



Office of the City Clerk



F2012-79

Office of the City Clerk

City Council Document Tracking Sheet

Meeting Date:	10/31/2012
Sponsor(s):	Mendoza, Susana A. (Clerk)
Type:	Communication
Title:	Opposition to reconstitution and expansion of S.S.A. No. 57 (formerly S.S.A. No. 29) to W Grand Ave, 1800-1900 block
Committee(s) Assignment:	

October 23, 2012

Alderman Proco Joe Moreno
1st Ward Alderman
City Hall
121 North LaSalle Street
Room 300
Chicago, Illinois 60602

2012 OCT 24 PM 12:48
CITY CLERK

Re: Opposition to the reconstitution and expansion of the SSA 57 formerly SSA 29 to the 1800-1900 block of West Grand Avenue, Chicago IL 60622

Dear Alderman Moreno,

We are writing this letter to you in formal opposition to the proposed reconstitution of and expansion of the SSA 57, formerly known as SSA 29. I understand that the opposition process requires this letter under the 35 ILSC 200 Property Tax Code pursuant in Section 27-35 of the Illinois Property Tax Code, Article 27 Special Service Area.

Here are some reasons why we are opposed to the SSA 57:

We are small business owners and residents who have helped gentrify this neighborhood by maintaining our surroundings, and working together as a team. Our property owners are comprised of seniors, young urban pioneers starting their careers, long-time residents who prefer to and depend on living in a light industrial area with low taxes, and small shop owners.

Many of us have already lost money on our real estate investments, are struggling to make ends meet, and simply cannot afford an additional tax.

We are all in agreement that **we wish to be excluded from the proposed SSA 57 expansions to our block**, which is at the South tip of the proposed SSA 57 expansion. The proposed expansion boundaries along the 1800-1900 block of Grand Avenue are primarily residential and the primary business is commercial and light industrial to the trades and not to the general public. Moreover, our neighbors at the 1900-2000 block of Grand have already elected to not participate in the SSA 57 expansion. The proposed SSA 57 expansion is unwarranted and unnecessary, as the owner of 1810 West Grand Avenue stated in the open public hearings in front of the Finance Committee on October 12, 2012. If enacted, she and her brother will not be able to continue to live in the home that her family has owned for four generations. Others have also stated that the financial burden that this would bring would force them to layoff some of their workforce.

We appreciate that Grand Ave. has a unique industrial character that would not be well served by blending it with the Chicago Ave. West Town Chamber/SSA umbrella of services. It would dilute the interesting identity of Grand Ave., as well as Grand Ave. does not envision itself as the Chicago Ave business corridor. Our identity comes from the businesses and people that live here, not by branding an outside identity via West Town banners to its street poles or flowerpots on the corner.

The Chamber of Commerce claims to have offered a public process with the notification via mail of meeting notices in April 2012. This claim is completely false, as the Department of Housing and Economic Development was unable to provide said proof of service in response to a properly filed Freedom of Information request.

For the last 25 years or more we have exercised our due diligence to maintain our own properties, clean and shovel our sidewalks (as required by law) and never asked anyone to pay for our survival as the West Town Chamber of Commerce is attempting.

According to the Chamber of Commerce's own findings in a survey conducted to assess the "business owners" needs during the process of expanding SSA 29 (proposed SSA 57), the following points were in their own report* and do not add up to a unanimous vote to actually even be part of the expansion:

- Survey response rate was only 11% as a total of only 30 surveys were returned.
- Of the respondents only 7.5 were property owners (There are over 1700 PIN holders affected).
- Only 29% of respondents were satisfied with the SSA services currently being provided.
- As quoted "On average, all participants were slightly dissatisfied with all factors, including cleanliness, safety, foot traffic, building facades and neighborhood branding".
- According to the report, Alderman Waguespack was contacted when the SSA Advisory Committee could not reach a consensus on this boundary.
- The Advisory Committee noted property owner pushback, but decided to proceed, regardless.
- Review of the current proposed 2013 budget is \$661,768.00. It is a waste of tax dollars to continue to fund let alone expand a district that the business owners who operate within the district find their efforts of no value.

We feel the research and surveys omitted input from the directly impacted property owners who will absorb the increased tax burden of the proposed expansion. The Chamber of Commerce failed to exercise due diligence and include the property tax payers in any public process and was neither transparent or in the public interest.

This was highlighted in outpouring of opposition from property owners in attendance that stood up and passionately spoke against the SSA 57 expansion at the public hearings in front of the Finance Committee on October 12, 2012 at City Hall.

Had it not been for the vigilant eyes of those who were made aware at the last minute, this could have passed unnoticed until it was too late. Today, it is still not too late.

The cloaked and veiled manner in which the Chamber of Commerce has attempted to slip this 15-year tax past us is unconscionable. It is unacceptable in this day of increased taxes and limited financial resources to expand the SSA into primarily residential and commercial trade businesses for the sole purpose of increased funding for the Chamber of Commerce disguised as SSA activities.

Increased property taxes will have a direct negative impact and result in a further lowering of property values.

We are asking you to please stop this expansion into our 1800-1900 block of Grand Avenue (Wood to Wolcott).

If you have any questions regarding this objection, please contact us directly.

A petition from the opposition on our block is attached.

Sincerely,

1800-1900 West Grand Avenue Chicago Illinois 60622

Contact: Cathleen Cooke

PIN: 17-07-226-006

Cathleen Cooke
1847 W. Grand Ave.
Chicago, IL 60622
Ph: 847-630-1129

Email: cathleenrhiannon@gmail.com

*Excerpts from West Town Special Services District Plan

**cc: Honorable Mayor Rahm Emanuel, 14th Ward Alderman Edward Burke
Finance Committee Chairman, 32nd Ward Alderman Scott Waguespack, 26th Ward
Alderman Roberto Maldonado, 27th Ward Alderman Walter Burnett, Jr., Chicago City
Clerk Susana A. Mendoza**

PETITION
TO THE CHICAGO CITY
COUNCIL

Finance Committee

AND

ALDERMAN

PROCO JOE MORENO

REPRESENTING THE 1st WARD

Formerly the 26th WARD

**Based on the authority granted to the
alderman by the City of Chicago's Tax Code:**

We the property owners of the 1800-1900
block of Grand Avenue request you to please
stop this expansion into our block of Grand
Avenue (Wood to Wolcott) and remove our
PINs from SSA 57.

**We have collectively elected not to
accept the services or participate in the
SSA 57 Expansion**