



Clark Street SSA#23 Renewal

February 25, 2021 | Virtual Meeting via Zoom | Advisory Committee Meeting #1

Attendees:

SSA #23 Renewal Advisory Committee

Jennifer Ames, Engel & Volkers
Bryan Biello, Lincoln Park Chamber
Sophie Evanoff, Vanille Patisserie
***Jonathon Gordon**, Neighborhood Hotel
Robin Hammond, Lincoln Park Chamber
Jen Harman, Reside Living
Sam Hergott, New Castle
***Jim Kroeger**, Lincoln Park Fitness Center
Kim Schilf, Lincoln Park Chamber
Jessica Wobbekind, Lincoln Park Chamber

Melanie Casati, Casati's Restaurant
Tom Claxton, Frances' Brunchery
Drew Grote, Reside Living/Newscastle
***Holly Lodarek**, Big Apple Finer Foods
Michael Leon-Komar, Great Clips
McKay Murphy, 43rd Ward
Nada Riley, community member
Michele Smith, Alderman, 43rd Ward
Joana Zaidan, 43rd Ward
**Current SSA Commissioner*

City of Chicago and Consultants

Carol Brobeck, Teska Associates, Inc.
Scott Goldstein, Teska Associates, Inc.
Oneida Pate, DPD, City of Chicago
Mark Roschen, DPD, City of Chicago
Francie Sallinger, Teska Associates, Inc.

On Thursday, February 25th, 2021, the first Advisory Committee Meeting for the Clark Street SSA #23 Renewal was held from 3:30pm-5pm via Zoom.

Introduction

Kim Schilf, President & CEO of the Lincoln Park Chamber of Commerce (LPCC) opened the meeting by providing some context on the SSA Renewal. SSA #23 was first established in 2002, then renewed with revised boundaries in 2009, and now is up for renewal again for 2022. Kim then introduced Scott Goldstein and the Teska Associates team, the planning consultants hired to assist LPCC with the reconstitution process.

43rd Ward Alderman Michele Smith was also introduced and thanked all participants for their service to the SSA: "It is really important now more than ever to continue to promote and keep people around Clark Street. This reconstitution process provides good opportunity to bring energy into the situation because we know there's a big task ahead of us next summer!"



Jessica Wobbekind, Director of Community Development for LPCC, emphasized the importance of this process and introduced Mark Roschen of DPD.

City of Chicago SSA Program, DPD

Mark Roschen, the Assistant Commissioner at the City of Chicago Department of Planning and Development gave an overview of the SSA program, the role of the advisory committee, the renewal timeline and how SSA funds are collected and distributed. The main takeaways included:

- The SSA program is a self-initiated program, meaning that SSAs are only established at the request of property owners.
- There are 52 active SSAs in City of Chicago and 450+ volunteer commissioners
- SSAs range in Budget:
 - Small - \$11,000
 - Medium - \$466,000
 - Large - \$3.3 million
- Most Popular Services provided by SSAs:
 - 1- Landscaping
 - 2- Special events
 - 3- Holiday décor
 - 4- Banners
 - 5- Façade rebates
- Role of SSA Commission
 - Recommend tax rate, services, budget and service provider
 - Authorize budget modifications, review and approve vendors/subcontractors, and monitor SSA expense reports
 - Approve agendas and minutes
 - Authorize payments from the SSA account
- Role of Service Provider Staff
 - Day to day management of vendors and services, including vendor selection and RFP process
 - Preparation of regular reports to DPD and SSA Commission
 - Ensure legal and contractual requirements are fulfilled
 - Recruit commissioners and manage nominations and renewals



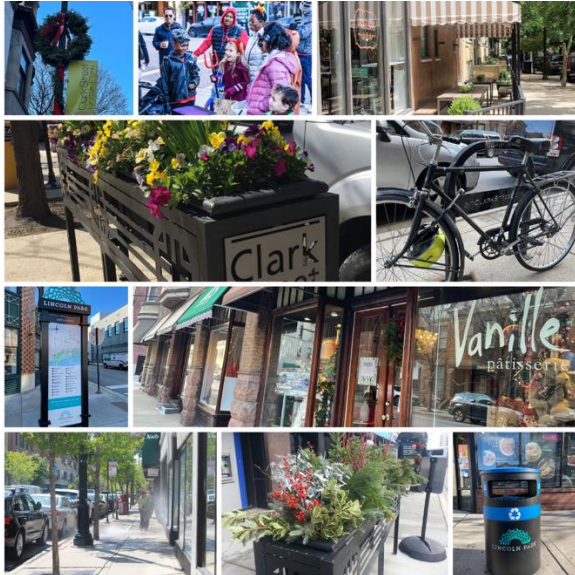
- SSAs are regulated by Illinois Tax Code
 - Funds are transferred to the SSAs on a weekly basis
 - Subject to City Ordinances, Open Meetings Act, Freedom of Information Act and Ethics Ordinances
 - SSA is established by City Ordinance which governs the boundaries, tax rate cap, expiration and renewal term allowances, and defines the commission number, terms qualifications, appointment process and powers.
 - Annual Levy must be approved every year
 - Levy determined by Budget, which determines tax rate for upcoming year
 - Service Provider Agreement approved each year

