



APPROVED

**Central Street Evanston  
Board Meeting Minutes  
Wednesday, November 8, 2023, 9:00am  
Zoom Meeting**

**Attendees**

Peter O'Malley  
Bane Srdjevic  
Aim Larrabee  
Dylan Johnson  
Eric Green  
Mari Barnes  
Stacia DeSalvo  
Paul Zalmezak  
Jim Konrad

**Staff:**

Angela Shaffer

**Not Present:**

Paula Danoff

**Minutes**

I. **Governance:** Peter O'Malley

Peter announced that we have a quorum and the meeting was called to order at 9:01am.

- a. Peter asked if anyone would like to motion to approve the **9/13/23 Board Meeting Minutes**. Mari motioned to approve the meeting minutes. Stacia seconded the motion. **The Board unanimously agreed to approve the minutes.**
- b. Peter welcomed new Board Members Bane Srdjevic and Jim Konrad.
- c. Peter opened up a discussion regarding the annual meeting and asked if there were any comments or feedback from the annual meeting.

**Dylan** commented that the free food was top notch.

**Eric** said he would like us to really try and reach out and get more people in attendance for next year's meeting. Let them know we have free food and drink.

**Peter** asked how we can get more attendance. He's not sure if people really understand the intent of our meetings and that there is free food and beer.

**Angela** commented that last year we comfortably had room for 35 people at the LUSH space and a set budget. We made last year's attendance goal 35 and did the same for this year. This year we had 7-8 people who RSVP'd but couldn't

make it at the last minute. Angela commented that she was pleased with the guests who did attend, because they were from businesses we typically don't see involved in our Central Street activities. This gave us the opportunity to connect with new individuals for the first time. Angela also mentioned that we need to be budget conscious for our annual meetings, so we still need to set attendance goals.

**Peter** agreed with Angela that that we need a particular attendance number to aim for so we can account for budget and space. He mentioned we did have leftovers this year. He suggested having informal discussions with business owners throughout the year about what we are doing and remind them we have an annual meeting to showcase what we did throughout the year. Peter said it's a good chance to hear from people on the street and that we can make more of a conscious effort in 2024.

**Peter and Eric** discussed the idea of setting up informal business owner gatherings throughout the course of 2024 to talk about what's going on. The idea would be to share issues and success stories about what they are doing to bring in more customers. Peter would be willing to host one at Beer on Central and Eric said he would be willing to host at Ten Mile House.

**Mari** agreed that we need more informal gatherings throughout the year and that the gatherings would get people used to knowing that the group meets. She also cautioned that we need to be careful the sessions don't turn into complaining sessions and we aim to have a purpose for the gatherings.

**Dylan** suggested that although he's pushing for more digital communications, he thinks it would be nice to offer a paper invite to each business to make them feel special. Angela agreed that would be a nice touch.

**Bane** asked if there is an online chat tool, like Slack, that could be implemented for businesses to communicate with one another regarding various issues. He said it can accommodate a group of up to 100 people and thinks it's a great community builder. He offered to help implement something like that for Central Street. Bane asked Angela how we communicate with our businesses on a regular basis.

**Angela** said online communications are in the form of newsletters and emails, and that she finds emails have been most effective, especially with timely communications. Angela said she's used Slack before and would not have the time to moderate conversations on a daily basis, but that she's open to trying new things.

**Mari** said she doesn't believe the businesses would take the time to use the tool and that Angela is better off with in-person conversations with business owners. She said good old fashioned 1:1 conversations cannot be replaced.

## **II. Treasurer's Report: Dylan Johnson**

- a. **Dylan** reported total cash in the bank as of 10/31/23 = **\$137,034**  
**SSA 7 - \$114,713**  
**SSA 8 - \$22,321**

**The 6300 Public Way Aesthetics Account should be \$27,740 less**, with a total balance remaining of \$18,000. The lighting deposit checks have not been cashed.

- b. **Audit Update:** The annual audit/990 tax form should be finished this week.
- c. **\$10K Accounts Receivable Line Item:** **Mari** noticed the Accounts Receivable line item for \$10,000 from Northwestern and asked whether she thinks we should count on getting the money and if it should remain in Accounts Receivable until then.

