Special Service Area #76 Commission

Date: July 21, 2026
Time: 3:00 p.m.
Location: The Magnificent Mile Association Offices / Hybrid
Attendance: Stephanie Knight (virtual), Julie Cameron, Savas Er (virtual) (Commissioners); Austin Faison, Kimberly Bares, Liz Gilbert, Glenn White, Sarah Kedas, Drew Polinsky (virtual) (TMMA Staff); Randall Harrington (Ward 42), Oscar Gomez (Starbucks), Justine Pugliese (virtual) (360Chicago), Gail Spreen (Public)

Call to Order and Introductions

The meeting was called to order and attendees introduced themselves. Commissioners participating included Julie Cameron, Stephanie Knight, and Savas Er. Staff and guests from The Magnificent Mile Association and district stakeholders were also present.

Approval of Previous Meeting Minutes

The Commission reviewed the minutes of the previous meeting. A correction was requested to reflect Gail Spreen's attendance.

Motion: Stephanie Knight moved to approve the minutes as amended. Savas Er seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

2026 Budget and Financial Forecast

Staff presented an updated 2026 financial forecast incorporating expenditures and accruals through June. Given that SSA #76 is scheduled to conclude at the end of 2026, the Commission discussed the importance of ensuring remaining resources are strategically allocated to eligible projects and programs.

Staff reviewed projected spending across district marketing, public way aesthetics, economic and business development, public health and safety, and administration.

The Commission discussed projected category variances and the potential reallocation of funds between existing budget lines. Staff estimated approximately $80,000 remained available for additional allocation after accounting for current commitments and projected expenses.

District Marketing

Liz Gilbert provided an update on district marketing activities. Existing funding is expected to support digital marketing, influencer partnerships, the Magnificent Mile Lights Festival, Shopping Week, website development, travel industry partnerships, and seasonal programming.

Staff reported that the $190,000 marketing allocation was expected to be fully utilized. The Commission discussed whether additional available resources should be directed toward Lights Festival programming or other district priorities.

Wayfinding

Staff presented the results of the wayfinding RFP process. Three proposals were received and evaluated based on established SSA and Magnificent Mile Association priorities.

The project scope includes assessment of existing conditions and development of recommendations for a cohesive district-wide wayfinding system, including physical and digital signage, accessibility, branding, maintenance, and implementation strategy.

Staff recommended Lamar Johnson Collaborative (LJC) for the $40,000 project based on experience, local presence, and ability to complete the work within budget and timeline.

The Commission discussed opportunities to expand the scope, including updated district maps, improved signage at Jane Byrne Plaza and Water Tower Park, and future implementation phases. Staff noted that additional funding opportunities could be considered following initial project kickoff.

Motion: Stephanie Knight moved to approve Lamar Johnson Collaborative for the wayfinding project. Savas Er seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Safety and Security

Staff and Glenn White presented an update on district safety programming and a revised proposal for off-duty law enforcement coverage through United Security.

The revised plan increases coverage from two to four officers on Thursdays through Sundays, with staggered shifts from 12:00 p.m. to 10:00 p.m. The expanded program will operate through September 30, increasing the contract from $40,000 to $55,000.

Motion: The Commission approved the revised security plan. The motion passed unanimously.

Staff also reported positive crime trends across multiple reporting periods, including reductions in theft year-over-year.

Business Improvement District Update

Staff provided an update on efforts to establish a Business Improvement District as the successor to SSA #76.

At the time of the meeting, approximately 38% of the proposed BID levy had been secured through signed support. Staff noted that at least 50% support is required to advance the process.

Staff reviewed adjustments to the proposed BID structure, including a reduced overall budget, revised district boundaries, and a hotel tier capping contributions at current SSA levels.

Commissioners and stakeholders discussed ongoing outreach efforts and the urgency of achieving the required threshold.

Public Comment

Staff provided updates on district initiatives including City Market at Water Tower Place, Flowers on the Avenue, ongoing maintenance activities, and coordination with the Mayor's Office regarding Michigan Avenue improvements.

Adjournment

A motion to adjourn was made and seconded. The motion passed, and the meeting was adjourned.