

STATE STREET COMMISSION
State Street Commission Meeting
Tuesday, March 15, 2022
2:00 PM
Via Zoom

MINUTES

ATTENDANCE

AFFILIATION

Commission Members Present

Sam Alexander
Commissioner Greg Cameron
Commissioner Kristin Duncan
Commissioner John Idler
Commissioner Dean Lane
Commissioner La Verne Morris
Cynthia Roubik
Commissioner Andrea Schwartz
Commissioner Ryan Segal
Commissioner Cole Stallard

CDOT
Joffrey Ballet
Renaissance Hotel
ABC7
Palmer House Hilton
20 North State Street Condos
Department of Planning & Development
Macy's
Acadia
Department of Streets & Sanitation

Commission Members Absent

Commissioner Mark Anderson

Hines

Others Present

AK Alilonu
Michael Edwards
Sonsere Hatch
Robert Kearney
Abel Rodriguez
Mark Roschen
Patricia Zuber

Alderman King's Office
Chicago Loop Alliance
CTA
Alderman Reilly's Office
Chicago Loop Alliance
Department of Planning & Development
CPD First District Commander

I. Call to Order

The March 15, 2022, meeting of the State Street SSA Commission was called to order at 2:03 PM by Chair Greg Cameron. Greg thanked everyone for their continued commitment to the work of the SSA Commission and their concerns for the future of State Street. Greg indicated he was happy to have had lunch with members of the Safety Ambassador program a week ago. As a result, when Greg ran into 3 members of the team a few days ago he was able to have a nice chat with them. Greg stated we need to recognize the good work they do on our behalf along State Street.

Greg welcomed Sam Smith, VP of Government Affairs at CTA as the new CTA representative participating with the State Street Commission. Sam was called out for a meeting and Greg was pleased to introduce Sonsere Hatch as his representative today. With a very heavy agenda, Greg began the meeting.

II. Public Comment

No comments were made by the public.

III. Approval of Minutes

Greg thanked La Verne Morris, Commission Secretary for her work in reviewing and editing the minutes each month. A motion to accept the Tuesday, January 18, 2022, minutes as presented was made by Kirsten Duncan and seconded by Andrea Schwartz. The motion passed unanimously.

IV. Financial Statements as of February 28, 2022

Abel Rodriguez screen shared and reviewed the financial statements through February 28, 2022 that were sent out to the Commission prior to the meeting. Abel stated we are in good financial shape and are beginning to receive the SSA levy (\$305,256) as expected. Abel noted we budgeted to end the year with \$340,000 in reserves but ended the year with \$681,950 reserves. Abel stated this will result in \$341,000 in unanticipated carry forward into 2022. According to CLA President & CEO Michael Edwards, the unanticipated carry forward is largely because we delayed the expansion of our Safety Ambassador program. Greg thanked Abel for the report and stated the Commission will be discussing the reallocation of the carry forward later in the agenda.

V. Commission Nominees

Michael Edwards stated the State Street Commission had two open positions. One private sector position to replace Eric Finnegan from Block 37 and one public position to replace DCASE Commissioner Mark Kelly.

Edwards thanked Ryan Segal and Andrea Schwartz for their help in reviewing three candidates for each position. With the input of Greg Cameron, we are pleased to recommend Sonya Garcia, General Manager of Walgreen's located at 2 North State and Erin Harkey the new DCASE Commissioner to terms on the State Street Commission. The vote will be to recommend these two individuals to Alderman Reilly, Alderman King and the Mayor's office for appointment to the State Street Commission.

After discussion, a motion was made by Kristin Duncan and seconded by Andrea Schwartz to recommend Sonya Garcia and Erin Harkey to Alderman Reilly, Alderman King and Mayor Lightfoot for appointment to three-year terms on the State Street Commission. Motion carried.

BID Legislation

At Greg Cameron's request Michael Edwards described the city efforts to create Business Improvement District (BID) legislation to compliment the SSA legislation.

Edwards said he and others worked with Mark Roschen and DPD to put together state BID legislation. This legislation would provide more control in the creation and management of a BID to the affected property owners and businesses and provide a wide range of assessment methodologies that could make BIDs more flexible. The legislation is now in Springfield for approval this session (not assured) and if passed, then the city would construct local BID legislation and a final ordinance. If all that happens, the State Street SSA could remain in place for the

remaining years of its current ordinance. If the SSA Commission chose to it could be reconstituted at that time under a BID ordinance. Mark Roschen concurred with the summary and Greg stated the State Street SSA has another *8-years* (correction from the meeting discussion of 11-12 years) before the BID legislation might affect us.

