



SSA #18 COMMISSION MINUTES – July 14, 2021

Video Conference

1. Call to Order & Roll Call

Commissioner Jim Ludwig called the meeting to order at 9:13 am and the following Commissioners were in attendance: Commissioner Jim Ludwig, Elizabeth Fuld, Kearby Kaiser, Mike Raffety, and Cindy Rudman.

The following were not in attendance: Dave Gassman and Tim Klump

From the Northalsted Business Alliance: President Ramesh Ariyanayakam, Treasurer and Acting Executive Director Lake Alen, Business Development Coordinator and SSA Program Manager Robert Morvay.

No members from the public were in attendance.

Pursuant to City of Chicago Open Meeting Act participation in today's meeting is conducted both in person or via videoconference.

2. Approval of Meeting Minutes

MOTION by Kearby Kaiser to approve the April 14th and 21st, 2021 meeting minutes
SECOND by Mike Raffety
MOTION CARRIED.

3. Public Comment Period

- a. No public comment.

4. Commission Update

- a. Lake gives an update on the Q2 Report
 - i. The Q2 Report is being compiled by Lake and Robert for its due date at the end of the month.

- b. Lake gives an update on the 2021 Budget Status
 - i. We have received 53% of our money from the city thus far.
 - ii. For Customer Attraction, expenses have been minimal through 2021 thus far due to the lack of events coming out of Covid, and the new Northalsted banners have been the only real SSA expense there.
 - iii. For Public Way and Aesthetics, there was an unexpected amount of necessity for heavy snow removal in early 2021, so unused funds will need to be moved into Snow Removal. Otherwise, this is on track for expectations.
 - iv. For SSA Management, the audit was an additional \$100 than expected. Remaining expectations are on budget.
 - v. Personnel is on budget.
 - vi. Overall, expenses have been 22% of the annual budget just over fifty percent into the year. SSA #18 has \$144,921 in the bank account.
 - vii. Bank of America Audit
 - 1. Joy has managed to recoup all but around \$1,000 of what was expected from the city
 - 2. Fraud Investigation has been reopened with Bank of America, and there should be a decision on the \$19,000.06 that is owed to us in mid-August.
 - 3. Lake has a scheduled conversation with Bank of America soon.
 - 4. Kearby mentions that we should reach out to the news due to his perception of Bank of America's taking of taxpayer money if they don't repay what is owed. Mike argues that Bank of America is not pocketing the money as the check was cashed to someone in Atlanta, but agrees we should reach out to the news, the attorney general, or state banking association if things don't go as they should.
 - 5. Lake mentions we will be taking further action if they come back saying the checks aren't fraudulent.
 - viii. Jim asks for a reminder of how much we can put into carryover and if we're in a special one-off period for carryover, Lake replies 25% (\$124,000) of the budget is allowed for carryover.
 - ix. Lake mentions that he and Robert are going to be meeting both Aldermans Tunney and Cappleman regarding the 2022 budget by the end of the month.
 - 1. Tunney does want the SSA to leave it open for amendments.
- c. Future Meetings
 - i. Lake inquires about future meetings.
 - 1. After today's meeting, we have October 13th and December 8th meetings. Lake asks if there is any desire to have any more meetings.
 - 2. Kearby does want to have more meetings if we have more to deal with, and we should talk about that at the end of the meeting. Lake agrees.
 - 3. Ramesh says that if we have more rebates, we should set up more meetings to cover those.
 - 4. Ramesh recommends August 18th for the next meeting at 9 am at David Gassman's building. All agree.

d. Contractors

i. Robert shares updates on SSA #18 Contractors

1. Litter/Trash Collection - Brightview was initially having some issue with staffing and a change in leadership that lead to lapses in trash collection and cleanup, Robert met with and worked with their SSA #18 contract manager, Robert Bradley, multiple times to manage expectations and things have improved. They have updated their crews to a new schedule with two-man crews Monday-Friday 5:30-9:30 a.m. and Saturday-Sunday 6 a.m.-10a.m. clean up; additionally, four-man crews are on standby if there's additional work needed for any particularly rough nights. Overall, Robert's experience with Brightview has been very positive. We've had additional issues with the plants in the planters due to the centerpiece being Birds of Paradise, which require consistent hot temperatures which we've not received, so they've not bloomed quite yet despite lots of effort from Brightview.
2. Power Washing - Pressure Washing Systems has also experienced labor issues, so currently they haven't been able to get to the street for a full cleaning and won't be able to until around July 20th when they are also cleaning Lakeview East. They did manage to get teams over in the first week of July to at least clean the rainbow crosswalks which had received complaints from the alderman.
3. Pylon Lighting - Our old contractor, Acorn Electric has retired, so we're now working with a new contractor, Horizon Electric, who have done a check-in to the Pylons lighting system. They were unsatisfied with the lighting strength and interior set-up of the pylons, so they ran a few tests putting in stronger LED lighting into the pylon located at 3418 N Halsted, and the positive difference is remarkable. Lake and Robert are currently waiting on a quote to redo the lighting in the remainder of the pylons with new LED lighting systems.

