

Downtown Evanston Executive Board Meeting
Wednesday, July 20, 2016 at 8am
Chicago North Shore Hilton Garden Inn

Meeting Minutes

Minutes are as interpreted by Downtown Evanston staff.

Executive Board Members present:

Andrew McDonald, Chris Mailing, Dan Kelch, Hank Goldman, Mike McGuigan

Guests: Paul Zalmezak and Howard Kain

Staff: Annie Coakley

Andrew called the meeting to order at 8:07am. Requested approval of meeting minutes, Chris approved, Hank seconded.

Treasurer's report

- Chris commented there is a variance in the NU contribution, likely timing.
- Annie reported that the audit shows they owe us \$5000 from last year, so that is coming in.
- Request that timing be added to explanations where needed. Chris mentioned we are not spending where we should be. Mike asked if public aesthetics was the banner program.
- Mike asked when video is complete, can it be used as a commercial in the movie theater?
- Add timing were needed on explanations. Chris says we are not spending as we should be.

SSA reconstitution discussion

Recon happens in 2019 what is expected?

Paul Z reported that the performing art center funding – developer is interested – TIF? Parking agreement? Wash/Mutual TIF is over in 2018, transit TIF is a possibility. 50 year-long TIFs and funds go to transit infrastructure.

How does Noyes/Foster impact downtown? We can't count on a TIF.

Dan asked if one TIF expires how long can it be before a new one is created?

Chris asked how much goes to the TIF?

Dan said, our goal has always been to increase our budget without asking Econ Dev. For additional funding and when the TIF expires, is that to be expected?

Paul Z commented when the TIF goes away – there is not an expectation for another Downtown TIF as it looks good, the money is well spent. Downtown Evanston has proven its worth so when TIF expires we may be in position to not ask the City for additional funding.

Dan K commented that the Ex Committee should be very particular in what our needs are. Especially if we don't need Econ and TIF money, just express how it is being spent.

Chris asked if should residents chip in? Could we put a flat fee on that type of parcel? Or can we apply a different rate to residents?

Howard mentioned that a very affordable rate was applied once years ago, to residents and were refunded, but the ask was about \$40/year to condos.

Hank commented it could be an uphill battle to get residents in, because there was a re-assessment on properties.

Chris suggested everyone's taxes go up, and if all taxing bodies don't over spend, it would all be the same as it is now.

Dan mentioned that DTE has failed on better outreach to residents and better interaction with residents. The benefits should be known to them. Not just in aesthetics but towards improving our vacancies. We might not have the time to prove up our value.

Chris countered that the timing is now, we should be able to prove up DTE value.

Dan suggested we should have been doing that over the last 10 years, we might not be in a position to do this, elected officials are different, however, maybe it is possible.

DK/AM – is brining residents in worth it. Currently, as they don't contribute. We aren't beholden to their expectations.

Chris suggested we invite city staff to help us access the pain threshold of including residents or relying on the expiration of the TIF to bring in our additional funds.

Hank mentioned that historically, we didn't include Margarita Inn b/c there wasn't much near there to include, so it was excluded.

Paul Z announced that Sept 12, north of downtown plan will be heard, perhaps the SSA includes that geography? City Council wants guidelines on future development proposals. Staff will recommend downtown plan which include changing buffer/edge zones north to foster, including lake city cleaners site. That might include first floor commercial

Dan asked don't we collect?

Does Park Evanston pay in? Need to clarify PINs paying into even though they are rental? E2 is another example. Investigate how we get commercial included on rental properties.

Hank suggested that the geography needs to be investigated, we did pick up other higher paying tax properties last reconstitution.

Paul suggested that currently we only "control" or manage south of Emerson. Likely uses north with be rental, something to consider bc/ he believes the rental properties pay in. going north to foster might not make sense. Do we consider picking up to ridge? Need to consider expanding services though.

Hank asked if it was worth it to redraw to include Mather?

Chris suggested if we go south to pick up PINs it might look gerrymandered?

Andrew suggested we need a plan moving forward. Is this on for next month, we haven't yet discussed increases rate or including residents

Paul Z expressed including residents, you need to decide what you gain. Put this on city staff radar. He believes elected officials won't have the appetite for it. Need to keep this conversation moving forward.

Dan – need to better justify if we spend the residential contribution and how. Is it worth it if there is not a TIF planned?

Howard suggested talking to Marty Lyons because collections were down. We are in a better position now?

Dan and Howard asked are we getting all of what we should off the current tax?

Andrew asked do we need a full board meeting in Sept? Can we just have one in Nov?

Chris suggested in years past we had a review of budget for the next year – when will county come out with their numbers? Can we merge both meeting and have it in October instead?

Dan and Paul commented that we also need to work on identifying resources to help our restaurant attract staff.

Meeting adjourned 9:20am