

**Downtown Evanston Executive Committee Meeting  
Friday, January 14, 2022, 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

**Staff**

Annie Coakley  
Laura Brown

**Approval of Meeting Minutes**

Andrew McDonald called for approval of meeting minutes from November 11, 2021 meeting. Andrew suggested to adopt the minutes; Mike Smylie seconded. Board approved.

**Treasurers Report: Renata Gherghiceanu**

- PPP loan was officially forgiven
- DTE received final SSA collections
- Unpaid invoices from sponsorship and banners
- Over \$11,176 in sponsorship
- Under spent in advertising by X
- Over \$39,000 in events
- Over \$14,000 in tenant attraction (Downtown Evanston Works project)
- Pay off line of credit but keep it open for funds available

**Staff Reports: Annie Coakley**

Events

- Past
  - Holiday Light Celebration – Dec. 4:
  - Noon Year's Eve – Dec. 31
- Upcoming
  - Hygge Fest with new Fika Crawl – February
  - North Shore Restaurant Month – February

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
  - Workforce development for the healthcare sector in Evanston
  - 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
  - Teska is drafting new streetscape concepts for Evanston
  - Group is drafting a letter of support for The Aux (\$1mil) and Northlight (\$2mil) projects being proposed for ARPA funding from City of Evanston
    - Board discussed sending a letter of support for Northlight request for funding
    - Annie will draft a letter to share with Board and determine if they want to send to Economic Development Committee on 1/26/22

- Annie proposed sending a letter to Chief of Police, Mayor Biss, to request a meeting with the Board to discuss activity in downtown Evanston
- Paul noted the following other economic development projects that might be supported by the ARPA funds. These will be presented at the 1/26/22 Economic Development Committee meeting
  - City Public Works submitted grant to National Main Street for \$2.1 million to assist with streetscape along Chicago Avenue
  - City of Evanston hiring a retail consultant to provide a business district study with actionable recommendations for the City/SSAs to pursue
  - Ambassador or Green Team for the business districts
- Downtown Evanston Works Campaign
  - Mayor Biss on panel at Bisnow event on Jan. 27
  - WBBM ads with Mayor Biss promoting office recruitment
  - Commercial brokers event at NU basketball game on Feb. 7
  - Ongoing press outreach
- CTA Purple Line Express Train
  - CTA will have another pilot program once the office workers are back in downtown Evanston

#### Placemaking

- Possible that City will provide more baseline services (ie garbage removal) so we can redirect our maintenance dollars to more placemaking activities to drive traffic
- Singing Tree: lights will be reinstalled

#### Retail/Office

- Opening/Coming Soon
  - Eco & the Flamingo – opened in January
  - Tapville – opened in November
  - Dollop Coffee (Albion) – under construction
  - Picnic (1619 Chicago Ave.) – under construction
  - 5411 Empanada (809 Davis St.) – under construction
  - Elephant & Vine (719 Church St.) – under construction
- Attraction
  - Robot City
  - Tortazo
- Closing
  - Next of Kin

#### Marketing

- Advertising Plan for 2022
- Website Updates

#### Maintenance

- Renewing contract with Brightview Landscape for 2022
  - New this year will be ability to have spot power washing service instead of an annual one-time meeting
- DTE will no longer provide maintenance for the Farmer's Market which will save about \$3K annually

#### Organizational

- Strategic Plan workshops with Shorepath Consulting – 2/19 meeting

#### **Action Items**

- Annie will share draft letter of request to support Northlight Theater ARPA request for funding (\$2 million)

- Annie will share draft email requesting a meeting with Interim Chief of Police, Mayor Biss, City Manager and council members to discuss additional police presence in downtown Evanston
  - Angela suggested to frame as a short-term request because Covid has significantly impacted the downtown environment
  - Gretchen noted that Wheel & Sprocket has noted the significant decrease of “eyes on the street” based on their security footage

Andrew called an Executive Session at 9:50am; Annie and Laura left meeting

Andrew adjourned meeting at 10:00am