e. Commissioners Appointments

- i. Robert has reached out to Oneida to do an audit on how many commissioner slots we have available as well as terms. He is still waiting on a response.
- ii. Lake mentions that Allan from The Men's Room and Colton from Raffety's building are interested in filling in unoccupied spaces, and Lake is looking into getting them applied.
- iii. Lake asks if Cindy still has a physical location on the street, and she does not anymore as her landlord sold her building. Robert has reached out to Oneida to see the procedure for what the resignation process entails. Lake mentions that the SSA Commission treasures her and her perspective as a mother, but Cindy understands the rules and is prepared to retire from SSA #18 when required.

5. Northalsted Update

- a. Ramesh gives updates on Northalsted's Festivals
 - i. There are 23 days left until Market Days, and Northalsted is going into weekly festival meetings every Wednesday until then.
 - ii. The street will be closed Friday, August 6th for setup, and then 5 p.m.-10 p.m. will be the festival. Saturday and Sunday will be 11 a.m.-10 p.m.
 - iii. Ramesh predicts a good income from Market days baked on sponsors..
 - iv. Pride Fest had to give up Sunday, October 3rd due to the unexpected scheduling of the Pride Parade. Pride Fest will run 5 p.m.-10 p.m. Friday, October 1st and 11-10pm Saturday, October 2nd
 1. Pride Fest requires more vendors.
- b. Ramesh gives updates on the new Howard Brown Building project
 - i. Northalsted met with the chief contractors of the new Howard Brown project where they showed off the new design. Ramesh thinks the design is looking great.
 - ii. There will be a meeting where Howard Brown will discuss logistics with the SSA Commission and Northalsted Board on July 22nd.
 - iii. Teardown on the block will begin after Market Days, per Ramesh's request.
 - iv. The project will take 16-20 months to complete.
 - v. Kearby wants retail space downstairs at the lot as was initially promised and mentions that we should address that the SSA wants that part of the street active with the alderman immediately, all agree.
 1. Ramesh replies that Northalsted has expressed this concern with Howard Brown asking that there be entrances to retail spaces on the Halsted side instead of having to enter through Howard Brown's main entrance, and Howard Brown is going to come back with updated designs to reflect this. Currently, there are plans for a Howard Brown Pharmacy space within the building as retail, and not a Walgreens as most Howard Brown locations have.
 2. Kearby requests that Ramesh ask Howard Brown to create two 150-sq ft spaces on the Halsted street to house businesses such as Noteworthy Notes or new businesses by minority-owned business owners. Ramesh agrees and says he has voiced those concerns, and Howard Brown will get back to us soon.
 3. Kearby recommends telling Cappleman that we will retract our support if Howard Brown does not have neighborhood-friendly retail.
 - vi. Kearby asks if there's anything physically historic that would be important to keep.
 1. Ramesh believes there's nothing historical to keep still within that area. Jim mentions that contractors have been taking out anything of value.
 2. Jim mentions wanting to cut out the Little Jim's Name from the awning to see if Gerber Heart wants it, Ramesh says he'll look into it.
 - vii. The affected Pylon, planters, and pylons will be taken away, stored, and restored by Howard Brown at their expense.

- c. Ramesh and Lake provide a Security Contractor update
 - i. Northalsted has sent out RFPs to help manage crime on the street. AGB Investigative Services has piqued our interest after recommendation due to their work at Sidetrack and in Oldtown, and is a black owned company which is a benefit to diversity in our contractors. Ramesh and Lake are impressed by their professionalism.
 - 1. Their training and equipment are top notch, which offsets some of their high cost which initially had bothered Lake on a financial level.
 - 2. All employees at AGB are W2 employees.
 - 3. Lake mentions that Northalsted's security committee is going to meet with them very soon, and will have additional updates after the next Northalsted Board Meeting.
 - ii. The CPD do not want Northalsted to hire security for various reasons discussed in the past, and Ramesh thinks this is something to keep in mind.
 - iii. Kearby asks Mike for his opinion on the necessity of Security, as someone who lives on the street. Mike finds security to have been a necessity prior to COVID and sees it being so now. He wants to see them in place, and wishes the city would own that issue themselves.
 - iv. Partying in the street on Pride Sunday required the police to shut down the street from 12-2, and they still lost control of it despite heavy police presence.
 - 1. The common place where control is lost is South of Roscoe.
 - v. Kearby asks if the SSA has any money budgeted towards Security, and Lake tells him that they do not and have not financially supported Northalsted Business Alliance's security budget for several years.

