17th district police department, introduced himself and spoke about available resources that can positively impact the business district. He is available to do training, provide safety tips from community policing office
- Maher discussed that she is aware that there is a big push for ADUs and would like to know if it is possible to activate some of the mixed use buildings to accommodate affordable housing. Is there an opportunity to move in this direction? Applegate explained that we are looking at lowering some of the transaction cost for the zoning change & buildout for ADUs and move in the direction of continuing to make the best use of already existing space which would include mixed used building spaces.