



Special Service Area #32 Reconstitution | Date: May 2nd, 2024 | Advisory Committee Meeting #1

Date: May 2nd, 2024 | Location: Jamaica Jerk Villa, 642- 648 W 79th St

Attendees:

Advisory Committee

- Kam Beard, *Property Owner*
- Shirley Bryant, *Resident*
- Frank Dillard
- Pastor Mauren Dishmon, *Zion Temple*
- Tim Howard, *New Joy Divine*
- Cynthia Love, *Block by Block*
- Yolanda Manuel, *Sneed Hardware*
- Yvonne Manuel, *Resident*
- Jasmin McCalpin, *Cook County 3rd District*
- Martha & Peter McKnight, *Jerk Villa*
- Aaron Royster, *Greater Auburn Gresham Development Corp.*

Chatham Business Association

- Jennipher Adkins, *Interim Executive Director*
- Melinda Kelly

Alderman

- David Moore, *17th Ward*

Teska Associates, Inc.

- Scott Goldstein, *Principal*
- Benito Garcia, *Associate*

City of Chicago

- Onieda Pate, *City Planner*
- Mark Roschen, *Assistant Commissioner*

Meeting Summary:

Alderman Moore, 17th Ward opened the meeting by thanking everyone for attending, thanking the owners of Jamaica Jerk Villa for hosting, and a brief prayer by Pastor Dishmon. Ald. Moore indicated an SSA is needed to provide more focus to the corridor, to fill in vacancies, to bring in more people, and make 79th St a destination like other Chicago neighborhoods. Ald. Moore hopes an SSA can be a tool to help bring like-minded business & property owners together to address immediate concerns. He wants to see “businesses working together.”

He proceeded to invite the owners of Jamaica Lake Villa to talk a little about their business. They were very humbled and said their business “started out small and in time had to grow”. They contributed their success to community support and the 17th Ward. They also “want to see the community grow like downtown.”



"Whatever we can do as a business, as an individual, we're here to support."

- *Jamica Lake Villa Owners*

Advisory Committee followed by introducing themselves.

CBA supports SSA #32 because it echoes their goal of improving the commercial corridor and helping businesses succeed.

She noted CBA is focused on economic development and it takes time, relationships, and feedback to identify core issues happening at the community level. An SSA can help with this by prioritizing needed services and when reinforced by other resources such as CBA's Small Business Administration (SBA) Navigator Program, they can address those needs. "Communication is key when dealing with owners and an SSA is good tool to start that."

Melinda introduced Mark Roschen, *City of Chicago*, to provide an overview of the SSA program. "This is a community led process" Mark stated, and the City is extending its taxing authority to the SSA provider so that it can direct more attention to the local business community.

Scott Goldstein, *Teska Associates, Inc.*, briefly introduced himself by listing a few examples the small firm specializes in, such as community and economic planning and in this case, SSAs. He also said he will elaborate further on the SSA program, such as how an SSA operates, the role of the Advisory Committee, the Needs Assessment Survey, and how specifically SSA services can help business and property owners. He emphasized that an SSA contributes to a community fund, funds are applied to that district, and the district benefits from funds.

Onieda Pate, *City of Chicago*, introduced herself as the SSA Program Manager for CBA and provided the following overview:

Ald. Moore thanked the owners and ended by saying he too is working hard to "making the 17th Ward a better

Melinda Kelly, Chatham Business Association (CBA) continued by stating the purpose of this meeting is to provide input into the reconstitution Special Service Area (SSA) #32 along 79th Street between Damen and Lafayette Avenue. The Advisory Committee is being asked to review and recommend the boundary and tax rate for the district to provide services that improve the quality of the business community and corridor. The



- An SSA is a district, a funding source to provide additional services by way of a self-imposed tax; the City does not require anyone to have an SSA.
- There are 55 SSAs and the program is very flexible in how the SSA provider allocates funds into the five categories (Customer Attraction, Public Way Aesthetics, Sustainability & Public Places, Economic & Business Development, Public Health & Safety Programs, SSA Management, and Personnel)
- Administration costs in last two categories cannot be more than 30% and funds can only be spent in the district.
- Examples of how other SSAs have spent their funds include customer attraction and public way aesthetics, which have become the largest budget items in recent years, followed by landscaping, special events, and safety programs.
- There are two entities – service provider and the commission; the service provider administers and manages the SSA and reports to the City while commissioners propose levy, reviews vendor contracts, approves meeting minutes/agenda, and authorizes payments from the SSA account.
- SSAs follow the City Establishment Ordinance, which states it must be renewed every 10 – 15 years, defines the boundary, sets the tax rate cap, expiration date, and commissioner number + qualifications and their tasks.
- Two community meetings must take place for support. A total of 20% signature support is needed with 10% due on June 14 and the remaining 10% due by August 1.
- The timeline for the application is due June 14th followed by a public hearing in October – November; the SSA establishment begins in 2025 and funds become available in August 2025.

