

STATE STREET COMMISSION
State Street Commission Meeting
Tuesday, June 18, 2024
2:00 PM
Palmer House, Honore Ballroom

MINUTES

ATTENDANCE

AFFILIATION

Commission Members Present

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

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

Commission Members Absent

Ciere Boatright
Tom Carney
Clinèe Hedspeth
John Idler
Aimeabilomon Ochiekeleye

DPD
CDOT
DCASE
ABC7
Macy’s on State Street

Others Present

Melvin Craig III
Debbie De Lopez
Kiana DiStasi
Judie Green
Randall Harrington
Dan Luna
Michael M. Edwards
Claudia Nicksic
Abel Rodriguez
Mark Roschen
Jad Salloum
Olivia Simon
Eileen Sweeney

Chicago Loop Alliance
Streets & Sanitation
Chicago Loop Alliance
Chicago Loop Alliance
Alderman Reilly’s Office
Alderman Conway’s Office
Chicago Loop Alliance
Acadia Realty
Chicago Loop Alliance
DPD
Chicago Loop Alliance
Alderman Conway’s Office
DPD

Call to Order

Chair Ryan Segal convened the State Street SSA Commission meeting on April 17th at 2:00 PM. The Chair welcomed attendees and asked everyone to introduce themselves.

Public Comment

No comments were made by the public.

Approval of Minutes

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

Sundays on State & BID Legislation

Chicago Loop Alliance President & CEO Michael Edwards began by thanking attendees of the first Sundays on State of 2024, held this past weekend. He highlighted that over 100,000 people attended and noted that most vendors were from underrepresented backgrounds. He encouraged those who missed the event to join the next one on July 14. He also reminded the group that, as in the previous year, the SSA did not incur any costs for the event, as it was funded through private backing and sponsorships. La Verne Morris mentioned that she enjoyed interacting with a diverse group of Chicagoans, while Mark Roschen praised the variety and quality of the vendors.

Regarding the Business Improvement District (BID) legislation, Edwards informed the group that the bill, SB 3679, passed resoundingly in the Illinois Senate and is now awaiting the Governor's signature. He reiterated that the SSA is not obligated to pursue a BID and would first require city-enabling legislation. Edwards mentioned that he did not yet have details about a signing ceremony due to scheduling coordination between the Mayor and Governor, but he would provide further information once available.

Financial Statements as of May 31, 2024

Abel Rodriguez, Chief Financial Officer of Chicago Loop Alliance, informed the group that the SSA has received 50% of the levy and that everything appears to be on schedule. He mentioned that large line items such as aggregate replacement and sealing would begin this summer but noted that there were no other significant financial updates to report.

The Chair then requested a motion to approve the financial statements as presented. Brian Grossman made a motion to approve them, and La Verne Morris seconded that motion. The motion carried.

Sole Service Provider Report

Edwards continued with the sole service provider report, addressing ongoing issues with high schools in the Loop, particularly issues of students entering the Palmer House and Macy's and acting up. He met with three principals of Loop schools to understand their operations better. Edwards stated that he and CLA staff plan to meet again with the principals this summer to discuss solutions before the new school year starts. With student enrollment increasing (for example, at Intrinsic high school, from 700 to 900 students), Edwards emphasized the importance of maintaining good communication with school leaders to ensure a positive outcome for all involved.

Judie Green, Chair of Chicago Loop Alliance, suggested increasing student involvement. She believes this would foster a sense of pride in the Loop among students and create enjoyable experiences for them in a more orderly manner, thereby reducing disruptions for business owners.

Edwards discussed the Loop's vacant storefront issue, noting a 70% vacancy rate south of Monroe and a 30% overall vacancy rate on State Street. He mentioned that the city has previously provided funds to activate vacant storefronts. Currently, CLA has requested \$330,000 from the city for a project called the Chicago Fashion Walk, in partnership with Columbia College Chicago, SAIC, and property owners. It would activate 20-25 storefronts from Monroe to Van Buren.

