



Downtown Evanston Executive Board Meeting
Thursday, April 27, 2023, 3pm
Avidor Evanston, 1727 Oak Street, 18th Floor

Board Members

Mike Smylie, Smylie Brothers, *Chair*
Angela Valavanis, Creative Coworking, *Vice Chair*
Andrew McDonald, Rotary, *Treasurer*
Marilyn Faklis Ruiz, *Secretary*
Gretchen Brauer, Wheel & Sprocket
Carol Bass, Resident
Marty Cless, 1026 Davis Street
Dave Davis, Northwestern University
William Flatt, 820 Davis
Garrett Karp, Evanston Chamber of Commerce
Michael McLean, Condor Partners
Paul Zalmezak, City of Evanston

Absent

Nathan Konstant, 1603 Orrington Ave.
Mitch Goltz, GW Properties, Church Street Plaza
Daryl Stayback, 500 Davis St.

Staff

Annie Coakley, Executive Director
Laura Brown, Marketing Manager

Guests

Isabelle Libbman, Trufit
Jim Nash, Farnsworth Hill, Inc.
Elizabeth Plucinsky, 909 Davis St.

Introductions

Mike Smylie welcomed attendees who introduced themselves.

Meeting Minutes

Annie Coakley asked for approval of November 10, 2022 meeting minutes. William Flatt motioned to approve. Andrew McDonald seconded. Board voted unanimously to approve meeting minutes from November 10, 2022.

Board Member Vote on New Slate

Mike Smylie reviewed the proposed nominations for the board of directors and executive commission for 2023-2025. Andrew motioned to approve; Angela seconded. New board members and Executive Committee members approved as follows:

- Gretchen Brauer nominated to Secretary of Executive Committee
- Isabelle Libmann, TruFit, nominated to Board and Executive Committee
- Jazmine Lee, Hyatt House, nominated to Board and Executive Committee
- Elizabeth Plucinsky, 909 Davis St., nominated to Board
- Jim Nash, Farnsworth Hill, Inc., nominated to Board
- Jake Samuels, Resident, nominated to Board

Treasurer Report: Andrew McDonald

- **Reviewed 2023 Proposed Budget**
 - Income
 - NU contribution received
 - SSA income expectation of \$610,995 will be received in late spring
 - Sponsorship received from Byline Bank
 - Expenses: spending is on target with budget

Downtown Evanston Update: Laura Brown & Annie Coakley

Laura provided an overview of advertising, marketing, events and landscaping from January to April 2023. View presentation [here](#).

- Advertising: ad budget and strategy shifted from radio to digital and targeting Chicago audience; this will provide more data on visitors and success of advertising spend
- Special Events: Hygge Fest, Spring Stroll, Thursday Night Markets, Sidewalk Sale, Winter events
- Public Way/Landscaping: Holiday décor - adding more lights in 2023; potential for additional placemaking projects with Evanston Thrives; new mural projects for 2023 at Church Street Plaza

Discussion

Marty: What are some of the events that you think were successful/unsuccessful?

Annie responded:

- Smaller stroll type of events to get people downtown and in businesses
- City to produce the large events they used to have at the lakefront and/or support SSAs and other organizations producing large events
- Focus on placemaking, public aesthetics, beautification to drive people to downtown and Evanston in general

Mike McLean: What do you think about the Farmer's Market? What do the brick n mortar businesses think about the events in the street?

- Annie commented that it has been done in other cities and helps to attract people downtown, but not currently a focus for Evanston. It was included in Evanston Thrives report and more to be discussed.
- Paul commented that in Evanston Thrives report presented this move/concept but would be more expansive than presented.

William Flatt asked for an updated on the following:

Policing/security initiatives in downtown Evanston

- City is still considering a social worker ambassador program
- Panhandling and crime have seemed to decrease in downtown
- Continue to work close with EPD officers Brian Rust and Mike Jones

Northlight Theater: Continuing to fundraise but still moving forward with plans

Metra Station

- Developer has property around the station but no current plans at Davis Street
- Clean up the Metra tunnel; Alcove Evanston currently does but should be Metra responsibility

Meeting adjourned at 4:30pm