



**Downtown Evanston Executive Committee
Meeting Minutes**

Thursday, September 10, 2026, 9:30AM
Dayhouse Coworking, 922 Davis Street

Board Members Present:

Nathan Kostant, Golub (*Chair*)
Andrew McDonald, Rotary International (*Treasurer*)
Marty Cless, Core & Rind Hospitality (*Vice Chair*)
Sarita Kamat, Artem Pop Up Gallery
Jim Nash, Farnsworth Hill
Paul Zalmezak, City of Evanston

Not Present:

Gretchen Brauer, Wheel & Sprocket (*Secretary*)
John Rohrbach, Hilton Garden Inn

Staff:

Andy Vick
Laura Brown

- I. Call to Order at 9:36AM (Nathan)
 - a. Approval of August Minutes (Nathan)
 - b. **Vote:** Andrew motioned to approve; Marty seconded; board approved the August minutes unanimously.
- II. Treasurer's Report (Andrew & Andy)
 - a. August Financials: SSA tax contributions are still lagging, but otherwise nothing new or concerning to report.
 - b. Meeting with City & Northwestern, re: maintenance/trash collection contract
 - i. Andrew briefly reviewed the Community Benefits Agreement (CBA) between City of Evanston and Northwestern for the Ryan Field Stadium, which includes \$250,000/year in funding for "downtown revitalization"

- ii. For the last couple of years, with City's approval, DTE has received CBA funding for the trash/maintenance contract with BrightView
- iii. Andy and Andrew had a virtual meeting with Northwestern and City reps to discuss continuing this arrangement going into next year. The estimated cost for the 2027 trash/maintenance contract is \$231,000.
- iv. Ultimately, Northwestern agreed that \$225,000 of the 2027 CBA funding can be used for the trash/maintenance contract. DTE has requested a written agreement (from Northwestern or the City) prior to signing the 2027 contract with BrightView.
- v. DTE will absorb the remaining \$6,000 to cover the full trash/maintenance contract for 2027.

III. Executive Director update (Andy)

- a. Clark Street Winter Activation: after careful consideration, and a thoughtful conversation with our funding partner, it was decided that the project is not financially feasible. As such, we are not moving forward with the planned activation, and all work on this project has ended.
- b. Downtown Summer Sounds
 - i. The concert series ended on September 3. Overall, great turnout at the concerts and lots of positive feedback from all involved.
 - ii. DTE is working with Northwestern to host an additional "At Home in Evanston" concert on Wednesday, 9/16 as part of Wildcat Welcome Week. There will be music from Funkadesi, in addition to Evanston community resource tables, food and non-alcoholic drink vendors.
- c. Mindhaven "First Look" reception: 10/29, 5PM
 - i. This is a new memory care center that will be opening at 820 Davis St. DTE Board members and other community leaders have been invited.
- d. Space to Place program launches on 10/3 & 10/4. Downtown Evanston is sponsoring a portion of the opening reception.
- e. There is a new landlord at 922 Davis Street, which is now called Dayhouse Coworking. Angela still owns the building, but Jen Luby is the new business owner. Our annual office rent in 2027 will increase by about 6%.
- f. Last week, three businesses on Davis Street were broken into – Bennison's, Gigio's Pizzeria and CM Chicken. As of this meeting, the police have not provided additional information on the incident.
- g. Downtown Evanston partnered with EPD to host a City Beat meeting on 8/19. The meeting was attended by about 15 community members.
- h. The Evanston Chamber's MashUp event is tonight on the Northwestern campus. Andy had previously nominated Animal Records and Art Encounter for MashUp Moolah, and both were chosen to receive \$1,000.

- i. Land Use Commission meeting (9/9): Andy advocated in support of the Continuum Development residential tower at 900 Clark Street, and there was good coverage of his remarks in the local media.
- j. DERA has a new board president who is very anti-development.
- k. A new Illinois law prohibiting e-bikes & e-scooters on sidewalks will take effect on January 1, 2027.

IV. Director of Marketing update (Laura)

- a. Communications Dashboard
- b. Upcoming Events
 - i. Northwestern orientation events (9/14-9/18)
 - ii. Cars & Coffee (9/20)
 - iii. Big Bite Night (10/4)
 - iv. Trick or Treat Stroll (10/24)
 - v. Holiday event planning: similar line-up of events as in previous years

V. Economic Development update (Paul)

- a. Space to Place launches 10/3 & 10/4 at Bookman's Alley for 90 days with a cohort of approx. 15 businesses.
- b. EDC Committee Meeting: The proposed Economic Development budget passed by the committee which included additional grant money for small businesses. The proposed budget is now going to City Council for final approval.
- c. Marty noted that at LUC meeting it was announced that Whole Foods committed to another 10+ year lease.
- d. Several businesses on Chicago Avenue have reported that sales have been negatively impacted by The Legacy Apartments construction project. Conversations are ongoing on ways to support these businesses.
- e. There was more group discussion about the current national economic climate, and how it is impacting our local businesses

VI. Other Business (Nathan)

- a. 2027 Budget
 - i. Andy reviewed the 2027 proposed budget by line item. It is not a balanced budget due to a decrease in some funding and increases in other expenses. However, we have enough money in reserves to cover the difference (\$38,349).
 - ii. Andrew suggested that the budget should be approved contingent on an agreement with Northwestern or the City of Evanston that Downtown Evanston will receive the \$225,000 for the contract with Brightview.
 - iii. **Vote:** Marty motioned to approve with the caveat that Northwestern or the City provide Downtown Evanston with an agreement in writing confirming the \$225,000 for the trash/maintenance contract with

BrightView; Jim seconded; board members unanimously approved the 2027 budget. It will be submitted to the City later today.

- b. The board discussed a replacement for Gretchen Brauer, who is stepping down from the Executive Board to join the Full Board due to her schedule.
 - i. Andy is going to ask Angelica D'Costa, owner at Madison Grace if she would be interested in moving up to Exec.
 - ii. Sarita volunteered to step into the role as Secretary, which the Exec board will vote on at the October meeting.
- c. Full Board Meeting: Thursday, November 12, 4-5:30PM at the Hilton Orrington

VII. Adjournment – Marty and Andrew (Nathan)

UPCOMING EVENTS

Northwestern "At Home in Evanston" Concert Event: Wednesday, September 16, 6:30-8:30PM

Evanston Cars & Coffee: Sunday, September 20, 9:30AM-Noon

Space to Place Launch Event: Saturday/Sunday, October 3 & 4

Big Bite Night, Sunday, October 4, 3-5PM

Next Exec Board meeting: Thursday, October 8, 9:30AM