



Downtown Evanston Executive Committee Meeting Minutes

Thursday, December 11, 2025, 9:30AM
Creative Coworking, 922 Davis Street

Board Members Present:

Angela Valavanis, Creative Coworking (*Chair*)
Nathan Kostant, Golub (*Vice Chair*)
Gretchen Brauer, Wheel & Sprocket, (*Secretary*)
Sarita Kamat, Artem Pop Up Gallery
Paul Zalmezak, City of Evanston

Not Present:

Andrew McDonald, Rotary International (*Treasurer*)
Marty Cless, Core & Rind Hospitality
Jim Nash, Farnsworth Hill

Staff: Andy Vick, Laura Brown

- I. Call to Order at 9:36AM (Angela)
- II. Approval of November Minutes (Angela) **[Vote]**
 - a. Gretchen motioned; Sarita seconded. Exec. Board unanimously approved minutes.
- I. Treasurer's Report (Andy)
 - a. November Financials: everything is in good shape, but we are still waiting for our 2nd tax levy payment due to Cook County's administrative delay, which is why we're currently showing a year-to-date deficit on our financials. We have enough reserves to cover us for the remainder of the year, and into the first two or three months of 2026.
 - b. Submitted our 2026 request for \$250,000 in funding from the Northwestern Community Benefits Agreement for Downtown Revitalization.
 - c. Submitted our 2026 request for \$9,000 in general operating support from Northwestern Neighborhood and Community Relations.

II. Executive Director update (Andy)

- a. Holiday Light Celebration: successful event with big crowd. Thankful to City for sharing some of the costs for the Christmas tree and for providing logistical event support.
- b. Chicago Stars FC: Downtown Evanston supportive of their proposed move to new Ryan Field stadium in 2027 for benefit of increase in visitors to Evanston and our downtown
- c. Tree lights: ComEd issue at Chicago/Davis, so there have been disruptions at various locations, but we have done our best to provide alternative power supply to light trees
- d. Evanston Made Holiday Market continues thru 12/21
- e. Planning just starting for new gateway mural on former Affordable Portables' west wall

III. Director of Marketing update (Laura)

- a. Website visits were down in November, but Facebook & Instagram numbers are up
- b. Small Business Saturday (11/29) was impacted negatively by weather
- c. Holiday Light Celebration (12/6) was very successful
- d. Warm Bevvy Walk (12/11) tonight, 116 registrations as of this morning's meeting
- e. Continuing to promote Holiday Dining and Shopping through December, including New Year's Eve specials

IV. Economic Development update

- a. Ensemble pop-up Holiday Market (12/6-7) was very successful with over 1,000 people during the previous weekend
- b. Oak & Church residential redevelopment site (building being demolished soon)
- c. New sidewalks planned on Chicago Ave between Church & Davis in 2026
- d. Chicago bike lane project on track for 2027

V. Other Business (Angela)

- a. Executive Committee meeting dates/times for 2026
 - i. Meetings will continue to be held on the second Thursday of each month at 9:30AM – Laura will send out a calendar invitation for 2026
- b. Downtown stakeholder survey
 - i. DTE will be working with Northwestern's Minority Business Association (MBA) in Q1 of 2026 to coordinate a survey of downtown stakeholders including business owners, residents, building owners, etc. to get feedback on major DTE focus areas – maintenance, landscaping, programming, marketing, etc. – and learn about stakeholder interests, ideas, etc.

VI. Open Discussion (All)

- a. Nathan commented that Orrington Plaza is seeing more interest from prospective commercial tenants
- b. Gretchen commented that Wheel & Sprocket has had a very busy 2025

VII. Adjournment at 10:17AM (Angela)