



**Downtown Evanston Executive Committee
Meeting Minutes
Thursday, March 12, 2026, 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
Paul Zalmezak, City of Evanston

Not Present:

Andrew McDonald, Rotary International (*Treasurer*)
Gretchen Brauer, Wheel & Sprocket, (*Secretary*)

Staff: Andy Vick, Laura Brown

- I. Call to Order at 9:33AM (Angela)
- II. Approval of February Minutes (Angela) **[Vote]**
 - a. Jim moved to approve; Nathan seconded. Board voted unanimously to approve the February minutes.
- III. Treasurer's Report (Andrew & Andy)
 - a. February Financials: still early in the year so not much to report, but everything is on budget and tracking well against the same period in 2025.
 - b. Still waiting for our first tax payment and CBA funding from Northwestern
 - c. 2025 Audit update: well under way with some last-minute adjustments

IV. Executive Director update (Andy)

- a. Downtown Survey: created in conjunction with Northwestern students; results are similar to what we've heard before regarding parking, homelessness, vacancies, etc.
 - i. Marty noted that it was interesting some people thought Downtown Evanston's role included tenant attraction. Andy clarified that this is primarily a City Economic Development function, though we occasionally provide assistance
 - ii. Angela commented that we could send a follow-up message to everyone thanking for completing the survey, here are our priorities and we partner with City of Evanston for X, Y, Z.
 - iii. Paul noted that we could also include the survey's final report in the Economic Development e-newsletter
- b. Let's Eat Challenge is underway for year-2, but off to a slow start
- c. South Plaza Construction: starting at the end of March, and should wrap up in June
- d. Northlight Theatre: DTE staff have participated in several planning meetings about the opening and how best to prepare for the theatre's opening this fall
- e. Panhandling Ordinance meeting with City of Evanston happening tomorrow
- f. Gateway Mural: artist coming up with mural designs for the committee to consider
- g. Sponsorships are coming in well for our 2026 events

V. Director of Marketing update (Laura)

- a. S'mores on the Square was successful, with about 650 free s'mores kits distributed
- b. Communications Dashboard

VI. Economic Development update (Paul)

- a. Paid parking is being discussed by the Economic Development Committee
- b. Evanston Thrives: creating a new communication tool to share what projects the City is implementing from the plan
 - i. Civic Plaza installation and Metra tunnel updates
 - ii. Lighting Project at Church & Davis
- c. 605 Davis St. residential tower project starting in late June or July
- d. Closings: Big Wig Tacos, Peet's Coffee
- e. Openings: New YorkTown, Lizano's Foccaceria, The Addled Bunny, Pizzeria Deville

VII. Other Business (Angela)

- a. Full Board Meeting at Hilton Garden Inn on Monday, May 18, 4-5:30PM
 - i. Board meeting date approved—Andy will confirm with John and notify Board

- b. DTE Board member term limits
 - i. Currently board members can serve three 2-year terms
 - ii. Discussed adding language to the Bylaws that would give Exec Board members an additional term to serve in a Board Officer capacity
 - iii. Andy will work with Andrew to draft a clause to review and approve at the April Exec meeting, before it would come before the Full Board in May
- c. Exec Board Officer positions/New Exec Board member
 - i. Board Chair: Angela nominated Nathan; Jim seconded; Board voted unanimously to approve Nathan as the new DTE Board Chair beginning 6/1/26
 - ii. Vice Chair: Nathan nominated Marty; Angela seconded; Board voted unanimously to approve Marty as the new DTE Board Vice Chair beginning 6/1/26
 - iii. New Executive Board member: discussion about a possible new Exec member. Andy will reach out to suggested candidate
- d. Two new Full Board members needed due to term limits (Class IV & Class V)
 - i. Class IV: Discussion about potential new Full Board members: Andy will reach out to suggested candidate
 - ii. Class V: Discussion about potential new Full Board members: Andy will reach out to suggested candidate

VIII. Open Discussion (All)

IX. Adjournment at 10:40AM (Angela)

UPCOMING EVENTS

Refresh + Renew Wellness Open House: Saturday, April 25, 10AM-2PM

Earth Day Clean-Up: Sunday, April 26, Noon-2PM

Next Exec Board meeting: Thursday, April 9, 9:30AM