**Peter** said he's planning to talk with Dave Davis about this, since it's something Dave committed to. Peter feels confident that we'll get those dollars.

**Jim** said he didn't know much about the funds, but he can certainly follow up internally with Dave. Peter said Dave approached us about the monies and Central Street sent Northwestern an invoice.

- d. **Tax Levy:** **Peter** asked Angela about the additional tax levies and if we're expecting anything this year. Angela said no, and that we'll most likely be seeing three tax payments come through in 2024. Angela asked whether Paul can speak a little bit to that. **Paul** said he's hoping to see the payments get distributed by the end of January.

**Mari** reminded everyone that the City does not fund us and that the City is a passthrough for the taxes that get collected on our behalf.

**Peter** said he requested that our auditor prepare our 990s to clearly state where the funds come from and how they are collected and received. Angela confirmed that she's still waiting on a response from the auditor regarding this matter.

### III. Marketing/Event Updates: Angela Shaffer

Angela gave a **slideshow presentation** with an overview of marketing projects and events in the works.

- a. **Website Overview:** **Angela** presented a slide of the website draft. She said she's done an extensive amount of work on the website and is happy with the way it's coming together. It's an update from an informational website to a website that tells the Central Street story. She wanted to wait to launch the site until all major events have ended to avoid any interruptions. Angela also mentioned she's planning to draw attention to Central Street as having a design district. Angela increased the website budget by \$4K to allow for more content and changes. Angela asked Bane if he'd be willing to work with her on the review process as a way to be involved in the project and get involved with the Central Street Board. Bane agreed to work with Angela on this.
- b. **Holiday Direct Mail Piece:** New this year, Angela mailed a postcard to 20K households to spread the news about the annual holiday stroll and tree lighting.
- c. **Mural Notecard Project:** As a shopping incentive, Angela is working on getting quotes for photography and notecard printing. She'd like to see the notecards be used for Small Business Saturday or Later Night Thursday. Notecards free with purchase of a set spend amount.
- d. **Holiday Lights:** Angela reported the holiday lights are lit up and look pretty this year. She said she's very pleased that we added the extra block of lights on the east end leading up to Mustard's Last Stand.
- e. **Halloween Event Overview/Feedback:** Angela gave an overview of the successful Halloween event.

**Peter** suggested that he thought we had more than 800 people come to the annual Halloween event, which he thinks is bigger in attendance than the 2022 event.

**Angela** received feedback from Marie, the owner of Leonidas, who said several community members came into the business for the first time and she saw them come back. She believed the crowd this year was a crowd that would actually come back and support Central Street.

**Angela** suggested we rethink the schedule for next year and have a set time for the entire event and people can decide what activity they want to do and when. It was too complicated to try and have a set schedule of events for everyone.

**Stacia** said the social media image was a bit confusing and didn't show the breakdown of all the events and just the overall timespan of the event.

**Mari** agreed that we just plan everything at once. She mentioned that the park had a bigger crowd before the DJ arrived. Angela agreed.

**Peter** thought the Halloween event was a great success. He asked Angela if she received any feedback from the businesses regarding the \$10 candy stipend.

**Angela** said businesses really appreciated the incentive and some were pleasantly surprised. People didn't complain as much this year like they did last year.

- f. **Holiday Stroll and Tree Lighting Event Updates:** Angela said she's finalizing a few details but everything is shaping up nicely. New this year we have a Santa warming house for photos with Santa at Berkshire Hathaway and a sleigh in the park for photos. She said she hired Santa for more hours this year, so she's planning to have Santa start on the west end.
- g. **Event Brainstorm for 2024:** Angela said May is National Mystery Month. McHenry does a murder mystery throughout their district and a scavenger hunt. That could be a fun idea for Central Street. Angela also said it would be a good idea to incorporate more performing arts into our 2024 event plan. Paula will be working with Gordon Salon for their big Trashion Show event in the spring of 2024. Central Street businesses are welcome to get involved.