- SSA Renewal Requirements and Timeline
 - Two community meetings are required
 - Signatures of support from at least 20% of the PINs within the SSA boundaries required by August 1st (10% required by June 11th)
 - Formal public hearing held in the fall at City Hall
 - Upon approval, SSA must submit all paperwork by the last Tuesday in December
 - New SSA begin officially on January 1, 2022
 - Tax levy collected and distributed starting in March 2022

SSA #23 Renewal Process, Teska

Scott Goldstein of Teska then gave a brief overview of the vision of SSA #23 and the benefits of renewal. While the SSA would not end until December 31, 2022, beginning the renewal process now allows the SSA to avoid interruption to service with a seamless financial transition starting January 1, 2022. Scott underscored that the focus of this first meeting is to describe the SSA Renewal process and discuss future SSA #23 services and needs.

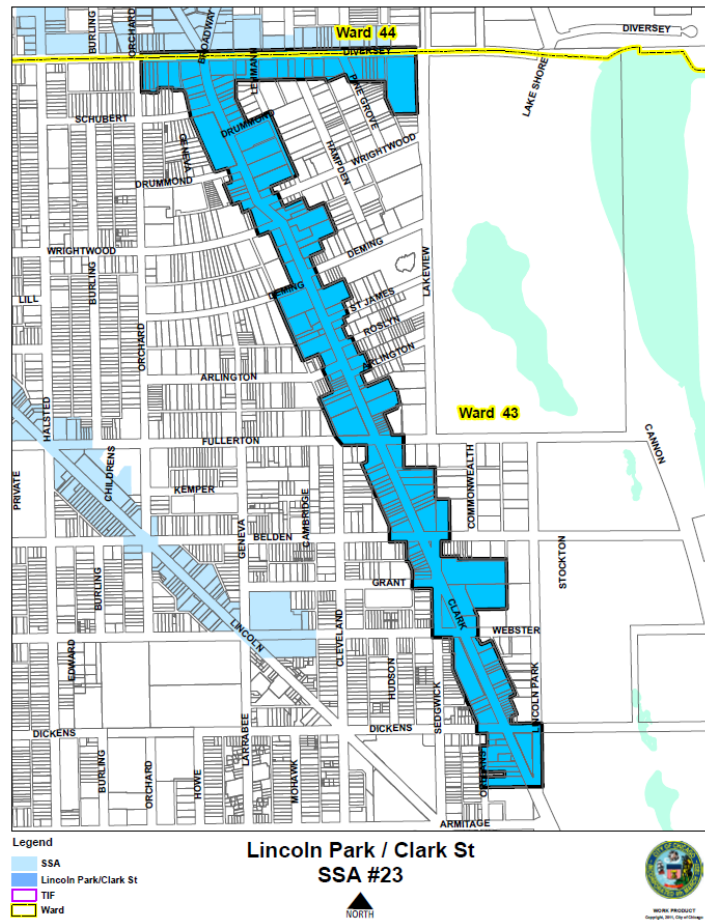
The SSA currently provides a range of programs and services:



Programs & Services

- Customer Attraction
 - Special events (e.g. Spooktacular)
 - Holiday decorations
 - Decorative banners
 - Marketing + Safety Rebate Programs
- Public Way Aesthetics
 - Landscaping (hanging baskets & planters)
 - Facade Rebate Program
 - Wayfinding signage
 - Public art (Art on Clark)
 - Sidewalk snow removal, litter pick up, pressure washing
- Sustainability + Public Places
 - Recycling receptacles, bike racks
- Economic/Business Development
 - Market studies, site marketing
- Safety Programs
 - Security enhancement rebate program

Clark Street Special Service Area (SSA) #23 includes all properties fronting Clark Street from Armitage on the south to Diversey on the north. In addition, it includes all properties fronting the south side of Diversey from Orchard to Lakeview. There are not any plans to modify the boundaries of the SSA as part of this renewal process.





