Downtown Evanston Executive Committee Meeting  
Thursday, November 11, 2021, 9:00am  
Zoom Meeting

Board Members  
Andrew McDonald, Chair  
Mike Smylie, Vice Chair  
Renata Gherghiceanu, Treasurer  
Angela Valavanis, Creative Coworking  
Alan Moy, Viet Nom Nom  
Gretchen Blauer, Wheel & Sprocket

Guest  
Paul Zalmezak, City of Evanston

Staff  
Annie Coakley  
Laura Brown

Approval of Meeting Minutes  
Andrew McDonald called for approval of meeting minutes from October 14, 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 $587,000; DTE should receive the additional rest of collections around November 22  
- Line of credit  
  - Pay down the line of credit to end interest payments but keep it open so there are still funds available  
- Carryover for 2021 which includes carryover from 2020, the PPP loan and unexpected income from loss collection  
- Andrew asked the Board to vote on the following. Renata motioned and Angela seconded. Board approved.  
  - Pay down the Byline Bank loan  
  - Keep the loan open and pay the annual fee

Staff Reports: Annie Coakley

Events  
- Past  
  - Fall Fest – Oct. 16: Artist & maker’s market, fall art activities, swing set drum kit; abut 600-700 people attended  
  - Halloween Trick-or-Treat Stroll – Oct. 30: about 1000 people attended; mostly positive response from businesses; dog costume contest at Fountain Square  
- Upcoming  
  - Small Business Saturday – Nov. 27 with shop local promotions through December  
  - Holiday Light Celebration – Dec. 4 at Fountain Square  
  - Noon Year’s Eve – Dec. 31: Family-friendly event at Fountain Square to celebrate NYE

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
Employee Back to Work Survey led by ZS Associates:
  - Parking was a major concern because more people indicated will be driving instead of public transportation
  - Group has engaged with Teska to provide 6 new streetscape concepts for Evanston

- DTE Office Campaign – launched in end of October on RealtyAds; press outreach and following up with final campaign video next week
- BisNow Office Event – meeting with reps about hosting a commercial broker event in downtown Evanston

Placemaking
- Ongoing work with City to promote placemaking projects and utilize some of the ARPA money for larger-scale projects
- Another idea is to have an Ambassador Program for DTE and MDM combined to provide social outreach and engagement
- Singing Tree: lights arrived and will be installed at 1603 Orrington Plaza prior to the Holiday Light Celebration

Retail/Office
- Open/Closed list of businesses
  - Deep Purple (acai bowl) – opened
  - Tapville (opening in November)
  - Dollop Coffee – under construction
  - Shop Evanston Made – 921 Church St. (pop up) – open through Dec. 19
  - Santa for a Day – 710 Church St. (pop up) – open through Dec. 25
  - Picnic – 1619 Chicago Ave.
  - Eco & the Flamingo – under construction
- Attraction
  - Robot City
- Closing
  - Dream About Tea

Advertising
- WGN Hometown – interviews and digital ads on September 30
- WBEZ ads to promote Small Business Saturday and DTEWorks campaign
- Direct email blasts – 4 over 6-week period to promote holiday shopping and dining

Maintenance
- Renewing contract with Brightview Landscape for 2022
- City is considering removing some of the larger in-ground planters to create more outdoor seating space

Organizational
- Strategic Plan workshops with Shorepath Consulting – 12/9, 8-11am
- Health Benefits: Annie finalizing new health benefit plan
- 2022 Budget – Board reviewed 2022 budget for approval at December meeting
- Questions
  - Andrew asked about the plan for the carryover funds; Annie commented that we will develop a list of proposed ideas to share with board
  - Annie asked Board to approve using $2500 to purchase bonus gift cards for the Small Business Saturday giveaway; Board approved.

Andrew adjourned meeting at 10:00am