



APPROVED

Central Street Evanston Board Meeting Minutes Wednesday, May 14, 2025

Zoom Meeting

Attendees

Stacia DeSalvo
Dylan Johnson
Eric Green
Karen Graham
Drew Beckmann
Paula Danoff
Jim Konrad
Bane Srdjevic
Sarah Weitz
Paul Zalmezak

Staff:

Angela Shaffer

Agenda

I. Call Meeting to order: Stacia DeSalvo

The meeting was called to order at 9:02am.

- a. Approve [March 12 Meeting Minutes](#). Stacia asked for a motion to approve the March 12, 2025 minutes. Drew motioned to approve the March 12 meeting minutes. Dylan seconded the motion. The Board unanimously agreed to approve the minutes.

II. Treasurer's Report: Dylan Johnson

- a. Dylan reported total cash in the bank = **\$76,486**
- b. **SSA 7** = \$71,922
SSA 8 = \$4,564
- c. Line of Credit is officially signed and secured
- d. Tax Collection Invoices have been issued:
Total Expected = \$101,714.23
SSA 7 = \$75,185.55
SSA 8 = \$26,528.68

Angela asked Paul if the collection included restaurant Burl. Paul said the collection did not include Burl and he would have a discussion with Angela to determine the best way to address that.

e. Angela and the bookkeeper are working on the 2024 audit with Cheryl Rolfs.

III. **Marketing/Events/Business Updates:** Angela gave a [slideshow presentation](#) with an overview of marketing/event/business updates.

a) **MARKETING**

2025 Marketing Goals: Central Street 2.0 - Destination Central Street

Angela shared marketing goals for 2025 to make Central Street a destination.

- **Expand our reach:** Become a destination
- **Continue to fill vacancies:**
 - Angela reported continuing her outreach efforts to help fill vacancies and shared current vacancy updates:
 - Tag's Cafe Space:** Outdoor Cafe still working on the space
 - Former Starbuck's Space:** Negotiations taking too long
 - Former Prairie Joe's Space:** Tallgrass bar will be opening
 - Former Beth's Little Bakeshop:** Poplar Bakery coming in
 - Alchemist Wife** relocated west to be next to their other business - Follow Your Nose.
 - Alchemist Wife Space and former TJ Cullin's jewelry space:** Angela sent over an interested business to take both spaces.
 - Former FedEx space on Green Bay Road** has a new tenant: Arfit Dog Rehab. Physical Therapy and other services for dogs.
- **Engage Central Street businesses:** Angela still needs to pick a date.
- **Grow our social media:** On May 12 we reached a milestone of 5K followers.

2024 Annual Report

Angela shared the completion of the 2024 annual report. [Link to report.](#)

Stacia said she thinks there is some valuable information in the report that will be great for our businesses to read. She said it's very clear and concise.

- Angela highlighted that she initially thought we only had 18 signed leases for the year but with more research we had 20 signed leases in 2024.

EVENTS

2025 Event Goals: Central Street 2.0 - Destination Central Street

Angela shared event goals for 2025:

- Incorporate more arts & music into our events
- Find more money for events: sponsorships
- Increased event participation by businesses
- Continue to explore new event concepts: Destination events and consistent programming

Restaurant Week Overview: April 7 - 13

This new initiative was intended to shed light on Central Street restaurants in lieu of June's Takeout Tuesday. Highlights included:

- 14 participating restaurants
- Great press hits with new editors: Chicago Tribune, Patch, Chicago North Shore Moms, Daily Northwestern
- Celtic Knot sold 89 specials.
- Jilly's said they were busy all week and people really like the Prix Fixe specials.
- Pinto Thai saw elevated traffic on the weekend.
- Curt's Cafe requested more signage for future partnerships
- The Fat Shallot said we could stand to do even more marketing around this.

First Friday ALIVE Series:

Officially kicked off with [Spring's ALIVE!](#) on May 2:

- 22 businesses participated
- The weather was dreary. It was a fairly quiet night. There was some confusion because the Park District put out a notice saying First Fridays was cancelled.
- Angela talked with businesses and said they were glad we were trying a series event and thought it was a good idea and think it will eventually take off.

Reminder: Stacia said trying something new is how we find out if it works or not.

Takeout Picnic is back!

In partnership with Evanston's Starlight Concert Series, Central Street will host the annual Takeout Picnic on August 26. This is an all-expenses-paid opportunity for Central Street. Entertainment by bluegrass entertainers The Sullivan Sisters.

Busker Fest - Attempting to bring this to Central Street on September 20

It's a great destination event opportunity. Angela has been juggling construction matters and the City has been challenging to work with as far as getting permission to block off Stewart and take over Municipal Lot 4. Angela went to an initial City meeting April 23 and was told she could not block off all of Central and should leave the Municipal lot open. Angela sent several emails to request a change in the decision. She did not hear back, even when she offered to pay the parking lot fee. Time is of the essence, because we need to pitch for sponsorships in order to make this event happen. Paul said he would step in and help get some resolve on the matter.

