



Downtown Evanston Full Board

Meeting Notes

Thursday, November 16, 2023, 4PM

Hyatt House, 1515 Chicago Avenue

Board Members

- Mike Smylie, Chair, Smylie Brothers
- Angela Valavanis, Vice Chair, Creative Coworking
- Izzy Libmann, Trufit
- Jazmine Lee, Hyatt House
- Michael McLean, Condor Partners (Trulee)
- Ben Kadish, Evanston Benson (EAC)
- Jim Nash, Farnsworth Hill, Inc.
- Carol Bass, downtown resident
- William Flatt, Free Market Ventures (820 Davis St.)
- Nathan Kostant, Golub (1603 Orrington Ave.)
- Jake Samuels, resident
- Marty Cless, Core & Rind Hospitality (1026 Davis St.)
- Luke Stowe, City of Evanston
- Gretchen Brauer, Wheel & Sprocket
- Paul Zalmezak, City of Evanston

Absent

- Andrew McDonald, Rotary International
- Dave Davis, Northwestern University
- Elizabeth Plucinsky, Lincoln Property Co. (909 Davis St.)
- Daryl Staback, Parkside Realty (500 Davis St.)
- Mitch Goltz, GW Properties (Church Street Plaza)
- Garrett Karp, Evanston Chamber of Commerce

Staff

- Andy Vick
- Laura Brown

- I. Call to Order (Mike)
 - a. New Board Members: Ben Kadish and Jake Samuels **[VOTE]**
 - i. Mike introduced a motion to vote on new board members Ben Kadish and Jake Samuels; Angela motioned to approve new members; Marty seconded; motion passed
- II. Approval of October Minutes (Mike) **[VOTE]**
 - a. Mike asked for questions/comments on minutes from April 27, 2023 meeting
 - b. Marty motioned to approve; Izzy seconded; meeting minutes approved
- III. Treasurer's Report (Andy)
 - a. Budget vs Actual deficit due to delayed second installment which is expected at end of January 2024
 - b. DTE will pay down line of credit when second installment is paid
 - c. Overall, in good shape financially for rest of the year
 - d. 2024 budget was approved by Executive Committee in September because we had to submit to City of Evanston for approval
- IV. Executive Director update (Andy)
 - a. Downtowns are all at an inflection point. Downtown Evanston has challenges like homelessness, crime, etc. that we cannot control but will work with partners where we can have an impact
 - b. Priority is to focus on what the organization can control by showcasing our downtown to help drive visitations – create a more positive, vibrant narrative
 - c. Downtown Summer Sounds concert series will provide weekly concerts and engage with local nonprofits to bring new audiences downtown. This will help create a more inclusive and welcoming vibe downtown.
 - d. Maintenance and landscaping to create a more welcoming environment.
- V. Director of Marketing update (Laura)
 - a. Reviewed 2023 events, advertising and open/closed businesses
- VI. Economic Development update (Paul)
 - a. Reviewed how the City Economic Development Committee is deciding how to spend \$3 million ARPA funds allocated for Evanston Thrives
 - b. Highlighted the Enjoy Evanston marketing/branding projects
 - c. Noted projects in downtown including Theatre Plaza and other infrastructure improvements
 - d. Discussed development updates: Bookman's Alley, ULSE/ULRI, Fountain Square office building, Evanston Labs
- VII. Questions
 - a. **Ben Kadish:** Commented that City's signage process is arduous and proposed having a calendar of City of Evanston processes and codes for incoming businesses/development projects

- b. **Michael McLean:** Does DTE have a stance on the zoning changes?
 - i. Luke Stowe commented that Downtown Evanston board will be invited to participate in meetings about these ordinances as part of comprehensive plan update
- c. **Luke Stowe:** Noted that the City will analyze sales tax data following the free holiday parking to determine the impact of free parking. Luke reported that EPD has increased number of patrol officers and there is a \$400K allocated for mental health crisis training program

VIII. Other Business (Andy & Mike)

- a. Andy noted that DTE has sponsorship opportunities for 2024 and encouraged board members to review

IX. DTE board and staff welcome ideas and suggestions for 2024

X. Adjournment to Holiday Mixer (Mike)

- a. Mike asked for a motion to adjourn the meeting. Angela motioned; Nathan seconded. Meeting adjourned.