



## **Chicago-Main-Dempster SSA Placemaking Committee**

Monday, May 16, 3:00 pm  
La Principal, 700 Main St. Evanston, IL

Members Present: M. Turley, A. George, E. Young, B. Amado, J. Oldani, L. Rosenberg  
Staff Present C. Plante

### 1. Call to order

A. George called meeting to order at 3:05 pm and announced C. Duquet's resignation from the board and the committee.

J. Oldani reported that the bylaws require that the seat be filled by someone located north of Greenleaf. The vacancy can be filled by the board for the remainder of the term.

A. George asked about whether we should start reaching out to people in the area to see if anybody is interested ahead of next board meeting.

### 2. Approval of April minutes

E. Young moved to approve minutes

B. Amado seconded

Approved 4-0

### 3. Report on planters

C. Plante reported that all 32 planters have been planted, including the 16 new ones.

Payment for the first installment of \$7,500 has been made to the vendor. The pots will be replanted 2 more times this year.

### 4. Bike racks

C. Plante introduced the map of proposed bike rack locations, with 8 racks spread throughout Main & Dempster area, including 2 on Chicago Ave (Trader Joe's and Hoosier Mama) based on the Main Street Merchants' Association's original proposal from last year and guidance from public works regarding necessary setbacks and sidewalk width.

A. George asked about making a recommendation to the full board regarding color.

M. Turley expressed concern that we should continue to wait until the logo and branding is resolved so the colors can be consistent.

C. Plante suggested that they could be a neutral like black or bare metal.

A. George moved to approve the locations and budget now, and plan to actually place the order in July when the colors are resolved.

E. Young seconded.

## Approved 4-0.

### 5. Other business

A. George said that some concerns have been raised by area businesses about the mural proposal.

J. Oldani reported that at least one area realtor has reported that prospective buyers always ask about safety and crime problems whenever they see a mural. This has come up in other discussions people are having with customers. Customers and businesses are expressing concern that it may not communicate the right message about neighborhood identity.

It's more important to have the streets be clean and buildings well maintained. Art should come after that.

M. Turley added that another comment she had heard from people was that murals are what neighborhoods do when they don't have money to actually fix things. It was described as putting lipstick on a pig.

A. George asked if we should pull back on the mural proposal then.

J. Oldani said that public art is important, but that there should be more focus on maintenance and infrastructure. We don't want it to look like Kenilworth, but the demographic profile presented by the Main Streets consultants suggests that it should be less shabby.

A. George said there are limits to what can be done on the infrastructure and built environment front; murals are something that can be done relatively quickly with the budget that we have. What are some other things we can do now to address these concerns and make a visible impact?

### 6. 2-year planning

J. Oldani suggested reaching out to local architects (McGuire Igleski) to see if anybody would be willing to fill the vacant board seat.

C. Plante said we can reach out. Added that one of the biggest budget line items during initial creation of the SSA is public way maintenance, and we haven't used any of that budget yet. This could be used for things like street sweeping, powerwashing, extra garbage pickups, gardening/landscape maintenance. The economic development division has also been working to encourage businesses in the area to apply for storefront grants to replace awnings and signage that's currently in disrepair.

E. Young suggested getting more support from elected officials on the viaducts, maybe a petition drive.

M. Turley said if we're going to move forward with the mural idea, we need to be mindful of the negative feedback we've had about it so far and how to respond.

A. George asked about how many people we've been hearing this from.

M. Turley said about 4 of her clients, J. Oldani had a few more.

C. Plante said that the CTA and Evanston Arts Council will still need to review and approve whatever art is selected, and will probably do so with these concerns in mind. Because CTA is saying the timeline is going to be longer than we'd anticipated, it's probably a better use of time right now to start thinking about what else can or should be done to beautify the neighborhood before murals can move forward.

A. George said that we should have a high bar for murals, and that if we don't have a good proposal, we don't move forward. Should invite J. Lasik to participate in selection meeting in June. Have more community input on the murals. If CTA stalls too long, it might be better to refocus on private property.

M. Turley added that murals on private buildings might also not have the same sort of negative connotation that murals on the viaducts would.

A. George asked the group for suggestions as to what else the group could do to beautify the neighborhood with the budget we have.

C. Plante suggested sidewalk powerwashing and window washing. On wayfinding signage, the City is rolling out new wayfinding signage (black and blue signs on the roads). They generally want consistency and avoiding excessive clutter on the right of way. Light pole banners should be done sooner once we have a logo.

M. Turley asked to see templates for wayfinding signage - there was a meeting at some point where templates were presented.

A. George agreed. Asked to price out wayfinding signs for the main corners - static and ones with changeable nameplates listing businesses.

M. Turley asked to also look at LED ones. Also suggested a more organized effort to talk with elected officials about cleaning up the Metra viaducts.

C. Plante reported that we should also see some new garbage cans replacing the oil barrels on Dempster street soon.

A. George suggested starting to get quotes for light pole banners so we're ready to move on it once the logo is finalized.

#### 7 Adjournment

A. George moved to adjourn at 4:30

**Adjourned 4-0.**