VI. Public Safety Update

Greg Cameron introduced First District Commander Zuber who updated the Commission on reports of events and criminal activity on State Street and in the Loop. Commander Zuber stated the event season is beginning with the greening of the river and the St. Patrick's Day parade. Due to the cold weather, there were no issues of significance in the Loop or on State Street and the crowds were well behaved. Next up is the Shamrock Run this coming weekend with expected street closures and Chicago Fire has begun its season in Soldier Field so expect a bit more traffic congestion. Michael Edwards indicated he and four staff were in the Loop and on State Street from 11:00 AM to 5:00 PM to experience the St. Patrick's Day festivities. Edwards felt the festivities were terrific for State Street. Commander Zuber went on to say they are managing night life and entertainment activity with the help of the now two-page long theatre opening and closing schedule. CPD also has its bike patrol in place. While there was a broken window at the Nederland Theatre and at Macy's this past week, generally crime has decreased in the Loop and on State Street, though there have been a few vehicle thefts recently. Robert Kearney reiterated Alderman Reilly's concerns regarding safety and asked if anyone has a request for additional LPR's (License Plate readers) to correct blind spots, the Alderman can help.

Michael Edwards asked about CTA and/or CPD police on the red line. Sonsere Hatch stated CPD does ride on the trains and works with CTA police as part of our security system. CTA has hired private security as well, but she did not have the details. The CTA is committed to improved security on all their lines, especially the red line and have seen a decrease in activity. Security is a big concern of CTA and absolutely at the top of the list. CTA feels the more riders we can bring back on the system, that the rate of crime will go down to a more manageable level. Greg Cameron believes there is an opportunity to make the red line better and looks forward to working with Sam Smith on this effort. The red line is an important infrastructure for the success of State Street. Maybe a partnership with the Cubs, White Sox and the SSA Commission would be a good idea to leverage enhancements to the red line and improve the customer experience.

Michael Edwards gave the Commission the CLA Security Committee Report. The new committee met on February 24, 2022, and the details of the meeting were included in the Commissions Board packet. Edwards thanked Robert Kearney (Alderman Reilly) and Prentice Butler (Alderman King) for attending the meeting with 17 other interested individuals. We agreed the purpose of the committee is to develop policy, programs and actions that decrease crime and increase consumer confidence in the State Street and Loop experience.

The next meeting will be scheduled for 90 minutes on April 7th.

We discussed the kind of crime affecting the Loop, which is different than the Magnificent Mile. Things like aggressive panhandlers, pick pockets, homeless with mental issues, and random acts

of violence. Edwards stated our Street Team use to have a very good feel for the panhandling and homelessness patterns of behavior on State Street, but since the pandemic that has changed with increased mental individuals on the street and decreased mental help services.

The Committee identified current available resources including the First District Commander; the co-policing experiments the CPD is doing with the city and social service agencies; the new Organized Retail Crime Task Force; our overnight security services through HLSA and the expanding CLA Ambassador program and Social Service Outreach Specialist.

We discussed potential solutions including:

- Distributing educational information to downtown businesses and customers on crime prevention techniques
- A GroupMe business account to facilitate communications
- Improved communication between the Ambassadors, HLSA and CPD
- Increased Commander and CLA President communication
- Have new CPD police officers train on State Street
- Enhance prosecutions
- Utilize the organized retail crime unit and more

Edwards finished his report by summarizing the work he and others in the business community are doing to change the current prosecution policies following meetings with Cook County's States Attorney General, Kim Foxx; Chief Judge Timothy Evans and next up Cook County Executive Tony Preckwinkle. Andrea Schwartz felt the new Security Committee is a good idea and will do well to engage the concerns of businesses on State Street.

VII. Sole Service Provider Report

Michael Edwards requested Abel Rodriguez to screen share a summary of possible uses of the unanticipated \$341,000 in carry forward that Abel discussed in his financial report. Michael Edwards gave a brief verbal review of each idea including:

More Overnight Unarmed Security

We currently have overnight, private security along State Street and adjacent streets each weekend (Friday and Saturday) in foot patrol and mobile units from 4:00 PM to 4:00 AM. We could add two more days per week at an additional cost.

Dean lane asked how many security guards we have on Friday and Saturday and requested having the guards overnight Wednesday and Thursday. Dean asked for a cost to provide the same services 7 days a week.

After discussion, the Commission agreed to add an additional \$65,000 to this line item to increase the frequency of the private security overnight.

Homeless Outreach Personnel

We have promoted Octavion Thomas to be our fulltime Social Service Outreach Specialist. When conceived we had a good handle on the homeless and social issues affecting State Street. However, since the pandemic and the social unrest following the George Floyd murder, the homeless issues

have gotten much worse including more individuals, increase mental illness, decreased homeless services and random acts of violence associated with the on-street mentally ill. We could add a second Social Service Outreach person (\$80,000) to work with Octavion and improve our ability to manage the issue in 2022.

The Commission did not want to add anything to this line item.

Sundays on State Street

Sundays on State was a big success in activating State Street with direct benefits to State Street retailers, food and beverage, and entertainment venues. Our intention is to raise a total of \$450,000 through City, SAA and Corporate giving. We have over \$300,000 in corporate sponsorship requests currently pending and expect to hear from the city of Chicago regarding their \$100,000 contribution shortly. We have received Target as a major sponsor for 2022 Sundays on State. Like last year, the funds would be used as a match to leverage corporate and city contributions.

