

Downtown Evanston Executive Committee Meeting
Thursday, September 9, 2021, 9:00am
Zoom Meeting

Board Members

Andrew McDonald, *Chair*
Mike Smylie, *Vice Chair*
Renata Gherghiceanu, *Treasurer*
Marilyn Faklis Ruiz, *Secretary*
Angela Valavanis, Creative Coworking
Alan Moy, Viet Nom Nom

Guest

Paul Zalmezak, City of Evanston

Staff

Annie Coakley
Laura Brown

Approval of Meeting Minutes

Andrew McDonald called for approval of meeting minutes from August 12, 2021 meeting. Marilyn Ruiz motioned to adopt the minutes; Mike Smylie seconded. Board approved.

Treasurers Report: Renata Gherghiceanu

- Currently over budget in sponsorship. The latest sponsorship was \$10,000 from Christopher Burke Engineering and this is almost a direct cost for the turf that was placed in Fountain Square, so this project didn't cost DTE, it's a direct cost for placemaking.
- Over budget in Special Events by \$3056.00. Estimated costs for special events for rest of the year is about \$5000.
- Premiums - \$1400 for give a ways and Small Business Saturday
- Advertising has a balance of \$24,775 for the rest of the year. \$6400 will be used for events and premiums and \$6000 for the RealtyAds. \$12,375 in advertising for Fall/Winter
- Banner income is still coming in. Amy resent all aging invoices again to our list of banner sponsors that have yet to pay. Probably only a few hundred dollars.
- Sponsorships will come in for Holiday Tree Lighting
- Website: there is a balance of \$17,000 which we voted to use toward the office attraction video and campaign at a cost of \$12,000 There will be \$4,975 left over.
- Other categories are timing. Holiday décor, landscaping.

Staff Reports: Annie Coakley

Events

- Thursday Night Market: Continued success at markets from vendor and local business perspective. Last market is Oct. 7
- Evanston Made Maker's Market has been taking place – DTE is partner
- Evanston Farmer's Market: proposal to manage and move market to Fountain Square in 2022 – idea on hold
- Bloody Mary Trail
- Big Bite Night – Oct. 3 with a block party on Maple Avenue to draw attention to that area
- Maker's Market on Oct. 16 to coincide with Open House Chicago, NU Homecoming weekend
- Halloween Trick-or-Treat Stroll – Oct. 30
- Holiday Tree Lighting – Dec. 4

Economic Development

- Workforce Development: hiring back-of-house employees is a major issue for restaurants

- CEO Meetings – Annie attending ongoing meetings with group of CEOs in Evanston
 - Create a better workforce plan for downtown Evanston/Evanston businesses
 - DTE Office Campaign: *In Your Element in Downtown Evanston*
- Sokoni Retail Incubator: on hold
- CTA Purple Line Express: on hold but when commuter numbers are up and Northlight and other nightlife is back will push this

Placemaking

- Mural on Davis Street Metra is on hold until UP finalizes sale of tracks
- Presentation to Economic Development Committee and working on a proposal to provide refresh for public realm – streetscape, lighting, signage, general cleanliness – and activation and placemaking opportunities including public art, tactical urbanism, etc.
- Evanston Loves Rotary: working with Patrick Hughes additional funding from the movies (\$12K) to possibly use toward a public art project
- Fountain Square public art project – Evanston Arts Council trying to raise \$25K

Retail/Office

- Brokers Open House: host in October possibly at 1603 Orrington Ave. outdoor patio
- Open/Closed list of businesses
 - New owners of Church Street Plaza very involved in recruiting new tenants and working with existing tenants and DTE
 - Coming soon: Eco & the Flamingo and Robot City

Advertising

- WGN Hometown – interviews and digital ads on September 30
- CVB ads in fall/winter
- WBEZ ads for holiday advertising – co-op with businesses

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
- Proposals from companies that establish ambassador programs to provide cleaning, homelessness outreach and hospitality to the downtown area
 - Angela commented that there are several groups/committees working on homelessness and panhandling issues so there are other funding sources for a program like this

Organizational

- Equity Training: Darkest Horse would cost about \$10K – Annie will share menu of services to Board
- Strategic Plan workshops with Shorepath Consulting – Annie will send calendar poll for dates in October
- Health Benefits: City is ending DTE healthcare on Jan. 1; Annie is getting quotes from insurance companies
- 2022 Budget – pending confirmation; board will vote on 2022 budget at October meeting
 - SSA#9 income: \$610,995
 - City of Evanston garbage removal: \$50K
 - NU contribution: \$13K
 - Sponsorship: \$25K
 - TOTAL: \$699,145

Andrew adjourned meeting at 10:04am