

STATE STREET COMMISSION
State Street Commission Meeting
Tuesday, July 16, 2024
2:00 PM
55 W Monroe St., 5th Floor Conference Room

MINUTES

ATTENDANCE

AFFILIATION

Commission Members Present

Konstantine “Gus” Drosos
Mark Anderson
Kristin Duncan
Brian Grossman
Ryan Segal
Cole Stallard
La Verne Morris

Palmer House Hilton
Hines
Renaissance Hotel
Walgreens
Acadia Realty Trust
Streets & Sanitation
20 North State Condo
Assn.

Commission Members Absent

Ciere Boatright
Greg Cameron
Tom Carney
Clinèe Hedspeth
John Idler
Aimeabilomon Ochiekeleye

DPD
Joffrey Ballet
CDOT
DCASE
ABC7
Macy’s on State Street

Others Present

Christian Boyer
Melvin Craig III
Cmdr. David Harris
Debbie De Lopez
Laura Graves
Randall Harrington
Dan Luna
Michael M. Edwards
Abel Rodriguez
Mark Roschen
Jad Salloum
Eileen Sweeney
Emily Thrun

Chicago Loop Alliance
Chicago Loop Alliance
CPD
Streets & Sanitation
ABC7
Ald. Reilly’s Office
Ald. Conway’s Office
Chicago Loop Alliance
Chicago Loop Alliance
DPD
Chicago Loop Alliance
DPD
DPD

Sean Wiedel
Amari Wilson

CDOT
Ald. Robinson's Office

Call to Order

Chair Ryan Segal convened the State Street SSA Commission meeting on July 16th at 2:00 PM. The Chair welcomed attendees and asked everyone to introduce themselves. He and SSA Commissioner La Verne Morris gave a note of praise for this past weekend's successful Sundays on State event.

Public Comment

No comments were made by the public.

Approval of Minutes

Segal asked for a motion to approve the Commission's June meeting minutes. Konstantine "Gus" Drosos motioned to approve the minutes, and Brian Grossman seconded that motion. The motion carried, and the minutes were approved.

Financial Statements as of May 31, 2024

Abel Rodriguez, the Chief Financial Officer of the Chicago Loop Alliance, updated the group on the financial status. He mentioned that the amount of levy received is currently at 50%, which aligns with expectations. Rodriguez also noted that property taxes have been issued and are due by August 1. This suggests that the second installment of the SSA levy will likely be received soon. Apart from these, he stated that the rest of the expenses are routine monthly ones.

The Chair then sought approval for the presented financial statements. Kristin Duncan moved to approve them, which was seconded by Gus Drosos. The motion was passed.

2nd Quarter Metrics Report

Rodriguez provided a brief overview of the second-quarter metrics report. He highlighted the website's achievement of 369,000 unique page views and the media attention it received, likely due to press coverage and features from Sundays on State.

The Chair then sought approval for the metrics. Brian Grossman proposed a motion to approve, which Mark Anderson seconded. The motion was passed.

Updates

Before discussing the budget, Edwards shared some updates with the group. He announced that Governor Pritzker had signed the BID legislation lobbied for by Chicago Loop Alliance and the Magnificent Mile Association. Consequently, the CLA Board is interested in initiating preliminary discussions about possibly becoming a BID. James Turner of CIBC and

Louis D'Angelo of Metropolitan Properties, both CLA Board members, will lead these discussions with Edwards.

Edwards further shared that the Chicago Loop Alliance (CLA) plans to engage in discussions with the Magnificent Mile Association to study retail issues and vacant storefront issues plaguing State Street. The aim is to collaborate with a consultant to conduct a retail analysis study. This study will focus on the current decline in retail and identify potential areas for growth within the Loop and the Magnificent Mile.

Additionally, Edwards highlighted Allison Gerlach's creation of the NASCAR Village from CLA. He explained that part of the payment for this project was made in exclusive NASCAR tickets. CLA utilized these tickets to invite potential donors, increasing CLA's partnership with the SSA.

2025 Budget Discussion

Edwards initiated the budget discussion by highlighting that the initial budget had been reduced to 9.85% per the SSA Commissioner's wishes. This was a significant decrease from the initially proposed increase of 18%. Edwards emphasized the inevitability of year-over-year cost increases, asserting that a 0% increase in the budget is unrealistic.

In response to Drosos's query about the percentage increase that would necessitate a public meeting, Edwards clarified that the threshold was 5%.

Edwards then turned the discussion toward specific budget items. He first mentioned the funds allocated for the Arts in the Dark Parade. Given that the CLA has been financing the \$25,000 donation to the parade organizers for the past few years, Edwards suggested that the SSA might be able to assume this responsibility this year.