The SSA #23 budget for 2021 is \$519,095. The 2020 levy rate was 0.2701% and the SSA's authorized tax rate cap is 0.309%. At this current tax rate, the cost is \$270 per year for each \$100,000 Equalized Assessed Value (EAV). Discussion about the SSA levy and cap rate will take place at the next Advisory Committee meeting.

The SSA Renewal process for SSA #23 began in in Fall 2020 with a field inventory and the submission of the Feasibility Study to DPD. Teska is now collecting data, preparing a levy assessment and actively engaging with SSA stakeholders, commissioners, property and business owners. Additional outreach includes a forthcoming Service Needs Assessment survey and two community meetings (dates to be determined).

After finalizing the proposed SSA levy and cap rate, the next step is to begin the process of gathering signatures of support from property owners within the SSA boundaries. Teska will provide LPCC with taxpayer information to seek support and prepare a PDF fillable form. DPD will accept forms that are filled and signed electronically. DPD requires 20% of property owners sign in support of the SSA, and a single PIN accounts for one signature of support. The final number of PINs needed to secure this support will be determined by the next advisory committee meeting. Signatures must come from the taxpayer of record. If a single entity owners more than one property (PIN), they can sign in support of the SSA for each PIN.

Discussion

What do you love about Clark Street?

- Jennifer Ames – The diversity of the businesses and restaurant are a huge plus...we've got a little bit of everything
- Strong pedestrian presence -- Pedestrian counter in window counts how many people walk by – pre-covid...we counted 64,000 people passing our window in a month on Clark Street
- Melanie Casati – Location is great, Clark is a main road that brings everybody together.
- Tom Claxton – The neighborhood feel and that you can come to the LP area and find things to do all day. There's a history and a prestige associated, everyone knows about Clark Street and how special it is
- Sophie – My favorite thing is the events; LP is so family focused and having the events brings people out who are several blocks away
- Holly – The energy and the people—the neighborhood feel. We've got Wrigley field, the zoo...a specialness about this street. Our family business has been here over 60 years...the business and the customers make it really special.

What services or programs do you value most?

- Tom Claxton – the general upkeep of the Clark St landscaping, sidewalk pressure washing...keeping the area nice, clean and maintained helps attract customers

- Jim - I would agree that keeping the street looking good and clean is hugely important. We subsidize some artwork which is relatively expensive but needed. Important to be attractive and a destination...
- Jim--We've also talked about security in the area, with what happened when various businesses were shut down and some looted...We've had discussion about whether we are responsible for providing additional security and I think it is important. The fact that we are such an attractive destination and a good reputation is that we're a very secure area of the city—people don't think twice about getting mugged or having something bad happen. Is that a service of the SSA? Or do we somehow get other city departments to help us out on that?

What challenges need to be addressed?

- Jennifer Ames – Vacancy, having some of the retail shops sitting empty and looking trashed and crummy inside is a real distraction. All the work that done to beautify the street is thrown for a curveball when you've got places that are vacant and not well maintained.
- Tom Claxton – I'd agree with that sentiment...We have to try to make peace with that or beautify it. Some business are painting what they've boarded up and try to make murals... a lot of business have been struggling for a year and we would love to have the neighborhood look as inviting as possible. There's quite a few people living in the alleys behind stores which creates a health situation...so that is a challenge that we have to try to work through. Overall beautification and cleanup is a priority for this spring.
- Jim – Missed opportunity is attracting people to come to Clark Street from other nearby destinations -- so much going on at the lakefront (beach volleyball, the museum, the zoo) Would be great to consider some sort of transportation mechanism to capture those people so they choose Clark as a dining option.
- Holly Lodarek—biggest challenge will be getting people back out on the street, having events and getting people back onto Clark to explore areas they haven't been before
- Jennifer Ames—there are some “dead zones” along Clark and people might not venture past the areas they are familiar with
 - Would be good to create a business directory/amenity map that all Clark St businesses could have to advertise all there is to offer
 - May be able to find companies that could print this for free with advertisements

Any questions about Special Service Areas or SSA #23?

- Melanie—to get buy in and signatures of support, we should estimate the costs as dollars per month
- Jennifer—do we do a direct mailing?



- Scott—yes, we will send a postcard to every taxpayer in advance of the community meetings
- In addition there is a more formal notice process (twice) in advance of the public hearing
- Other communications will also happen over email
- Usually mailing or email on its own won't get people to sign -- you also need personal interaction

Next Steps

Advisory Committee Meeting #2: April 8th at 3:30pm via Zoom

The next advisory committee meeting will focus on the tax levy rates. Teska will provide information regarding the tax base, proposed 2022 budget, maximum rate and annual rate options at the next meeting. Jessica Wobbekind will email the committee with login information for the April 8th meeting via Zoom.