Greg Cameron asked if it would be possible to discuss the persistent issue of open alcohol consumption among the unhoused with the Walgreens store on State and Randolph, which is very close to the Joffrey school. He expressed concern for the 700 Joffrey students and proposed speaking with the store manager to explore potential solutions. He suggested asking Walgreens to restrict daytime alcohol sales. The Chair noted that open drinking is illegal and suggested calling the police as a possible first course of action. Brian Grossman, Walgreens corporate employee, mentioned he has already contacted the store and is awaiting a response. He said he plans to visit the store in person if he doesn't hear back soon and will speak to the store manager. Cameron thanked Grossman for his efforts.

Edwards informed the group that the State Street and Michigan Avenue sign ordinances will be reworked as part of the Mayor's "Cut the Red Tape" initiative. Edwards highlighted the importance of updating the ordinance from 20 years ago and ensuring that it is sufficient for the next 20 years. He asked the group for a motion to send a letter of support for the measure.

He also mentioned that Scott Greenberg of the Wit hotel is very interested in dynamic electronic signage. Edwards noted that he believes this could attract national retail

campaigns and liven up State Street. Kristin Duncan expressed support for the idea. Greg Cameron requested more detailed schematics and voiced concerns about State Street turning into Times Square. La Verne Morris shared similar concerns, noting potential issues for residents due to bright lights at night.

Cameron motioned that the group send a letter of support to DPD Commissioner Ciere Boatright in favor of updating the signage ordinance, and Kristin Duncan seconded that motion. The motion carried.

2025 Draft Budget Discussion

Edwards started the budget discussion by giving the floor to Kiana DiStasi, Chief Marketing Officer at Chicago Loop Alliance, to discuss the website/CRM/CMS line item. DiStasi explained the need for an updated website for CLA and the SSA and emphasized the need to update the corresponding CMS and CRM due to technical issues hindering the staff's ability to serve members and the public effectively.

She explained the interconnection of these systems and the necessity of the updates, noting that the website, launched in 2017, will soon lose support from its developer. The project is estimated to take 1-2 years with an estimated cost between \$200,000 and \$300,000, with the budget proposing to split the cost between fiscal years 2025 and 2026. Edwards pointed out the \$150,000 line items for 2025 and 2026 to develop this.

Edwards highlighted various expenses, including \$25,000 for the Arts in the Dark parade on State Street and \$100,000 for additional placemaking events or possibly an evolution of Sundays on State. Regarding public way aesthetics, he mentioned the need to refresh CTA kiosks and tree grates on State Street, with potential city contributions before the DNC in August. Edwards also discussed the CLA contract with Streetplus, the Ambassador contractor, noting it will likely increase due to rising costs and renegotiation. Sidewalk power washing is estimated to cost around \$300,000 due to increased street activity.

On the topic of vacant storefronts, Edwards explained that many other SSAs around the city provide grants to keep stores open or activate vacant spaces. He expressed a desire to add funds to the budget for this purpose.

Overall, the draft budget presented an 18% increase over last year's budget. Gus Drosos asked if this increase would need City Hall approval, and Rodriguez clarified that it only requires a public meeting. Cameron inquired about potential grants or state funding to cover website costs. DiStasi mentioned the possibility but noted that such funds are not guaranteed and that alternative plans might be necessary.

Both Drosos and Segal expressed concerns that the 18% increase was too much for business owners. Edwards stated he and CLA staff would return to working on presenting a draft budget, with a goal of a budget increase of less than 10%. After

further discussion, Edwards stated that CLA staff will bring a revised budget to both the SSA and CLA board for review at their respective July 2024 meetings.

Department of Transportation Report

Sean Wiedel, Deputy Commissioner of CDOT, reminded the group that construction on the State & Lake CTA station will likely begin in early 2025 now that bids for work closed in May. He said that work on the proposed median in front of the Chicago Theatre will not begin until after the station is complete, so it will be a couple of years before that starts. Wiedel also stated that street closures will begin on Lake between State and Wabash in the coming weeks, and Edward noted that CLA will release an advisory.

Other Business

There was no other business.

Adjournment

La Verne Morris, Secretary