#### **IV. Business Updates:** Angela Shaffer

- a. **West End:** **Angela** reported that we have new exciting businesses: The Fat Shallot restaurant, Dr. Panzer's concierge medical office, and Third Coast Pediatric Dentistry. **Angela** also reported that Batti Studio of Architectural Arts, a stained glass studio, is coming in. **Paul** asked for that address and said they used to be located by the YMCA and that this will be an exciting addition to Central Street.
- b. **Central Central:** Angela reported a new dog groomer on Prairie Avenue called Rogue Dog Grooming.

**Peter** mentioned the LUSH property, made up of the former library space and former restaurant space, was sold to a single owner. He said the owner of that building came to the annual meeting. **Peter** and **Angela**

both agreed that they would not share any detailed information about the business until the owner of the property is ready for the news to be public.

- c. **East End:** Angela reported two new businesses - Growing Up Green and Enclave Coworking space. Enclave is building out two offices next to Db3 Donuts.

**Angela** asked Paul about the building next to Hewn. Paul said he had an upcoming meeting with the project manager and will get an update. **Paul** said they've had some issues with the neighboring property owner.

**Eric** asked if there were any takers of the old Prairie Joe's space yet and whether Angela knew anything about the massage parlor across from Ten Mile House. **Angela** reported she was not aware of any new updates.

#### **V. City Updates:** Paul Zalmezak

- a. **Evanston Thrives:** **Paul** said in a recent Economic Development Committee Meeting that they got the approval to launch the Evanston Thrives website branding. The goal is to create a centralized calendar in order to start working the branding effort. Paul said they hired the All Together team to work with each district to identify and come up with a plan for placemaking infrastructure needs.
- b. **Independence Park:** At the December 6th Economic Development Committee Meeting, **Paul** said he will be formally asking for \$500K for the building of a dining edge on the south end of Independence Park. The \$500K would be pulled from the allocated ARPA funds. It will be like Fountain Square without the Fountain, and Central Street can call it whatever they want. A bathroom is not included in this plan.

**Peter** asked if having a letter of support from the Central Street Board might be helpful. Paul said it could be helpful and believes this project is critical for the post Covid era. Paul said grassroots reinforcement would be helpful. Peter asked if the Board should send something to members and ask for feedback? Angela said not to send to members in case it doesn't work out.

**Aim** and **Stacia** offered to help draft a letter.

- c. **Parking:** **Paul** said the City is working on a parking campaign to notify the community and business districts that if you upload the parking app during the holidays you can get two free hours of parking daily with the code "Holiday 2023" November 22 - January 1. **Angela** agreed to help spread the word via social media and newsletters. **Peter** asked for some printed posters. Stacia suggested an optional printable. **Mari** said for 2024 we could also include parking information on our holiday posters and help promote early.

#### **VI. Northwestern Updates:** Jim Konrad

- a. **Peter** asked if Jim had any ideas to bring more students and staff to dine and shop on Central Street.

**Jim** said he's only a conduit for making connections but he can get ideas and connections for us. Jim asked Angela who she's been in touch with already.

**Angela** said she attends the quarterly community meetings and she's also been in touch with the NU foodie group called Spoon University. Angela said she talked with a representative of Spoon University about doing a Central Street restaurant week for students with dining deals to get people to Central Street.

**Jim** said he's been wanting to reenergize the Wildcard Advantage program. The primary intent originally was for the card to offer perks for faculty and staff for personal use. The card would give staff and students 10% off. Jim said he envisions a major cleanup of the program so it's only Evanston-Streeterville centric.

**Jim** said Northwestern also has a structured process for determining preferred vendors. He said they often have the occasional need for services, such as framing, and they can point the university in the direction of local vendors for those needs. Jim also said they have preferred caterers on campus, but there is no rule that says the university can't work with a local restaurant or business.

**Eric** said NU needs catering whether it's Medill or Kellogg. He's had trouble getting involved. Jim said he would follow up with Eric after the meeting.

**Peter** asked if Jim could connect us with their marketing partners. Jim said he would work on that.

**Meeting adjourned at 10:08 AM**