Andrea stated she thought we should do the event again. It had a great, positive impact beyond retail sales in terms of a feel-good event, incorporating the neighborhoods. La Verne asked about increased cost due to the addition of another block. John Idler requested clarification on the current placemaking budget and the addition of \$100,000 for Sundays on State. The current placemaking budget has \$100,000 but we are spending \$60,000 on two ACTIVATES and \$20,000 for the Gateway, leaving about \$25,000 for Sundays on State. John Idler clarified the ask is a total budget of \$125,000.

After discussion there was agreement to add \$100,000 to the placemaking line item for Sundays on State.

Landscaping Contract

Due to the pandemic, we have delayed our RFP process for landscaping services with City Escape. This has resulted in keeping City Escape for a fourth year at a cost of \$10,000 more than budgeted. We plan on doing an RFP for landscaping services in June of this year for a 3-year contract beginning January 1, 2023.

There was agreement to add \$10,000 to the landscaping line item.

IT Services

Due partly to work from home and the strain on our current IT system, we believe it is time to make the move to enhance our IT services for the organization. We completed an assessment and RFP process with the help of the CLA finance committee and are recommending we sign a 3-year contract with Impact Networks. This will cost us \$13,000 more than we currently have budgeted.

There was agreement to add \$13,000 to the IT services line item.

Streetlight Poles Outlet Replacement

We discovered last holiday we have 77 outlets on the Type-1 streetlights (2 acorn style) along State Street. Working outlets will be necessary if we intended to create a spectacular holiday

display to better compete for holiday shoppers in the future. We have discussed with the city's electric division and have a plan to replace all the outlets (which have been exposed to the weather since 1997) and not used since the mid 2000's. We are estimating the cost will be less than \$50,000.

John Idler asked if have enough budgeted for holiday lights to plug into the 77-lamp post. Abel stated we have \$175,000 budgeted for holiday lights. John asked if this would be enough to complete the length of the street. Edwards responded no, because to do the whole street would exceed the budget. John said it begs the question why fix the outlets if we have no money for the lights. La Verne said we need to upgrade the lights and should not wait. John wants to see us improve the outlets and do the holiday light installation. If we are not doing both, why upgrade the outlets? Greg Cameron agreed we need to have the lights designed by a professional to get a dramatic display suitable for State Street. We need to upgrade the infrastructure and move forward with the holiday lights.

Ryan Segal asked about the current holiday lights and do we own them. Edwards said yes and we may need someone to design and recommend a compelling design. Greg Cameron wants more discussion and thoughts around the use of \$153,000 left in the unbudgeted account, let's add it to the holiday lights. Let's leverage the city, take advantage of the political year. This would allow us to get more serious about holiday lighting as a compelling destination around the holidays and beyond. There was good discussion about whether we have enough funds for holiday lighting to make an impact this year. Edwards stated he was doing an RFP for design and installation of holiday lights to go out to the market place shortly.

The Commission agreed to add \$50,000 for the outlet upgrade and \$103,000 to the holiday lighting line item.

Marketing

We found great success in an aggressive marketing program for Sundays on State last year. With an eye on accelerating the economic recovery of State Street, we should have an ongoing marketing campaign (\$50,000) for State Street as a destination throughout the year, not just for events or holiday.

The Commission did not want to add anything to this line item.

Pop-Up Retail

The Commission could subsidize the creation of a neighborhood market in a well-located retail space(s) on State Street (\$100,000). This is an expensive proposition, but could assist in finding new entrepreneurs, retail concepts and attractions to fill vacant storefronts either until the retail market returns or as a new strategy to fill State Street with new, local merchandise. This program would require a master lease and then CLA subleasing to viable local businesses. It should be noted the CLA, through Sundays on State, is confident it could fill a market with 10-15 viable retailers.

Greg Cameron and Andrea Schwartz felt it was a heavy lift to do pop-up retail successfully. Greg would rather lean into the businesses that made a long-term investment.

The Commission did not want to add anything to this line item.

The budget modifications, total \$341,000 and will be recommended to the Alderman, DPD and the Mayor as a budget modification to the 2022 budget. Robert Kearny felt the Alderman will be supportive of many of the budget modifications recommended around safety and increasing business activity.

Greg Cameron apologized for not getting to the department report but will redo the agenda to get to those reports earlier at our April 19, 2022, meeting. Greg thanked everyone for their attendance and thoughts today.

VIII. Status Reports

No reports were given at this time.

IX. Chat

Abel Rodriguez: I apologize but I just noticed that we were not recording the meeting, so I just started the recording

Commander Zuber: Good Afternoon, I have to attend to another issue. Have a great day.

AK Alilonu: Sorry everyone, I have to go to another meeting

X. Other Business

Greg Cameron thanked everyone for attending the meeting today and he is looking forward to meeting in person later in the year.

XI. Adjournment

La Verne Morris, Secretary