He also brought attention to the costs associated with website and CRM development. While these were initially set at \$150,000, Edwards expressed optimism about the possibility of obtaining grants to offset these expenses. As a result, the projected costs have been reduced by \$75,000.

Edwards stated that the item on identifying new activations for downtown workers has been reduced from \$125,000 to \$75,000.

Regarding contracts, CLA will begin an RFP to see what else is available for service providers for the Clean and Safe program, so a decrease in this line item may be possible, but it is currently budgeted at \$540,000. In terms of pressure washing, there is no room to reduce costs.

The cost of painting CTA kiosks and tree grates has been reduced by \$70,000. CLA is applying for a grant for this work and hopes to receive approval.

Edwards noted that overnight security could stop if Commissioners wanted it to due to lowering crime statistics, and that is a cost that could be cut.

Laura Graves, a VP at ABC7 representing Commissioner John Idler, who was not in attendance at the meeting, stated that he would like a budget increase of no more than 6%. She then detailed a significant number of budget cuts to be considered.

Following discussions with other Commissioners, a series of budget cuts were decided upon. These include a \$5,000 cut from the Clean Program, \$5,000 from the Safety Program, a \$10,000 reduction in graffiti removal, a \$13,000 cut from the Memorial Day parade, a \$15,000 reduction in storefronts, a \$25,000 cut from placemaking, and a \$30,000 reduction in public way aesthetics. These adjustments amount to a total of \$103,000 in budget cuts for a 6.43% increase. Edwards also explained that the dollars going toward CLA's office expansion will also be cut, as the numbers just haven't aligned and will need to be delayed.

Commissioner La Verne Morris asked if there were any funds to address issues with the planter boxes, to which Edwards replied that there were not. She expressed the need to maybe switch to another flower instead of tulips due to the issues that occurred with them last year.

The Chair then requested a motion to approve the budget with the noted \$103,000 in cuts and the Commissioner's recommendation for Chicago Loop Alliance to continue as the Sole Service Provider for SSA#1-2015. Kristin Duncan made a motion to approve, with Drosos seconding. The motion passed unanimously.

1st District Police Update

Commander David Harris of Chicago's 1st Police District then began his update. Over the last 28 days, there have been 0 homicides, one shooting, a 50% decrease in aggravated batteries, a 31.8% decrease in robberies, one vehicular hijacking, five burglaries, 14 motor vehicle thefts, a 31% decrease in thefts, and 104 arrests. Year-to-date, there have been two homicides, three shootings, and 55 aggravated batteries. Robberies have decreased by 7.6%, vehicular hijackings have decreased by 20%, burglaries have increased by 23%, motor vehicle thefts have increased by 26%, thefts have increased by 11%, and arrests have risen to 1,562, a 61% increase.

Regarding the increase in burglaries, the Commander noted that these are primarily overnight business burglaries and plans to start a burglary task force to address this issue in the coming weeks.

In terms of thefts, he mentioned a significant rise in migrants stealing and reselling items in tourist areas such as Millennium Park. When asked by Edwards about what was being stolen,

the Commander indicated that it was usually tourist items like t-shirts and Chicago memorabilia.

Regarding Pritzker Park, he added that discussions are underway to turn it into an official dog park, though an operator would be needed. Although there is fencing in place, residents are currently using it as an unofficial dog park.

The Commander also reported that the Standard Club, which houses male migrants, has steadily decreased, and the current population is around 300 individuals. The plan is for the shelter to be shut down by the DNC. He also stated that the NASCAR Street Race was successful and had no significant issues.

Edwards informed the group that CLA would partner with the 1st Police District for National Night Out on August 6. The event will take place on the block of State Street in front of the Chicago Theatre. There will be music and food, and the event aims to increase community involvement with local police and celebrate the partnership.

Streets and Sanitation Update

Commissioner Stallard stated that his team is currently servicing Pritzker Park three times a day, seven days a week. The increase in food vendors has attracted rodents. He said that sweepers and cleaners have been cleaning it, and there is also rodent control. He noted that graffiti has been increasing but that his team is focused on removing it as quickly as they can. He stated that it took 14 hours to get all the graffiti off of Lower Wacker.

Department of Planning and Development Update

Emily Thrun, who is appearing for Deputy DPD Commissioner Cindy Roubik, explained that the department has moved into a new phase of its Central Area Plan update and is starting to collect community feedback to make recommendations and improvements to the plan. She noted that they were recently on Sundays on State collecting community feedback.

CDOT Update

Commissioner Sean Wiedel stated that he did not have much to report since his last update.

Other Business

There was no other business.

Adjournment

La Verne Morris, Secretary