



**Downtown Evanston Executive Committee
Meeting Minutes**

Thursday, June 11, 2026, 9:30AM
Creative Coworking, 922 Davis Street

Board Members Present:

Nathan Kostant, Golub (*Chair*)
Marty Cless, Core & Rind Hospitality
Sarita Kamat, Artem Pop Up Gallery
John Rohrbach, Hilton Garden Inn
Paul Zalmezak, City of Evanston

Not Present:

Andrew McDonald, Rotary International (*Treasurer*)
Gretchen Brauer, Wheel & Sprocket (*Secretary*)
Jim Nash, Farnsworth Hill

Staff: Andy Vick, Laura Brown

I. Call to Order at 9:30AM (Nathan)

II. Approval of May 2026 Minutes (Nathan)

- a. **VOTE:** Sarita motioned to approve; Marty seconded. Board voted unanimously to approve the May board meeting minutes

III. Treasurer's Report (Andy)

- a. May Financials: Everything is on track; no issues or concerns to report.
- b. Status of 1st SSA Tax Assessment Payment
 - i. Submitted the invoice for the first installment and we should receive payment within the next week.
 - ii. If necessary, we are in a strong position to use reserves for up to 5 or 6 months without the next payment.

IV. Executive Director update (Andy)

a. Clark Street Winter Activation

- i. DTE board member Evan Meador of Continuum Capital, owner of the Church Street Plaza, hopes to build a residential tower on the north end of the property and has proposed a winter activation for the portion of the building footprint that will be demolished by October. Evan will provide funding for the activation.
- ii. Evan would like to activate the space from Thanksgiving until Christmas with winter activities such as projection lighting, fire pits, winter markets, food & beverage vendors, art activities, etc. to help position downtown Evanston as a holiday shopping destination and build community during the holiday season.
- iii. Andy met with a small committee to brainstorm program ideas, and there will be additional meetings moving forward as the project evolves. Andy would like to get Exec's approval to move forward with this exciting initiative.
- iv. **VOTE:** Marty motioned to pursue partnership opportunity for winter programming at 900 Clark Street. John seconded. Exec voted unanimously to authorize the DTE staff to move forward with the project.

b. Programming highlights:

- i. Andy mentioned an issue with last-minute food truck fees which would have negatively impacted some of the Downtown Summer Sounds food trucks. Thanks to City Manager Stowe, the City agreed to waive the fees for this year but will likely assess the fees next year. This is part of a larger discussion about City of Evanston processes around special events.
- ii. Other summer events moving along smoothly: Downtown Sip + Stroll, Downtown Summer Sounds, Sunday Jazz at the Square, Cars & Coffee, and Thursday Night Markets.
- iii. Downtown Evanston provided funding to help repair/touch-up the ground mural in front of the Orrington Plaza.

c. Future of maintenance/trash collection contract

- i. If Northwestern is going to continue "take back" CBA funds, we will need to coordinate with the City to determine how we will continue to pay for maintenance/trash, or we may have to relinquish the contract back to the City.
- ii. Andy is in ongoing conversations with City of Evanston to come up with a solution before the fall, when the 2027 contract will need to be signed.

- d. EPD is going to have a more visible police presence in the area around the Metra Station exit on Marple Avenue due to an increase in loitering and public drinking.

V. Director of Marketing update (Laura)

- a. Increase in website traffic and social media views due to the start of summer advertising campaigns on Google and Meta.
- b. Downtown Sip + Stroll is Thursday, June 25. DTE is partnering with Evanston Professional Moms and fundraiser for Kitchen to Community.
- c. 1744 Marketing has provided videos and photos of businesses to use for social media and other digital promotions.

VI. Economic Development update (Paul)

- a. City recently distributed new parking survey for businesses to work on some of the smaller issues which can be easily addressed.
- b. Bridge Lighting
 - i. CTA is only allowing one lighting project in the downtown, so plan is to move forward with Church Street
 - ii. Metra projects will be installed at both Davis and Church Streets
- c. Civic Plaza
 - i. Furniture will be installed within the next couple of weeks including at the outdoor patio at Alcove Evanston
 - ii. Install sidewalk decals to help direct people from Maple Garage to Northlight
 - iii. Metra tunnel will be updated this summer

VII. Other Business

- a. Marty asked about building on Oak and Church. Paul noted that it is demolished and will be grassed over until there is a construction plan.
- b. Paul noted that there is interest in the former GYG location, and some interest/activity at the former Big Wig space.

VIII. Open Discussion (All)

IX. Adjournment at 10:33AM (Nathan)

UPCOMING EVENTS

Thursday Night Market: Tonight from 5-8PM (CANCELED DUE TO WEATHER)

Downtown Sip + Stroll, Thursday, June 25 from 4:30-7:30PM

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