

STATE STREET COMMISSION
State Street Commission Meeting
Tuesday, March 21, 2023
2:00 PM
ABC 7 Chicago - 190 N State Street, Chicago, IL - 10th Floor

MINUTES

ATTENDANCE

AFFILIATION

Commission Members Present

Mark Anderson

Greg Cameron

Konstantine "Gus" Drosos

Kristin Duncan

Erin Harkey

John Idler

La Verne Morris

Ryan Segal

Hines

Joffrey Ballet

Palmer House Hilton

Renaissance Chicago

Downtown Hotel

Chicago Dept. of Cultural
Affairs

ABC 7/WLS Television, Inc

20 N. State Condo

Resident &

Board President

Acadia Realty Trust

Commission Members Absent

Maurice Cox

Michael M. Edwards

Cole Stallard

Chicago Dept. of Planning
and Development

Chicago Loop Alliance

Chicago Dept. of Streets
and Sanitation

Others Present

Sam M. Alexander

Bill Conway

Melvin Craig

Cmdr. David Harris

Rich Gamble

Robert Kearny

Abel Rodriguez

Mark Roschen

Chicago Dept. of
Transportation

34th Ward Alderman-elect

Chicago Loop Alliance

Chicago Police Department

RVC

42nd Ward

Aldermanic Office

Chicago Loop Alliance

Chicago Dept. of Planning

Cindy Roubik

Luis Zepeda

and Development
Chicago Dept. of Planning
and Development
Chicago Dept. of Streets
and Sanitation

I. Call to Order

The Chair of the Commission, Greg Cameron, introduced incoming 34th Ward Alderman, Bill Conway. The Alderman-elect made a few short remarks about his connection to the Loop as a professor at DePaul University's Loop campus and noted that he is looking forward to working with the Commission going forward.

The Chair then welcomed the newly elected Chicago Loop Alliance Board Chair, Rich Gamble, to the Commission. Gamble thanked him and stated that he looks forward to partnering with the commissioners.

After Gamble's remarks, the Chair shared that Chicago Loop Alliance CEO and President, Michael Edwards, is currently in Washington, D.C. to make connections, bring home deeper relationships and possibly even funds.

The Chair then thanked ABC 7 President and General Manager, Jon Idler, for hosting the commission at ABC 7's offices now that meetings have begun in-person once again. He then welcomed the new General Manager of the Palmer House, Konstantine "Gus" Drosos, and spoke briefly about the relocation of former Palmer House General Manager and State Street Commissioner Dean Lane to Florida.

II. Public Comment

The Chair asked the group for public comment. Seeing that there were none, he moved to the approval of the last meeting's minutes.

III. Approval of Minutes

Commissioner and SSA Secretary, La Verne Morris, noted that she was unsure that the dates listed on page four of the January meeting minutes were correct, as she had not yet had a chance to speak with Michael Edwards. The Chair then moved to approve the minutes on the condition that the dates be clarified at a later time.

This motion was started by John Idler and seconded by Kristin Duncan. The motion carried.

IV. Status Reports

Financials

The Chair moved on to financial statements, introducing CLA CFO Abel Rodriguez.

Rodriguez explained there were no financials for this meeting because CLA is still completing its 2022 audit, and that there is some confusion about how to record the monies still owed from the SSA levy and the carryover. Rodriguez said that CLA has not begun any extensive spending and that the only expenses CLA currently has are its recurrent monthly bills such as landscaping, our clean team, and ambassador program.

Aggregate Repair

Rodriguez further explained that due to continued annual costs, CLA is considering switching to plain concrete for State Street repair instead of the costly red colored aggregate currently employed on the street. He plans to present a proposal for this at the next State Street Commission meeting in April, as well as the current financials for that meeting.

Cindy Roubik of CDPD then inquired as to whether the new concrete would be red like the aggregate or if it would be just plain concrete.

Rodriguez replied that due to a 1990s-era infrastructure planning agreement, it is the SSA's responsibility to pay for special maintenance on State Street such as the aggregate and the special green light posts, both unique features of the street. This means that the Chicago Department of Transportation cannot come and paint the poles because they are different from the city standard.

The Chair suggested procuring color matched concrete to replace the aging, colored red aggregate, in response to Cindy's question, to preserve State Street's unique look.

Once the conversation concluded, the Chair moved on to the Sole Service Provider report and introduced officials from CDOT via Zoom.

Sole Service Provider Report – CDOT Presentation

Michael Lev of CDOT and Ian Kaminski-Coughlin of SOM gave introductions to the Commission regarding the State/Lake station renovation and spoke about the State and Lake South Median project proposal via Zoom.

The proposal would create a safe platform on the yellow striped median space in front of the Chicago Theatre, a space where tourists currently have the tendency to unsafely congregate to take photos in front of the iconic lighted sign. This project would install what is called a refuge island; a space for those crossing the street to gather safely in the middle of the street, if unable to make it all the way across in time. During planning for the State and Lake renovation, CDOT was asked to create this raised platform to make this space more welcoming.

The proposed median would be approx. 6-12 inches off the pavement, made from either a granite or paver surface. CDOT is unsure if it is possible to have trees on the median, as it could interfere with the utilities below the surface.

