Downtown Evanston Executive Committee Meeting
Thursday, October 14, 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
Gretchen Blauer,
Guest
Paul Zalmezak, City of Evanston

Staff
Annie Coakley
Laura Brown

Approval of Meeting Minutes
Andrew McDonald called for approval of meeting minutes from September 9, 2021 meeting. Angela Valavanis motioned to adopt the minutes; Mike Smylie seconded. Board approved.

Treasurers Report: Renata Gherghiceanu
- SSA levy collections as of September 30 is $562,000
- $33,190 over and plan to spend $12,000 so balance of $21,190
- Overspent in events but carryover in advertising covers this
- Shifted the $17,000 for website enhancements to use for the Downtown Evanston Works office campaign
- Andrew asked about the SSA collections
  - Paul commented that there will be additional funds from the County in the next two weeks so Downtown Evanston should receive most of the collections by November 5
  - Paul noted that while DTE budgeted for a loss collection, but the 2020 property tax collections do not reflect a loss so DTE will not be impacted

Staff Reports: Annie Coakley

Events
- Past
  - Thursday Night Market: Continued success at markets from vendor and local business perspective.
  - Big Bite Night – Oct. 3: 30 restaurants; decent student turnout
- Upcoming
  - Fall Fest – Oct. 16: Artist & maker’s market, fall art activities, swing set drum kit
  - Halloween Trick-or-Treat Stroll – Oct. 30
  - Small Business Saturday – Nov. 27 and continued shop small promotions through December
  - Holiday Light Celebration – 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 – launching in mid-October
Group has engaged with Teska to provide 6 new streetscape concepts for Evanston
• Mike commented that people from other suburbs are not going to Evanston b/c feel that businesses are not open and that Evanston is still on “lockdown”
• 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
• Ongoing work with City to promote placemaking projects and utilize some of the ARPA money for larger-scale projects
• Mural on Fountain Square building with some additional funding for Evanston Loves Rotary

Retail/Office
• Brokers Open House: work with NU to host brokers at a game followed by apps/drinks
• Open/Closed list of businesses
  o Deep Purple (acai bowl)
  o Tapville (opening in November)
  o Dogtopia – opened
  o Dollop Coffee – under construction
  o Church Street Plaza
  o Picnic – 1619 Chicago Ave.
• Attraction
  o Eco & the Flamingo
  o Robot City

Advertising
• WGN Hometown – interviews and digital ads on September 30
• CVB ads in fall/winter
• Direct email blasts – 4 over 6-week period to promote holiday shopping and dining

Maintenance
• Reviewing proposals from companies that set up ambassador programs to provide homelessness outreach and hospitality to the downtown area

Organizational
• Strategic Plan workshops with Shorepath Consulting – 12/9, 8-11am
• Health Benefits: City is ending DTE healthcare on Jan. 1; Annie getting other quotes from insurance companies
• 2022 Budget – pending confirmation; board will vote on 2022 budget at meeting
  o SSA#9 income: $610,995
  o City of Evanston garbage removal: $50K
  o NU contribution: $13K
  o Sponsorship: $25K
  o TOTAL: $699,145

Andrew adjourned meeting at 10:03am