



## **Downtown Evanston Executive Committee Meeting Minutes**

**Thursday, June 12, 2025, 9:30AM**

**Creative Coworking, 922 Davis Street**

### **Board Members Present:**

Angela Valavanis, Creative Coworking (*Chair*)

Nathan Kostant, Golub (*Vice Chair*)

Marty Cless, Core & Rind Hospitality

Sarita Kamat, Artem Pop Up Gallery

Jim Nash, Farnsworth Hill

### **Not Present:**

Gretchen Brauer, Wheel & Sprocket (*Secretary*)

Andrew McDonald, Rotary (*Treasurer*)

**Staff:** Andy Vick, Laura Brown (*via telephone*)

**Guests:** Paul Zalmezak, City of Evanston

- I. Call to Order at 9:31AM (Angela)
  - a. Welcome to Sarita Kamat and introductions of other Committee members
- II. Approval of May Minutes (Angela) **[Vote]**
  - a. Marty motioned to approve; Jim seconded; the Board voted unanimously to approve the May Full Board minutes.
- III. Treasurer's Report (Andy, in Andrew's absence)
  - a. May Financials: All finances are in good shape, with no surprises or concerns. The surplus of revenue over expenses is just a timing issue.
  - b. Loss of \$25K from Northwestern CBA funds
    - i. Andy reviewed the circumstances that resulted in a \$25,000 reduction in anticipated Community Benefits Agreement (CBA) funding from Northwestern for fiscal year 2025.

- ii. Angela shared a summary of her telephone conversation with Dave Davis regarding the funding situation. Andy expressed his appreciation to Angela for stepping in to help resolve the matter.
- iii. Nathan commented that it was important that Downtown Evanston pushed back on the decision to reallocate the \$25,000 even though the funding amount was ultimately reduced.
- c. 2025 Budget Revision #3, because of the change in 2025 CBA funding
  - i. Sarita motioned to approve; Marty seconded; the Board voted unanimously to approve the third revision to the 2025 budget.

#### IV. Executive Director update (Andy)

- a. Congrats to Sarita on the ribbon cutting for Artem Pop Up Gallery's new workshop space at 1625 Sherman Ave.
- b. Productive meeting with City staff and Brightview team to clarify some areas of responsibility with the maintenance and landscaping contracts
- c. Public Art:
  - i. Partnered with City of Evanston to refresh/restore the "Sea of the Ear" sculpture on the corner of Sherman & Davis
  - ii. Work on the large-scale surface mural on the sidewalk in front of 1603 Orrington Plaza is scheduled to begin around July 8
- d. Summer Programming
  - i. Let's Eat Challenge wrapped up with a final event on June 7. The results were just OK, but Vibemap has offered to run the program again in the fall to reconnect with Northwestern students, and to capitalize on the timing with the Big Bite Night event in October
  - ii. Working with Vibemap and the Evanston History Center to develop and launch a history walking tour sometime in the fall
  - iii. Roycemore student artwork will be installed in the windows at the former Affordable Portables location tomorrow, with an informal dedication event planned for Tuesday at 1PM.
  - iv. Working with property manager at Sherman Plaza building to install Downtown Evanston posters with logo and QR code in the vacant storefront windows formerly occupied LA Tan
  - v. The Margarita Inn is developing its own workforce program so we may be able to shift funding for the Fountain Square table cleaners that we contracted with last month back to the Margarita Inn
  - vi. Events Update:
    - 1. Thursday Night Market on June 5 was a big success
    - 2. First new Cars & Coffee event is taking place on June 22
    - 3. Downtown Summer Sounds is ready to go on July 10

V. Director of Marketing update (Laura)

- a. Laura updated everyone on current marketing efforts, and reviewed the Communications Dashboard
- b. Jim commented that the NCAA Women's Lacrosse Championship (May 2026) will be at Northwestern, so it will be important to find ways to capitalize on the influx of out of town visitors

VI. Economic Development update (Paul)

- a. Civic Plaza projects around 909 Davis are underway
- b. While there are storefront vacancies in Downtown, it is important to note that a majority of vacancies are owned by just a few landlords
- c. Discussion about the Economic Development Committee and how the Downtown Evanston board can help provide info and/or resources about downtown development strategies, and the retail business landscape

VII. Other Business (Angela)

- a. November Full Board Meeting (*options: 4PM on 11/11 or 11/18*)
  - i. Wade Rodgers at Lincoln Property has offered to host the next full Board meeting in their 6<sup>th</sup> floor conference room at 909 Davis
  - ii. Exec Committee members expressed a preference for the 11/18 date, so Andy will check with Andrew and Gretchen to confirm
- b. With Eric Smith's departure from his position, Andy has reached out to the new leadership team at the Hilton Garden Inn to find a replacement to serve on our Board of Directors
- c. Andy is also working to find a new Northwestern student rep for our Board

VIII. Adjournment at 10:30AM (Angela)

**UPCOMING DTE EVENTS**

Evanston Cars & Coffee, Sunday, June 22, 11AM-2PM  
Downtown Summer Sounds & Thursday Night Market, July 10, 5-8PM  
Sunday Jazz at the Square, Sundays, 11:30AM-1:30PM through July 27  
Evanston Rides, May - October

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Next Exec Committee meeting: Thursday, July 10, 9:30AM