Downtown Evanston Executive Committee
Meeting Minutes
Thursday, October 8, 2026, 9:30AM
Dayhouse Coworking, 922 Davis Street

Board Members Present:

Nathan Kostant, Golub *(Chair)*
Marty Cless, Core & Rind Hospitality *(Vice Chair)*
Sarita Kamat, Artem Pop Up Gallery *(Secretary)*
Angelica D'Costa, Madison Grace
John Rohrbach, Hilton Garden Inn

Board Members Not Present:

Andrew McDonald, Rotary International *(Treasurer)*
Jim Nash, Farnsworth Hill
Paul Zalmezak, City of Evanston

Staff:

Andy Vick
Laura Brown

I. Call to Order at 9:30AM (Nathan)
   a. Approval of Sarita Kamat to become the new Board Secretary
      i. **Vote:** Nathan motioned to approve; Marty seconded; Board approved unanimously.
   b. Approval of Angelica D'Costa (Class 4) to join the DTE Exec Committee
      i. **Vote:** Nathan motioned to approve; Sarita seconded; Board approved unanimously.

c. Approval of September Minutes **[Vote]**
    i. **Vote:** Marty motioned to approve; Sarita seconded; Board approved unanimously.

II. Treasurer's Report (Andy)
    a. September Financials: Finances are in good shape, no concerns. We continue to tap into reserves as we wait for additional tax collections from the County.
    b. Funding confirmed for 2027 trash collection contract with BrightView
        i. Northwestern and the City have provided DTE with email confirmation to provide $225,000 for trash collection service next year through the Ryan Field Community Benefits Agreement. DTE will cover the remaining contract balance, which is estimated to be an additional $6,000.

III. Executive Director update (Andy)
    a. The Margarita Inn Workforce Development program that provided daily litter pick-up lost funding in June 2026. DTE has just contracted with a resident of Margarita Inn on a temporary basis to pick up trash throughout the downtown business district 2 hours/day, 5 days a week, through the end of November.
    b. Downtown Summer Sounds
        i. Successful concert series with an increase in attendance.
        ii. *At Home in Evanston* (Sept. 16) was a special concert and resource fair for first-year Northwestern students. The event was funded by the university, but DTE provided the management and production support. The event was very well received by all, and is planned to return in 2027.
    c. Other Programming highlights
        i. Evanston Cars & Coffee: September 20 event canceled due to rain, but lots of positive feedback about the new location Sherman Avenue.
        ii. Holiday Light Celebration: working with City to fund/procure the annual Christmas tree, and how to install it at the new paved plaza.
    d. Advocacy/Business engagement highlights
        i. Andy presented in support of the 900 Clark Street development project at the Land Use Commission on 9/9. The project seems to have the votes for approval at City Council.
        ii. Staff attended Mash Up event; Andy was part of the planning committee.
        iii. Staff attended a variety of ribbon cuttings and other meetings and events in September to represent Downtown Evanston.

e. Increase in vandalism and unwanted loitering in downtown Evanston.
    i. Andy is in close contact with EPD and CARE team about recent incidents. There is not much that can be done in many loitering situations, given First Amendment rights.
    ii. DTE has requested more police presence at Fountain Square and specifically during our upcoming special events (i.e. Trick or Treat Stroll).
    iii. John noted the benefits of video recording any incidents when possible
f. Business Updates
    i. Giordano's and Boca Brava will be filling the former Reza's Restaurant
    ii. Chase Bank drive through has been demolished, and permits are underway for the 605 Davis Street residential tower construction
    iii. Wafflavor closed but a new restaurant concept is already underway
    iv. Peppercorn Kitchen space will have a new restaurant tenant
    v. Adel Flowers now open in Ayla's Originals
    vi. North Shore Artisan Market is planned for downtown in July 2027 on Sherman Avenue (similar footprint to Art & Big Fork Festival)
g. John Suggested activities or events in Evanston before Friday Northwestern home games because a lot of visiting teams come Thursday evenings

IV. Director of Marketing update (Laura)
a. Communications Dashboard
    i. Increase in social media, specifically Instagram because of Northwestern students
    ii. Website numbers are down in September due to lull in paid ads, but increasing ad spend will be starting soon for the holiday events and general shop and dine local ads
b. Events:
    i. Big Bite Night: 500-600 students; good feedback from restaurants
    ii. Trick or Treat Stroll (10/24)
    iii. Small Business Saturday (11/28)
    iv. Holiday Light Celebration (12/5)
    v. Warm Bevvy Walk (12/10)
c. Marketing:
    i. New Holiday Bingo Card (11/28-12/19) to encourage more local shopping during the holidays with a larger prize incentive

ii. A “Late Night Thursdays” (12/3-12/17) was suggested for retail shops in conjunction with a special holiday meal or promotion with restaurants
iii. General discussion about how it has been slower for businesses in summer and fall, which led to idea to create “Where to Shop, Dine Local” postcard to distribute to hotels, all businesses

V. Other Business (Nathan)
   a. Cancel November 12 Exec meeting
      i. **Vote:** Sarita motioned to approve; John seconded; Board approved to cancel the meeting.
   b. Full Board Meeting: Thursday, November 12, 4-5:30PM at the Hilton Orrington

VI. Open Discussion (All)

VII. Adjournment at 10:37AM (Nathan)

UPCOMING EVENTS

Halloween Trick or Treat Stroll Saturday, October 24, 2-4PM

Mindhaven’s First Look Open House, Thursday, October 29, 5-7:30PM

- -

Full Board meeting: Thursday, November 12, 4PM