



**Downtown Evanston Executive Committee Meeting
Thursday, March 9, 2023, 9am
Zoom Meeting**

Attendees

Mike Smylie, *Chair*
Angela Valavanis, *Vice Chair*
Andrew McDonald, *Treasurer*
Marilyn Faklis-Ruiz, *Secretary*
Nathan Kostant
Alan Moy

Absent

Gretchen Brauer

Staff

Annie Coakley
Laura Brown

Guest

Paul Zalmezak, City of Evanston

New Office Space

- Discussed new office options starting May 1, 2023
 - o Street level office with visitor's space (1630 Orrington)
 - o Industrious
 - o Creative Coworking
- Andrew motioned to approve moving the Downtown Evanston office to Creative Coworking; Mike seconded, Alan seconded; Board approved. *Note that Angela Valavanis, owner of Creative Coworking, was not present during the discussion and did not participate in the vote.*

Treasurer Report: Andrew McDonald

- Reviewed income/expenses but not much to report as it is the beginning of the year
- Discussed when to pay off the Byline Bank loan
 - o Received \$229,000 for the fall 2022 income, but if we pay off now the organization will only have 3 months of expenses
 - o Spring collections should be distributed in May 2023 at which point we will be in a better position to pay off the loan
- Sponsorships
 - o Confirmed annual with Avidor Evanston
 - o Sending the sponsorship deck to other companies

Staff Report: Annie Coakley

- **Events**
 - o Reviewed 2023 events – tiered list based on size, ticketed, etc.

- To date have allocated \$17,500 for events of a total \$35,500 earmarked for events; will determine other expenses for remaining or shift to other budget categories
- **Economic Development**
 - Business District Plan Draft - Evanston Thrives – final plan published on March 10
 - Capacity Building –planning a series of workshops for 2023
- **Advertising/Marketing**
 - Discussed additional advertising options including Chicago Reader and increased social media ads on FB and IG
 - Postcard Mailer to Rogers Park, Skokie and Edgewater and SE Evanston
 - Mike noted to add the QR code to the front of postcard
 - Coop purchase with the CVB
 - PR Company – sent RFP to 4 companies; received 2 proposals and will share with board when receive others
 - Hire social media influencers
 - Alan suggested engaging with Support Evanston and Evanston Restaurant Facebook pages to figure out a way to work with these groups to incentivize visiting local businesses because they are built-in local support
 - Placer AI
 - Provides statistics about visitors to businesses, downtowns
 - Use this to look at zip code data for advertising purposes
 - Pre and post covid analysis
 - Vibe Map
 - Company creates a map based on “vibes”; they do all the leg work to upload and update business information, edit the map which is embedded on our existing website
 - Board approved moving forward with Vibe Map
- **Sponsorships/Partnerships**
 - YWCA Race Against Hate
 - Juneteenth
 - Umbrella Arts Fest
 - Evanston Made Makers Market
 - Evanston en Blanc
 - Others to consider
 - Evanston Fire Foundation – Annual Open House (Oct)
 - July 4th Parade
 - Woman’s Club of Evanston
- **Maintenance**
 - Reviewed the floral/plantings for spring/summer 2023

Meeting Adjourned

Mike adjourned the meeting at 10:12am.