

Downtown Evanston Executive Committee Meeting
Thursday, July 15, 10am
Zoom Meeting

Attendees

Andrew McDonald, *Chair*
Mike Smylie, *Vice Chair*
Renata Gherghiceanu, *Treasurer*
Marilyn Faklis Ruiz, *Secretary*
Gretchen Brauer, *Wheel & Sprocket*
Paul Zalmezak, *City of Evanston*

Staff

Annie Coakley
Laura Brown

Approval of Meeting Minutes

Andrew McDonald called for approval of meeting minutes from June 10, 2021. Marilyn Ruiz motioned to adopt the minutes; Mike Smylie seconded. Board approved.

Treasurers Report

- Received \$111K in collections for the SSA \$297,607 representing 50% of collections
- Second installment of property taxes due Oct. 1, 2021
- Approved for \$34K in PPP
- Over budget on sponsorship due to Evanston Winter Games
- Discussion about the \$200K maintenance line item
- Line of credit: still owe \$240K which will be paid off once we receive collections in the spring
- Andrew commented that currently have excess funding. Do we anticipate spending all SSA money this year?
 - Annie commented that we are on track to spend

Staff Reports: Annie Coakley

Events

- Thursday Night Market: June 3 and July 8 were successful from vendor and consumer perspective. Next markets are August 5, Sept. 2 and Oct. 7
- Sidewalk Sale, July 22-25
- Where's Waldo, July 2021
- Evanston Farmer's Market: proposal to manage and move market to Fountain Square in 2022
 - Annie shared the 2021 Farmer's Market budget to provide a sense of what it would cost and sponsorship opportunities.
 - City is going to send the MOU to review as a board
 - Annie colleague will provide an overview running a farmer's market to give the Board a better idea of what that would look like
- TENTATIVE: Fall Event: Beers, Brats, Books...and Buds - Oct. 16 to coincide with Open House Chicago, NU Homecoming weekend

Economic Development

- Workforce Development: hiring back-of-house employees is a major issue for restaurants
 - Mike commented that City could fund "return-to-work" bonuses to incentivize people to come to work in Evanston. This is a much bigger incentive than health programs.
 - Paul commented that City Council is meeting to discuss how to spend the AARPA money

- Recommendation to draft letter to City Council and get restaurants to sign off and advocate for funding (hiring bonus) to incentivize workforce
 - Emphasize that if restaurants are closed due to lack of employment, people are not spending money in Evanston not just at the restaurants but also retail, parking, any other expense related to visiting Evanston
- CEO Meetings led by Joe Flannagan to bring business sector leaders to discuss and recommend how to spend AARPA funding in Evanston. Examples are workforce development, daycare, transportation, branding
- “Here Is” Campaign to attract new businesses to move offices to downtown Evanston. Annie working on a campaign with local design firm. City will pay for the branding campaign (\$29K) and DTE will pay to purchase the ads (\$6K)
 - Annie asked the Board for approval to spend \$6K if the new brand is created
 - DTE updating/improving the Do Business Here webpage
- Sokoni Retail Incubator: presented to Economic Development Committee for funding to have a retail incubator program and space in downtown Evanston primarily to support women and minority-owned businesses
 - Paul reported that Sokoni project is on hold; City Council looking into partnering with Northwestern

Placemaking

- Mural on Davis Street Metra is on hold. Union Pacific is going to remediate the viaducts so have to wait to do a mural
- Fountain Square is not working and scheduled to be fixed in 2022. DTE working on placemaking projects, installations to bring life to the square
- Fountain Square Public Art project on hold – waiting to hear more direct guidance from City of Evanston, Evanston Arts Council

Open/Close Businesses

- Annie reviewed the status of new and/or businesses reopening

Maintenance

- Reviewing the garbage collection to determine if we could shift some of the money used to pick up garbage to enhancing landscaping in certain areas of downtown

Organizational

- Working with YWCA for Equity Training program for Executive Committee
- Strategic Plan Proposal from Shorepath Consulting
- Health Benefits: City is ending DTE health care that we receive through the City. Annie is meeting with health care consultant to set up new group plan

Board Vote

- Annie proposed using \$1000 for a Gift Card Giveaway to incentivize people to come to Sidewalk Sale activities at Fountain Square
 - Andrew motioned to approve. Mike seconded. Board approved.

Andrew adjourned meeting at 10:07