Scott Goldstein provided more detail on SSA services:

- Customer Attraction is a big part of SSAs as funds can be used to promote and host special events, business marketing and promotion, branding, networking, streetlight banners, and customized print materials.
- Public Way Aesthetics are more physically based and highly visible, allowing funds to provide snow plowing, art murals, litter abatement, landscaping maintenance, and sidewalk power washing. If there's a recession or capital improvement project, an SSA can help with this.



- Sustainability refers to things that an SSA is going to take care of and potentially work with other entities such as CDOT for corridor maintenance, which can include installation of bike racks, landscaping, and planters.
- Economic & Business Development focuses on networking, promoting partner resources, and promoting programs that help the business community.
- Public Health & Safety helps with graffiti removal, upkeep of public spaces, and marketing programs that promote the wellbeing of the community.

Scott Goldstein underscored local businesses and organizations unite to determine how funds are spent and emphasized funds remain in the district to be invested. Everything is local. This is the role of the Advisory Committee, identifying what the issues are and determining what services can be used to resolve them. He shifted to explain what the cost of an SSA is by starting with the difference between what the annual and maximum rate is.

The annual rate sets the tax levy for each year.

The annual rate was 1.74% before it expired.

The maximum rate sets the tax cap for the next ten years.

SSA #32 had a 2% tax rate cap prior to expiring.

Taxes are based on Equalized Assessed Value as determined by the Cook County Assessor. Two examples of properties located in SSA #32 are below:

EAV Property Value	Proposed Max Rate: 1.75%	Former Max Rate: 2.00%
\$25,000	\$437	\$500
\$50,000	\$875	\$1,000

A taxpayer owning a property with an EAV of \$25,000 would pay \$437 for one year ($\$25,000 \times 1.75\% = \437). Formerly, the maximum rate was 2%, which would have cost \$500 for the year ($\$25,000 \times 2\% = \500). The same calculations are applied for a property with an EAV of \$50,000. The 1.75% rate would result in a SSA budget of \$382,000.

After discussion with the committee, Melinda Kelly proposed to lower the maximum tax rate to 1.75%. The Advisory Committee agreed to pursue the lower rate as a way to keep the cost down to local property owners. The Annual Rate would be set each year but would not be able to exceed 1.75%.



Q & A:

Question 1: Is the SSA tax applied to all properties, including residential?

- Only properties in the SSA district will be taxed but if there is a residential building or mixed-use building (commercial on ground level and residential above), everyone is taxed the same. Non-taxable properties such as a nonprofit or religious institution that already do not pay property taxes will continue to be exempt.

Question 2: Are there TIFs that overlap the SSA?

- Scott confirmed there are 3 TIFs that overlap the SSA, 67th & Wentworth, 79th St Corridor, 79th St/Highway, and 79th/Vincennes.

Question 3: Referring to the SSA Budget Comparison slide, is line item 6 (SSA Management [*audit, rent, supplies*]) a one-time fee?

- Scott noted that Management and Personnel cover expenses like audits, rent, and staff. Total Management and Personnel fees cannot exceed 30% of the SSA budget.

Question 4: Why set the maximum tax rate lower than it was before?

- Melinda Kelly said the goal is to not have a high rate and ensure businesses are not financially strained. There are other financial resources the SSA can pursue, and it makes sense to have a low rate since the SSA will just be starting.
- Mark Roschen clarified once the Advisory Committee agrees on the maximum rate, it will be on the signature form as support is garnered. Once signed, it cannot be changed. However, if the maximum rate does need to be modified, the community meeting process needs to start again.
- Ald. Moore agreed with lowering the maximum tax rate and added he wants to see both residents and commissioners working together to make informed decisions. Commissioners will be more involved because they are paying into the district.

Question 5: With the former SSA #32 expired, will former pending items also be included with this new SSA?

- Mark Roschen replied that this will technically be a new SSA and funds for the new SSA will start with a new budget decided by the commissioners.

Question 6: Why pay for something that the City already does and should be doing?

- Ald. Moore said the SSA services are an extension of City services and provided an example of street sweeping; it can occur only once a week in the morning, however, by the afternoon,



the street may have litter again. Frequent services are what the SSA provides, allowing a contractor to come out and maintain the corridor, removing litter, and keeping up with trash receptacles.

- He gave another example of hiring a security company to monitor the corridor if businesses cannot afford their own.

Next Steps:

Upcoming meetings are:

- Advisory Committee Meeting #2 | Thursday, May 16 at 1:00-2:30 via Zoom
 - Click [here](#) for Zoom link
 - Meeting ID: 861 1135 6203 | Passcode: 316296
 - Mobile: 1(312)626-6799 | 86111356203# US (Chicago)
- Community Meeting #1 | Thursday, May 30 at 1:00 – 2:30 via Zoom
 - Click [here](#) for Zoom link
 - Meeting ID: 832 1394 1981 | Passcode: 828259
 - Mobile: 1(312)626-6799
- Community Meeting #2 | Thursday, June 6 at 10:00 – 11:30 AM In Person (site TBD)
- SSA Package Submittal and 10% of Signature Support Deadline | June 14
- Remaining 10% Signature Support Deadline | Aug 1

Scott Goldstein encouraged everyone to take the Needs Assessment Survey which is important in determining what services need to be prioritized. Click [here](#) to access the survey.