Going forward in 2026, Paul said his department is having discussions to hopefully make it possible for SSAs to have events but not have to pay corresponding City fees, since the City wants these events to take place. Paul suggested Angela work with Andy and Katherine and bring these fee issues to the Economic Development Committee.

IV. Evanston Sustainability Grant: Stacia

[Link](#) to grant opportunity

Stacia mentioned that last year Angela brought a couple of options and opportunities to the Board's attention, including a reusable container company and the opportunity to talk with Mary Beth from Collective Resource Compost about implementing other options. Stacia would like to apply for this grant for a community drop off site for our district in

Independence Park. For example a community drop off station for compostable cups to get in the right place instead of the garbage. Businesses are making an effort, but once the cups leave the restaurant they go in the garbage.

Angela asked Stacia what she was thinking as far as composting in the park, since the Park District manages the park.

Dylan asked if it would be a compost bin added to the park next to the garbage can. Stacia said she'd like to ask Mary Beth about it. She said she's seen it in Skokie and in other places. Dylan said he would be open to being a part of those conversations.

Stacia asked Paul if he wanted to add anything. Paul said it's definitely a growing trend. Paul said Main-Dempster is approaching a similar initiative. Brian Zimmerman would have more details. Paul said community-wide Evanston has composting subsidized at 50%.

Eric said Boulder Colorado has a pretty extensive residential composting program but doesn't know how it plays into the businesses.

Paul said we also need to make sure we discuss getting the right containers from an aesthetic point of view. He said we want to maintain a quaint district feel.

Stacia asked Angela how to go about moving forward. Angela deferred to Paul, since it's a Park District property. Paul said he talks with Brian Zimmerman on the regular. Paul suggested a meeting with Dylan, Stacia, Paul, Brian and someone from the sustainability team. Paul to provide the contact information.

V. Business/City Updates: Angela/Paul

a. Construction Update

Angela reported she has been attending weekly construction meetings and shares any questions or concerns from the businesses. She said the free parking is still confusing to some, because the meter boxes can't be turned off and people are still paying.

Angela reminded Paul that we need to get the Birds of Concern mural on the corner of Central/Green Bay covered up prior to June 18, when that corner is scheduled for construction.

Paula asked Paul what's happening with the mural under the viaduct. Paul said he and Angela looked at the mural and prior to construction the wall had been crumbling. Angela said she reached out to Art Encounter and Leah Pinsky said there is no longer a maintenance agreement for that project and they don't have anything to do with the mural at this point. Paula said it was her understanding the murals were supposed to be maintained for 15-20 years. Paul said his new colleague Juelle Daley is someone he brought on board to address the preservation and maintenance of all public art and she would be someone to have a conversation with about the mural.

Eric asked Paul if he knows when the street closure will open under the Metra viaduct. He said there are no real detour signs at this point and it's confusing. Angela said she will ask at the construction meeting later in the day. Construction meetings take place on Wednesdays at 1:30 PM.

b. Other Business

Angela had an introductory meeting with Councilmember Parielle Davis, who is also our new 7th Ward Alderwoman. Councilmember Davis said all the Wards talk about how they want to be more like Central Street and we should pat ourselves on the back.

Gateway signs: Paul said a contractor has been working on the gateway sign designs and his team is waiting on internal approval to get them fabricated. This is part of the Evanston Thrives recommendations. The plan is to have signs installed before the end of the summer.

c. Independence Park

Angela reported that there is now electricity in the park and chairs and tables have been ordered. A park opening and ribbon cutting is planned for June 14 from 10 AM - 12 PM. The Park District said Central Street businesses are welcome to do something extra and Angela said we have one week to come up with any thoughts. Paula said the Evanston Art Center is having a special event from 10 AM - 4 PM that day that includes a community mural painting, ice cream truck and more activities. Angela will reach out to businesses to see if they want to offer a promotion of some sort.

VI. **Northwestern Updates: Jim/Eric**

Jim said from a budget perspective Northwestern is going through a lot this fiscal year budget and a lot of planning going into next year. All construction projects are moving along. With regard to Ryan Field, Central Street information and menus are inside the tent offsite. There are menus and contact information to place food orders for individual workers and group meetings.

Jim said the stadium will host a variety of events, possibly including farmers markets and art fairs. With regard to events, Paula asked Jim how that would work? She asked if she should reach out to Angela or Jim to coordinate and make sure there's not a conflict with calendars or any overlap, or if there's even the opportunity to work together to include our businesses in NU events. Jim doesn't have enough information yet regarding the process.

Jim said he still wants to keep the shuttle conversation going with Angela. He would like to find out how to push the limits on the shuttle program to extend into other districts.

Meeting Ended at 10:01 AM