The median could feature tables and chairs or other programming of choosing by the SSA. The city has asked for bollards to be placed on this median for safety reasons. The city will pay for this construction, the bollards and chairs, along with the initial landscaping. The SSA would then be responsible for maintenance of the landscaping, as well as street furniture and programming. Power for holiday decorations can be added.

After the presentation was complete, the group asked several questions concerning tree weight limits and the effect they might have on underground utilities, the width of the median, the effect trees might have on photos, use of the space by CPD and the CFD, whether the paving would be CDOT standard paving so that they could maintain it, and if not, the effect that could have on the SSA purse, and more. The Chair then thanked the CDOT representatives for their presentation.

Once questioning was finished, the Chair moved on to the induction of new Commissioner Konstantine “Gus” Drosos. Mr. Drosos, and Abel Rodriguez left the room for an official vote from the commissioners.

The support of the commissioners and Chair was unanimous, and all voted “aye.”

The Chair encouraged all to take a look at the March President’s Report and then introduced 1st District Commander, Davis Harris, to give the security report.

Security Report

The Commander noted that murders in the district are currently at three, the same as 2022. He explained that two of the three murders were domestic in nature and that the third was reported in the South of the district, so there is some uncertainty over whether it really occurred in the district, however, it has been included as such.

Criminal sexual assaults were also flat compared to 2022 numbers at fifteen total incidents. The Commander also informed attendees that robberies are down 14%, aggravated batteries are down 13%, and burglaries are down 22%. Year to date, thefts are up 7%, however in the last 28 days, they have been trending 20% downwards. In the last week they are down 28%. Theft is the major issue in the 1st district due to the number of retail establishments and motor vehicles. Grand theft auto is down 3%. Shooting incidents are down 45% and vehicular hijacking is down 43%. Overall crime is down 3%.

The Commander is confident that even with the warm weather coming these numbers will continue trending down. Also, as far as the potential indictment of former President Trump is concerned, there is no suggestion that there will be large protests in the City of Chicago. He also noted that CPD is prepared and has a posture in place for if that were to change. Regarding CPD's radios being encrypted, he reassured the commissioners that he will continue to provide Michael Edwards insight going forward. He also stated that Sgt. Carol Burns's email blasts will continue to go out to Loop partners as normal.

Cindy Roubik of DPD inquired about staffing levels and the Commander noted that only 3% of the city's districts have proper levels of staffing. He said that 1st district staffing has remained the same.

Rich Gamble asked if spring break was an issue, and Commander Harris noted that because the Loop is not a huge travel destination for spring breakers, he does not anticipate there being many issues.

Once the report concluded, the Chair recognized Cindy Roubik of CDPD and asked for her status report.

Chicago Department of Planning and Development

Roubik noted that May will likely be when the State Street TAP will occur. Panelists are still being finalized. Stakeholders and various city employees will be interviewed in May, and tours will take place then as well. After gaining public input via webinar, TAP would then create a report and publish their findings. CLA will be working with TAP and DPD to accomplish this.

In terms of the LaSalle Initiative, the Chicago Department of Planning and Development hosted a webinar on March 2nd, 2023, that had over 230 attendees. The recording is available online. There were six proposals presented which are still being evaluated by city

staff. The decision on the finalists will be made very soon. CDPD is also working closely with CLA on SPIF, the Small Business Improvement Fund Grant. The City Council has approved up to \$5 million for that grant and this would provide up to \$300,000 in funds to eligible businesses to be awarded through the application process. The applications will open this fall. There will also be networking events held to assist these businesses in matchmaking with property owners who have vacant open spaces. This is to help bring in new tenants downtown.

CDPD is also working on a long-range plan for the central area update. Focus group meetings have begun and a public webinar and in person meeting will also be scheduled in the coming months. This is the start of a two-year process.

After this briefing, Roubik noted that one of the GSA owned buildings, a small three story in the area, has experienced irreparable structural issues, and that the building will be demolished by the federal government. There will be a consulting meeting being scheduled for the week of March 27, 2023. CLA's representative will be Michael Edwards.

CDPD has asked GSA to notify the public that this will be happening. Rich Gamble asked if the GSA would allow the Commission to get in front of the demolition and make an announcement. Roubik stated that she was unsure, but that she would try to get an answer.

Noting that there were no more questions, the Chair asked if there were any CTA station updates.

Sam Alexander of CDOT replied that there were none at the moment but that planning is continuing underway as scheduled. CTA is in contact with local stakeholders and will inform them of any changes.

The Chair then asked Commissioner Erin Harkey of the Chicago Department of Cultural Affairs and Special Events if she had any updates.

She said that she had a CTA station update since public art is being utilized. She noted they are identifying finalists and that once there is an idea for what the art style will be, a presentation to the Commission will be presented.

The Chair then asked about access to Millennium Park for this summer. She replied that DCASE is working out how patrons will be able to have access given the number of events going on. There are extra layers of security due to the restrictions on young people coming to the park during the weekends.

V. Other Business

The Chair thanked everyone for attending the meeting today and stated that he is looking forward to meeting again on April 18th, 2023.

VI. Adjournment

La Verne Morris, Secretary