

SSA Meeting Minutes: July 8, 2020

ATTENDEES

SSA Commissioners present: Saima Causevic, Mark Aistrope, Kareeshma Ali, Stephanie Fishel, David Maletin

Staff present: Alexa Schutz, Thomas Applegate, Dalia Aragon

SSA Commissioners absent: Andrew Levin, Daniella Cornue

Guest: None

Meeting called to order at 5:45 pm by Chair, Mark Aistrope.

Approval of minutes: 1st Maletin, 2nd Causevic; all in favor with no absentions

Approval of financials: 1st Aistrope, 2nd Ali; all in favor with no abstentions

Schutz advised that due to NRC receiving PPP funds, this month's invoice to NRC will be delayed. Schutz reminded everyone that our carryover deficit from the previous year is carrying over our financials. However, we are in good standing, closely monitoring expenses and income, anticipating a decrease in budgeted levy for the second property tax bill (now due October 1), but still on budget with a lean spending to account for the impacts of the pandemic and targeted carryover into next year.

2021 SSA Final Budget (due July 15)

Schutz informed the group that the only change to the proposed budget from last month is adding in the 2019 EAV for the 2021 budget, which only affected the estimated tax rate required to generate the requested levy amount. Our estimated tax rate for 2021 is 0.3696%. Carryover remains at \$40,000 and staff feel comfortable with this amount (which we are targeting in this current year) due to the modifications to our larger contracts, especially snow removal, thus no large payments at the beginning of the year like the past. The EAV only went up by \$750,000 which is the lowest increase we have seen compared to the last 4 previous years.

Motion to approve SSA 2021 final budget submission due mid-July:

1st by Maletin, 2nd Fishel; all in favor with no abstentions

Motion to approve SSA60 services as presented in the workplan for 2021 and North River Commission as the Service Provider for SSA 60 for 2021:

1st by Fishel, 2nd Ali; all in favor with no abstention

Updates:

- (a) **Emergency Rebates** - Aragon informed the group that applications for the Emergency Board Up Grant have closed, and staff is in process of issuing checks. So far there are 13 businesses that applied; staff estimate around \$12k in emergency rebates. As a reminder, this grant will cover labor and materials up to \$1,000 to any business/property located in the SSA who applied. Staff have directly reached out to businesses who boarded up to encourage them to apply. Reimbursement funds will come from facade and/or security camera line item(s) due to a decrease in interest in these programs from the pandemic.



- (b) **Public Art** - Schutz shared that Honore Storage has “gifted” the SSA their eastern wall for a public mural. Staff are looking for SSA and non-SSA funding opportunities to fund the large, elevated mural but it will be completed in the months ahead with a community input process. Moving forward, the community art process will be led by NRC staff member Carson Poole and we encourage 1 commissioner to sit on this NRC public art committee. Carson also communicated with someone today who is interested in donating a mural so we have provided various locations in and out of the SSA as possible locations.
- (c) **Expanded Outdoor Dining (EOD)** - The City created this program in early June to help support businesses in providing more and safe outdoor dining options during the pandemic. Staff propose a temporary shutdown on a small residential street for only Friday - Sunday, 4pm - 10pm for a shared public dining area starting with a one month pilot with the possibility of extending it, if successful and desired. We would repurposed SSA special event funds to support this initiative. Staff worked with CDOT for their initial traffic review and have contacted vendors for pricing feasibility. Two proposed locations are off Kedzie (in an attempt to not shut down a main street) on Leland from Kedzie to the alley, and on Eastwood from the curbcut of the stripmall to the alley. Unfortunately, CDOT’s team examined the traffic flow and informed us that these routes are important eastbound and westbound alternatives to Lawrence for the surrounding residents. Staff are still looking to pursue parking lots in the district to create a shared dining experience, working with businesses along Kedzie for sidewalk dining as part of EOD, and supporting businesses who seek to apply for Expanded Outdoor Dining or Sidewalk Patio Cafes on their own, all of which to increase the quantity of outdoor options and drive customers back to businesses; assistance included to Kale My Name, Angelo’s, Pisco Chicago, etc. We also continue to do outreach to businesses to take advantage of our Sidewalk Cafe Permit Rebate program. The city has decreased the patio fee by 75%.
- (d) **COVID Business/City Updates** - Schutz reminded the group that staff are always on calls, webinars, and communication with BACP, DPD, and the city. We did outreach to promote Illinois’ Business Interruption Grants and know some of our businesses applied. We are also pursuing the opportunity for sidewalk sale shopping, which the city has shut down for the moment, but we will continue to look for creative ways to support all our small businesses.

Public Input

Applegate informed the group that there are a few development proposals in the district, primarily in the 33rd Ward. Commissioners are interested in seeing proposals which staff will share ([listed here](#)); group discussed current and past development proposals. Causevic shared that L&L at 3240 W Lawrence will not be reopening and the building is/should be up for sale.

Meeting concluded at 6:31 pm.

Next meeting is Wednesday, September 9th via Zoom at 5:30pm. There is no August meeting.