

STATE STREET COMMISSION

State Street Commission Meeting
Tuesday, October 15, 2019
2:00 PM
ABC7
190 North State Street, 10th Floor

ATTENDANCE

MINUTES

AFFILIATION

Commission Members Present

Commissioner Mark Anderson	Hines
Commissioner Greg Cameron	Joffrey Ballet
Commissioner Andrea Schwartz (via phone)	Macy's
Commissioner Ryan Segal	Acadia
Commissioner Eric Finnegan	CIM Group
Commissioner John Idler	ABC7
Commissioner Kristen Duncan	Renaissance Hotel

Commission Members Absent

Acting Commissioner Tom Carney	CDOT
Acting Commissioner Eleanor Gorski	Department of Planning & Development (DPD)
Commissioner Mark Kelly	DCASE
Commissioner Dean Lane	Palmer House
Commissioner LaVerne Morris	20 North State Street Condos
Commissioner John Tully	Department of Streets & Sanitation

Others Present

Jacob Alderden	Chicago Police Department - 001
Katherine Branch	Chicago Transit Authority
Michael Edwards	Chicago Loop Alliance
Karl Guider	Chicago Public Library
Dwayne Hightower	Department of Streets & Sanitation
Shawn Hopkins	Bigbelly
Laura Jones	Chicago Loop Alliance (CLA)
Paul Reise	Department of Planning & Development
Mark Roschen	Department of Planning & Development
Abel Rodriguez	Chicago Loop Alliance (CLA)
David Seglin	Chicago Department of Transportation (CDOT)
James Turner	CIBC/CLA Board Chair

I. Call to Order

SSA#1-2015 Chairman John Idler welcomed everyone and called the meeting to order at 2:02 PM. Introductions were made around the table. Michael Edwards passed around copies of the latest Springboard pedestrian counts, noting that the SSA spends \$50,000 a year on these counters/reports. The good news is that on many recent weeks we've had more pedestrians on the street than we've had since 2016. Counts for the Chicago Marathon and the pedway were included.

It was noted that a long-time member of the Chicago Loop Alliance, Marty Stern, unexpectedly passed away over the weekend. Stern often attended Commission meetings. Please keep his wife Devi and his daughters Sarah and Rachel in your thoughts. The obituary and funeral arrangements will be sent out to Commissioners and the CLA Board.

II. Public Comment

No comments were made by the public.

III. Approval of Minutes

A motion to accept the July 16, 2019 meeting minutes as presented was made by Commissioner Duncan and seconded by Commissioner Cameron. The motion passed unanimously.

IV. Financial Statements as of September 30, 2019

Abel Rodriguez stated that Commissioners had received the budget and 3rd quarter metrics contained in today's meeting packets in an earlier email for their advance review. Regarding those documents he highlighted a few items:

- Memorial Day and aggregate sidewalk repair line items are over budget. This is the time of year that adjustments are made. We will bring suggestions back to our November meeting for the Commission's review and approval. Rodriguez explained that we can adjust existing line items in large categories, but we can't add new line items that were not in the original budget approved by the city.
- Almost all of the SSA levy has been received; During our meetings, we talk frequently about late collections and interest and how they impact the budget. DPD gives us a late collections figure that they feel we can anticipate during the year, but instead of receiving more money this year we are losing money. At this point it appears we may have a deficit of \$75,000. Many of our existing legal contracts have set payments in their lines, so we'll have to look carefully at what to cut. Chairman Idler asked Rodriguez to further clarify how we would handle the revenue shortfall. Rodriguez said for example there may be some unused dollars in the landscaping and sidewalk power washing line items. We always add a small amount over the contractual cost to cover emergencies that arise outside of scheduled services, like damage to the planters by crowds attending large scale events on State Street like a Cubs or Blackhawks victory parade or accident clean-ups. Other dollars may come from items like the Master Plan which have not yet been started. Rodriguez cautioned that the actuals everyone had in front of them were for the 3rd quarter only. He was confident we can balance the budget by year end.
- The 3rd quarter metrics sheet is a DPD form with DPD categories. Vendors we have used, along with what they were used for, and the amount of money we spent, are all listed.

There was no further discussion. Commissioner Cameron motioned to approve the 3rd Quarter Performance and Budget Assessment. Commissioner Segal seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Also, on the subject of budgets, there is a new committee structure at city hall that will be reviewing all SSA budgets, services, activities and initiatives. It has been named the Economic Capital and Technology Development Committee. Michael Edwards and Abel Rodriguez attended their October 10th meeting on behalf of SSA#1-2015 in order to answer any questions the committee had about our 2020 budget prior to its final city council approval. The meeting went well, and our ordinance for funding is expected to be approved at the city council meeting tomorrow.

