

STATE STREET COMMISSION
State Street Commission Meeting
Tuesday, March 18, 2025
2:00 PM
190 North State Street, ABC 7

MINUTES

ATTENDANCE

AFFILIATION

Commission Members Present

Konstantine “Gus” Drosos
Mark Anderson
Greg Cameron
Brian Grossman
John Idler
Ryan Segal

Palmer House Hilton
Hines
Joffrey Ballet
Walgreens
ABC 7
Acadia Realty Trust

Commission Members Absent

Ciere Boatright
Tom Carney
Kristin Duncan
Clinèe Hedspeth
La Verne Morris

Aimeabilomon Ochiekeleye
Cole Stallard

DPD
CDOT
Renaissance Hotel
DCASE
20 North State Condo
Assn.
Macy’s on State Street
Streets & Sanitation

Others Present

Erika Coldman
Debbie De Lopez
Michael Edwards
Allison Gerlach
Randall Harrington
Commander, David Harris
Dan Luna
Abel Rodriguez
Arturo Rodriguez
Cindy Chan Roubik

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

Call to Order

Chair Ryan Segal convened the meeting at 2:03 PM. The Chair welcomed attendees and asked everyone to introduce themselves and their business or organization they represent.

Public Comment

No comments were made by the public.

Approval of Minutes

Ryan Segal requested a motion to approve the January 2025 meeting minutes as presented. Michael Edwards called out a couple of typing errors to be corrected. With that, Brian Grossman of Walgreens made a motion to approve the minutes as presented, seconded by John Idler, ABC 7. The motion carried.

Financial Statement and Performance Report

Abel reported that the auditor has been engaged to complete the audit of the SSA finances for 2024. The auditor has the information they need and will have a final audit report to present to the SSA Commission at their April 22, 2025 Commission meeting. Abel reminded the Commission the April meeting was pushed back to the 22nd because the original date landed on tax filling day.

Abel Rodriguez stated the SSA did not receive all the expected revenue from 2024 including the anticipated carry forward of \$127,696. Therefore, we are beginning the year with a budget hole of \$127,696 which we will have to fill through cuts to the budget. Add to this the questions around the available EAV due to decreasing property values, and the State Street SSA will need to make some early budget adjustments. Abel stated he will have some recommendations for cuts at the April Commission meeting.

Sole Service Provider Report

Loop-wide Business Improvement District

Michael Edwards stated CLA has applied to form a Loop-wide BID and today would like to outline a process for the creation of a Loop-wide Business Improvement District (BID). A detailed copy of the process was distributed to all the Commissioners at the meeting.

The process includes a feasibility study; the creation of the district plan and the campaign to secure over 50% of property owner value through petition and city council approval. The process could take 12-18 months, depending on strategy selected and deliver a new BID and necessary funds by January 1, 2027 or January 1, 2028. Edwards indicated the process is long, complicated and will require consulting services, financial analysis expertise, legal review and a fulltime project manager. Edwards stated these expenses are reimbursable from the eventual proceeds of the new BID. Edwards indicated the CLA has reserves that could be used to cover these expenses and no SSA financial contributions are requested.

Ryan Segal asked who, besides himself and Brian Grossman, would like to be invited to the Loop-wide BID district planning group. John Idler stated he would also like to participate.

Commissioner Applications

Abel Rodriguez encouraged the Commissioners to complete the online required Ethics Statement by May 1, 2025.

February Streetplus Report

Michael Edwards took a moment and encouraged the SSA Commissioners to take some time to review the February report of the Street Team Ambassador program. This is our most expensive program and very important to creating a more attractive and hospitable place to the benefit of our visitors and our property owners and businesses. The services include security, business checks, cleaning and social outreach services.

Entertainment District Sign Program

Michael Edwards made a presentation concerning the use of digital signage to breath life back into State Street and create a compelling new reason for people to come to State Street as a destination.

Edwards gave background on the work Cindy Roubik and the Department of Planning & Development did in 2024 to update the State Street and Michigan Avenue sign district. That work involve almost 30 people including businesses, property owners and design professionals. That process led to a larger discussion on more aggressive signage strategies as a way to create excitement and vitality on State Street and Michigan Avenue is the absents of any significant retail interest and storefront recovery.