6. SSA Budget Updates

- a. Lake presents the 2022 Budget Workplan Draft created by Robert and himself.
 - i. Customer Attraction:
 - 1. Budget has been upped in Social Media Management for ads and rebates
 - a. Kearby recommends instead of rebates, paying SSA's Social Media Marketing Consultant to hold social media education training sessions for businesses on the street. Ramesh and Lake think this is a good idea, and the description will be changed in the budget.
 - 2. Major increase to Holiday Decorations to make Northalsted a must-go Halloween experience. Kearby thinks this is a great idea.

- ii. Public Way Aesthetics
 - 1. No major changes, some slight reductions in streetscape elements due to that line item often being carried over year to year.

Mike Raffety Leaves the Call

- 2. Power Washing has been reduced anticipating labor shortages and to increase the Holiday Decor budget.
- iii. Economic/Business Development
 - 1. Site Marketing is increased from \$2,000 to \$5,000 to enhance Howard Brown Construction.
 - a. Kearby thinks the money should remain to help other businesses, but recommends pushing Howard Brown to pay those costs. Lake agrees, and will work with Howard Brown to beautify the area.
- iv. SSA Management
 - 1. Lake mentions that Cindy previously had brought up a discrepancy in the cost of utilities being lower than they should, and Lake explains that he used the 2020 utilities actuals as a reference point; this a mistake considering that no one was working in the office for a majority of 2020 due to the pandemic, so there was ultimately less money spent that year. Lake has adjusted the budget to account for this.
 - 2. Office Rent is expected to go up a little bit.
 - 3. Bookkeeping was decreased due to renegotiations with our bookkeeper.
 - 4. Cindy asks why NBA and SSA personnel costs are more split.
 - a. Lake replies that there was a lot more interaction with non-member businesses last year, which Lake thinks was a rousing success; Robert has been instructed to put equal time into NBA and SSA businesses going forward, functioning similarly to Lakeview East where the average person wouldn't know who was and wasn't a part of their membership.
 - 5. Cindy asks why storage costs have increased considering we now have an additional office space for storage.
 - a. One office is billed as an office rent, and the other is billed as storage. There is no more off-site storage held with LifeStorage.

- v. Other Comments
 - 1. Kearby recommends putting additional money into DEI training for membership and SSA.
 - a. Ramesh mentions that Northalsted and its new DEI Committee lead by Robin Gay-Stafford and Brad Balof have been doing that successfully with Caren Young from The Professional Adult, with multiple trainings, one for the board Q1, hospitality managers in Q2, bar staff in Q3, and more plans are forthcoming.
 - i. These trainings are on privilege and how to be aware of them, and Ramesh and Lake have found them positive and effective.
 - ii. Kearby was unaware of this, and wants to put more SSA money in to support those plans.
 - b. There is a meeting for next steps for the DEI Committee going on the week following this meeting.
 - c. Ramesh would gladly accept Kearby's offer to help financially in these training sessions. Kearby agrees to add \$2,000 to the line item.
 - 2. Kearby recommends putting additional money into Mental Health Awareness seminars.
 - a. Ramesh mentions that our Health & Wellness committee will be researching tackling this in the future, and appreciates Kearby bringing it up.

A technical error led to the audio recording being interrupted at this point. The commission paused the meeting for a few minutes to make sure the recording continued as is required.

- vi. At Alderman Tunney's request, the motion for budget approval has a very specific wording that will allow for room for amendments at a follow-up SSA meeting following his meeting with Lake, Robert, and Ramesh on July 22.

MOTION by Kearby Kaiser to preliminarily approve the 2022 budget with expectation that it may be amended upon review with Alderman Tunney later this month.

Second by Jim Ludwig.

All approve.

Motion carried.

- vii. Kearby addresses a desire to have Tunney attend one of these meetings in the future to give his thoughts on the state of the street. Ramesh will mention this to him at the meeting on the 22nd.

MOTION by Kearby Kaiser to approve Northalsted Business Alliance as Service Provider SSA #18 for 2022 as well as 2022 Services.

SECOND by Cindy Rudman.

All approve.

Motion carried.

7. SSA Program Update

- a. Rebates will be voted on at the August 18th meeting following review by Kearby and Cindy.
- b. Robert will work with Kearby and Cindy to get their recommendations for approval.

8. Other Topics

- a. Jim asks Lake to make contact with Dave Gassman and Tim Klump to reiterate that attendance at these meetings are vital.
- b. Ramesh asks Lake if he has the application ready for Allan O'Brien from Men's Room, and Lake replies that it's a longer process than initially thought and that it is in progress. Kearby recommends that Lake encourage Allan to attend the meeting as a member of the public.

9. Adjournment

There being no further business,

MOVED by Kearby Kaiser to adjourn the meeting.

SECOND by Elizabeth Fuld.

All approve.

MOTION CARRIED.

SSA Meeting ends at 10:30 AM

Next SSA meeting will be held on Wednesday, August 18th at 9:00 AM in-person at DLG Management (3210 N Halsted St).