V. Status Reports/Outstanding Issues

1. CTA :

Laura Jones pointed out a letter with attached photos from the CTA contained in meeting packets. To summarize it, some of the ornamental CTA bus stop signs on State Street are missing, others are leaning, rusting, or in various states of disrepair. The Chicago Loop Alliance, as sole service provider for the SSA, has been repairing, painting, or replacing the ornamental bus poles (which were part of the original SOM designed State Street Renovation Project streetscape) for almost 25 years now. We are at the point where we need to reorder stock at a cost of over \$7500 per pole plus mold fees, shipping and handling; or, as the CTA is proposing, replace them with the standard signs, poles, and bases that are consistent with poles at other bus stops in the Loop and around the city. The replacement and maintenance of the standard poles would be at the CTA's expense, including -- if needed-- matching the replacement or repair of any of the existing aggregate or buff sidewalk pavement damaged by the screws securing the poles. Jones asked the Commissioners if they wished to purchase new stock to match the ornamental poles, or let the CTA replace the poles with the same ones used in other areas of the city?

Commissioner Cameron said that he strongly supported replacing the poles with CTA stock; it was a cleaner, fresher look that paired well with their technology. There was no further discussion, therefore Cameron made a motion that the Commission accept the CTA's plan to replace the ornamental poles with the CTA's standard, provided that any cement repair or replacement they did matched the State Street streetscape aggregate mix and pattern. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Segal and passed unanimously. CTA representative Katherine Branch thanked the Commissioners and said that the replacements can take place in a matter of weeks.

2. Security:

Captain Jacob Alderden from CPD apologized for Commander Pigott's absence, he's on furlough. He stated that we continue to see the same thing we've seen in the last 18 months in the First District: crime is down over all and arrests are up. He said he knows there have been some reoccurring issues with retail theft, but they have been making arrests and are trying to work with the court to ensure those repeat offenders don't come back anymore. The Columbus Day Parade was yesterday, and the Chicago Teacher's Union disrupted traffic on State Street yesterday, but overall, CPD continues to work in a positive direction reducing incidents.

Commissioner Duncan said that several purses had been stolen from individuals on lower Wacker. Police coverage seems good “above ground” on State Street, but not so good below ground. Captain Alderden asked if there was video of the incidents and Duncan replied yes, and that her hotel has been working with CPD. Alderden said that since lower Wacker was fenced off, things seemed to be better down there, but CPD will keep the area on their radar.

Commissioner Cameron inquired about coverage of the pedway. Alderden said there have been no major incidents recently, but as the weather gets colder, they will keep the pedway in mind.

The next major events for CPD are the Arts in the Dark Parade, and a possible teachers strike.

3. DCASE

Commissioner Mark Kelly was not in attendance for this meeting, but Michael Edwards stated that DCASE and LUMA8 were partners in presenting the Arts in the Dark Parade, and the Chicago Loop Alliance was a major sponsor. This parade adds a lot of energy to State Street; it’s a wonderful event. Anyone who wants tickets to the VIP tent that evening should email Edwards by tomorrow.

4. Streets & Sanitation

Dwayne Hightower said that the department is preparing for snow season and getting the fleets together. The National Weather Service has not yet predicted how much snow we might get. The Chicago Marathon went well, and it was cleaned up in record time. Over 70 Big Bellies in the area were repaired. Next up is the Thanksgiving Day Parade.

5. CDOT

CDOT’s David Seglin reported that two federal grants have been secured, one for the State/Lake El Station from CMAC for \$59 million, and another from CMAC for \$13.5 million for the pedway.

The \$59 million grant will be combined with an earlier grant of \$70 million from CMAC for the construction of the station. Contracts for design are still in procurement.

After CMAC awarded the \$13.5 million grant for the pedway, the federal government came back and said that only about \$4 million of it was eligible for the project – leaving CDOT with a \$9.5 million hole. The department continues to work with the feds on finding another funding source. CDOT is taking the \$4 million, but they will not move forward with the pedway improvement project until they amass all of the money for it.

6. DPD

There was no report.

VI. Sole Service Provider Report

1. 2019 Street Team Survey Results

Michael Edwards stated that every year since 2014 CLA has done an on-street survey of people about the Street Team. This year’s report is not finished graphically, but he said he’d like to report some of the numbers to the Commission now. Some copies of the report were handed out to Commissioners, but there were not enough to distribute to the entire group. 576 responses over 5 days were recorded in September, a month earlier than we typically do the survey. Results include:

- **Question: Are you aware of the program?** The percentage of respondents who were aware of the program dropped this year. Last year it was 74%, this year it was 59%. This may be because we did the survey earlier, and we got a lot of students responding.
- **Question: How often do you see the ambassadors?** This was pretty much in line with what we’ve seen in the past, but “never” was up to 30%, so we just want to make sure our people are out there.
- **Question: How would you describe your interaction with safety ambassadors?** Responses were excellent to very good. There’s not a lot of change in this category since 2018. Not a lot of people actually interact with them.
- **Question: Do you believe the Street Team provides a visible value/service to you and your business?** The response “no visible value” went up from last year’s 11% to 15%. “Some value” stayed the same, and “very visible value” went up 38%.