Edwards outlined the program that would include 5-7 digital signs on non-historic State Street buildings, for commercial adverstising, along with the opportunity for 20% of the time to be set aside for the CLA to have arts, culture and community programming. Initial analysis indicated the signs would generate \$750,000 a year in new revenue to the SSA/CLA for use in other programs like safety, infrastructure repair, events and other programming as appropriate.

Edwards gave example of these large, digital signs in and around the Loop and that if Chicago is to compete on a national or international level for retail, this kind of brand awareness is a requirement. Given our place as the 3rd largest market in the country after NYC and LA, and the millions of people on State Street each year, Chicago needs to leverage our advantage to benefit the Loop. Edwards finished by discussing how these signs could work together to promote community event such as the Memorial Day parade, Sundays on State and other community event to celebrate all of Chicago on State Street.

Edwards indicated he has spoken to property owners about this idea and almost all are either in favor of it, or see the value and would like to learn more. Following the presentation there was good discussion around the idea including its ability to generate much needed pedestrian traffic along State Street. How would this relate to the city's JC Decaux contract? Alderman Reilly is not supportive of the installation of these large digital signs. Others stated we need to take some action to restore vitality to State Street. There are 30 people that want to pursue this idea and there seems to be support from potential property owners.

Edward stated the idea was to take feedback and craft a final proposal to present to the Aldermen later this year. The Commissioners acknowledge this idea might not sit well with residents on State Street or within aldermanic districts.

Cindy Roubik questioned whether CLA has the capacity to pursue both the sign district idea (without apparent alderman support) and the proposed Loop-wide BID district plan, which would also require the same aldermatic support. The major issues is that this is a lot for the organization and the politics do not appear favorable. Dan Luna, from Alderman Conway's office stated Alderman Conway also does not support the sign district idea.

Edwards said he is schedule to make the same presentation to the CLA Executive Committee this Thursday morning and that he will certainly let them know our two aldermen are opposed to the idea.

State of State Street Report-out

Retail

Ryan Segal, Acadia reported retail in Chicago neighborhoods is doing well. but not so on State Street. That said, Ryan reported a new restaurant in the former Vapiano's space will open in June and he believes he has another new restaurant locating into the Loop.

Arts & Culture

Greg Cameron stated that attendance is strong for the Joffrey and other live performance venues like the Goodman. Museums are not doing as well. Crime and the perception of crime continues to negatively impact attendance.

Hotel

Gus from The Palmer House state that while January was slow as usual, both February and March beat expectations. However, due to national politics we have lost some convention business and international travelers have cancelled or are not booking travel to Chicago. Dan Luna asked Gus for information on the former Corner Bakery space next to the Palmer House at Wabash and Monroe streets.

Street & Sanitation

Debbie DeLopez from Street & Sanitation reported the department almost done with snow removal and her department was very busy with last weekend's St. Patrick's Day festivities in the Loop. Commissioners thanked Debbie and her Team for the quick response to request for services. Debbie encouraged Commissioners to call 311 to report graffiti issues in the Loop.

CPD

Commander Harris reported district and over all city crime numbers ending with a report that crime in Chicago, is down 9.6 % over last year. There was discussion of the need to get more positive stories about crime in the Loop through ABC 7 and similar broadcast media to decrease the perception of crime. Commander Harris also mentioned the creation of a police designated zone within Randolph, State, Lake and Wabash. This zone designation will allow police to trespass individuals out of the zone and arrest them if they return within 8 hours. This should help with the loitering, drug and alcohol issues in front of Walgreen's and the State and Monroe intersection. Commander Harris finished his comments by informing the SSA Commission of his planned retirement from CPD in July. There was a heart-felt round of applause for his work in the Loop and with the Commission.

CDOT

Arturo Rodriguez reported the CTA station renovation is progressing. The contract has been awarded and the contractor is going through procurement. Art Rodriguez encouraged Commissioners to report any broken lights or infrastructure along State Street. Edwards thanked Art for his approval of our first Broadway show promotion on the State Street banners beginning next week.

Department of Planning and Development

Cindy Chan Roubik reported the city continues to advance the LaSalle Street development projects. The city is close to a beginning construction at 79 West Monroe Street. Cindy

indicated the Central Area final draft is being prepared and will be share publicly in the coming months.

Other Business

With no other business before the Commission, Ryan Segal reviewed the upcoming events.

Adjournment

Meeting adjourned at 3:13 PM

La Verne Morris, Secretary