



**Downtown Evanston Full Board of Directors  
Meeting Minutes  
Monday, May 18, 2026, 4PM  
Hilton Garden Inn Evanston, 1818 Maple Avenue**

**Board Members Present:**

Amanda Ault, FlowersFlowers  
Gretchen Brauer, Wheel & Sprocket (*Secretary*)  
Marty Cless, Core & Rind Hospitality  
Angelica D'Costa, Madison Grace  
Brianna Gray, Evanston Chamber of Commerce  
Elliott Jones, Downtown Resident  
Peter Kelly, Downtown Resident  
Sarita Kamat, Artem Pop Up Gallery  
Nathan Kostant, Golub (*Vice Chair*)  
Isabelle Libmann, Trufit Personal Training  
Evan Meador, Continuum Capital  
Andrew McDonald, Rotary (*Treasurer*)  
Jim Nash, Farnsworth Hill  
Gina Prokopeak, Hyatt House  
Wade Rodgers, Lincoln Property Company  
Christian Rodriguez, The Evanston Place Apartments  
John Rohrbach, Hilton Garden Inn  
Jake Samuels, Evanston Resident  
Luke Stowe, City of Evanston  
Angela Valavanis, Creative Coworking (*Chair*)  
Paul Zalmezak, City of Evanston

**Board Members Absent:**

Rachel Angulo, La Cocinita  
Carole Bass, Downtown Resident  
Will Flatt, John Buck Company  
Warwick Johnson, ULRI/ULSE  
Ben Kadish, Evanston Athletic Club

**Staff:** Andy Vick, Laura Brown

- I. Call to Order & Introductions (Angela)
- II. Welcome from John Rohrbach, General Manager, Hilton Garden Inn Evanston
- III. Approval of new Board members, Officers and Executive Committee members (Angela)
  - a. Board Officers & Executive Committee members
    - i. **VOTE:** Isabelle moved to approve; Wade seconded; board approved unanimously
  - b. Board member (Class II) Christian Rodriguez, Evanston Place Apartments **[Vote]**
  - c. Board member (Class IV) Amanda Ault, FlowersFlowers **[Vote]**
  - d. Board member (Class IV) Rachel Angulo, La Cocinita **[Vote]**
  - e. Board member (Class V) Elliott Jones, Downtown Resident **[Vote]**
  - f. **VOTE:** Nathan moved to approve; John seconded; board voted unanimously to approve all four new board members.
- IV. Approval of April Minutes (Angela) **[Vote]**
  - a. Angela moved to approve; Gretchen seconded; board voted unanimously to approve the April Exec Committee meeting minutes.
- V. Treasurer's Report (Andrew & Andy)
  - a. April Financials
    - i. 2025 audit completed and posted to DTE website
    - ii. 2026 income/expenses on track as of 4/30
    - iii. 1st SSA tax installment delayed at the County level
      1. Paul reported that the funding is expected in about 2 weeks
    - iv. DTE will continue to draw down on reserves, as needed
    - v. Northwestern's 2026 CBA funding reduced by \$25K
      1. \$25K needed from reserves to fund Downtown Summer Sounds
  - b. 2026 Conflict of Interest Forms
    - i. New policy is that we will request new Conflict of Interest forms every May
- VI. Executive Director update (Andy)
  - a. Landscaping/Maintenance: update on quarterly plantings and trash removal
    - i. Workforce development program with Connections for the Homeless to engage residents from The Margarita to augment downtown trash abatement
  - b. Annual programs: 17 annual events produced by DTE
  - c. DTE sponsorship of other community events in downtown ~ \$6,000 budget in FY2026
  - d. Summer postcard to promote concerts to Evanston residents to mail in mid-June
  - e. Community Engagement: presentations at Ward meetings, residential buildings, etc.
  - f. Placemaking: Elmwood mural extension; new gateway mural on Maple Ave. and Davis St.
  - g. New downtown and city maps at Sherman Plaza and Maple Street parking garages
  - h. New residential developments: 1621 Chicago Ave., 605 Davis St., 900 Clark St.
  - i. Future of maintenance/trash collection contract unclear until Northwestern Community Benefits Agreement funding is clarified and solidified with the City

VII. Director of Marketing update (Laura)

VIII. Economic Development update (Paul)

- a. City of Evanston Incubator/Pop-Up Market
- b. Retail vacancy rate is 5.7%; office vacancy rate at 18% (date from CoStar)
- c. Evanston Thrives still guiding the retail strategy
- d. New lighting at Fountain Square south plaza along with the additional pavers

IX. Other Business (Angela)

- a. Proposed Bylaws modification for DTE Board member term limits:
  - i. *"SECTION 3.1 ADDITIONAL TERM OF OFFICE. Any Class IV or Class V directors who are elected as an officer of the corporation shall be eligible to serve four (4) successive two-year terms."*
    1. VOTE: Jim motioned; Nathan seconded; board voted unanimously to approve the update to the DTE bylaws.
- b. Evanston Folk Festival (Jake)
  - i. Third year of the event taking place September 12-13
  - ii. Three stages with a variety of folk music, conversations, local vendors, etc.

X. Open Discussion (All)

XI. Incoming Chair Remarks (Nathan)

- a. Nathan thanked Angela for her service as Board Chair for the past two years

XII. Adjournment at 5:11PM (Angela)

### **UPCOMING DTE EVENTS**

Next Exec Board meeting: Thursday, June 11, 9:30AM