- **Question: Have you sensed a change in the level of panhandling on State Street in the past year?** Only 18% of respondents said it had increased, lower than last year. Only 15% said it decreased, and a lot of folks (39%) continue to think it's about the same as it's been.
- **Question: Have you felt more or less safe on State Street during the past year?** "More safe" was reported by 28% compared to 37% of respondents the year before. However, only 8% feel less safe. 49% of people say there has been no change.
- **Question: Is State Street as clean as it was?** Most people still think it's clean, but the numbers indicate it is not as clean as it was the year before. Less clean went down, and no change stayed about the same.

Finally, on the last page are some written comments, both good and bad, outside of the standard questions. Overall, the rating for the Street Team is down and we're really sort of back to where we were in 2016 as far as how people feel about the program. Thus, we have some work to do, and it's time to send out a new RFP for this service in the first quarter of next year anyway. It could be awarded to our current vendor (contingent on them cranking up the program a bit), or a new vendor. Edwards said that he did feel that the results were skewed somewhat because the survey was done earlier than last year. Chairman Idler asked when the survey was typically done and who did it. Edwards replied October into November; it has been done by Direction Marketing for the past several years for consistency. Idler then queried if the screeners identified who they were talking to – student, visitor, worker, etc.—and if there was any deviation from years past. This information should be included in the final report, and the information needs to be shared with the vendor. The results are really disappointing and not a good thing for the Commission to hear.

Before moving to the next agenda item, Michael Edwards relayed that we are now in the process of surveying all SSA businesses to find out which ones have their own security, the level of that security, and whether or not the business is willing to file a complaint. If they are not willing to file a complaint, our HLSA armed guards will not make the incident a priority or go there. There is no sense in us capturing an offender if a complaint isn't filed. The shoplifters know they won't be prosecuted. Captain Alderden commented that unfortunately there are many different store managers, and you get different answers on what is store policy from each of them.

Commissioner Cameron asked if there were things that we could do to incentivize the Street Team and make them feel they had greater ownership of State Street? Maybe show tickets or tours. He would be willing to noodle it and put together a package.

2. Bigbelly Trash Receptacles

Michael Edwards said that during the course of planning for 2020, CLA has been looking at ways to improve the cleanliness of the street. Last year, the city removed the Bigbelly trash receptacles from the area and replaced them with blue and black trash cans. Edwards said it was his job to tell Commissioners what technology is out there. He introduced Shawn Hopkins from the Bigbelly company. Hopkins walked the group through a State Street assessment included in packets, making the following points:

- Bigbelly trash receptacles have been on the streets of Chicago since 2010. Things have changed since then. They now rent the stations rather than sell them. 70% of their business is now rental, and they offer service and support.
- The company is Boston based and is now 15 years old. It has gone international.
- The technology incorporated into the receptacles does work when implemented and monitored correctly. Units operate with a foot pedal. The stations convey information to "the cloud" and then convey the information to the service component. They can measure the amount of trash and recycling for metrics purposes. Stations are solar powered and can operate for up to a week on a charge of one hour of sun a day.
- One of their Chicago accounts is UIC, where they removed all of their cement receptacles. They also service Navy Pier and SSAs like Lakeview. They assessed State Street and feel it could be improved with this new technology.
- A proposal is contained in meeting packets, including costs. The city purchased the units before; what Bigbelly is proposing is a rental model.

Michael Edwards said the cost is similar to that of Springboard; SSA#1-2015 could work with the city and pay for the bags. The next step would be to get the city to support this. Dwayne Hightower from Streets and Sanitation said that they would have to meet with Edwards to talk about it and see if it's a viable idea. Who would monitor the app that says they need service? Edwards replied that the ambassadors could do this.

Chairman Idler said that he thought this Commission had previously said they did not want Bigbelly receptacles on the street and he did not know why we were bringing them up again. We can review the minutes. The units leaked. As new business, this discussion will be tabled until the November meeting and the city has a chance to weigh in with their current assessment. Should there be an RFP? Are there competitors? Don't the ambassadors have enough to do? Are we going to continue to privatize all of the services up and down State Street? The discussion was tabled.

VII. Other Business

Commissioner Duncan gave a quick update on the construction going on at the Renaissance Hotel. They are working on permitting. The front entrance will not be accessible for a few weeks. Also, there is a metal plate of some kind in a street by the hotel that makes a loud noise every time traffic runs over it. This causes many guest complaints. Can it be secured? David Seglin from CDOT said that depends on why the plate is there in the first place. They will look into it.

VIII. Adjournment

The next meeting of the State Street Commission will take place on Tuesday, November 19, 2019 at 2:00 PM. There being no other business, the meeting was adjourned at 3:04 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

LaVerne Morris
Secretary