APPROVED

Central Street Evanston
Board Meeting Minutes
Wednesday, January 14, 2026
Zoom Meeting

Attendees
Stacia DeSalvo
Dylan Johnson
Bane Srdjevic
Sarah Weitz
Jim Conrad
Paula Danoff
Paul Zalmazek
Eric Green
Drew Beckmann

Staff:
Angela Shaffer

I. **Call Meeting to order: Stacia DeSalvo (5 Minutes)**
Stacia asked for a motion to call the 1.14.26 meeting to order. Dylan motioned to call the 1.14.26 meeting to order. Drew seconded the motion. The meeting was called to order at 9:02am.
   a. Approve **November 12, 2025** minutes.
   Stacia asked for a motion to approve the November 12, 2025 board minutes. Dylan motioned to approve the November 12, 2025 board minutes. Dylan seconded the motion. The Board unanimously agreed to approve the minutes.

II. Treasurer's Report: Dylan Johnson/Angela Shaffer (10 minutes)
   a. Financial Update (Dylan)
   2025 Final Review: Dylan reported that we ended 2025 ahead of the game with $11,707. That amount was made up of the SSA spending $8700 less than anticipated in 2025, and the SSA having raised $3K in sponsorships. The SSA budgeted expenses of $253,917 and spent $245,212.

Tax Levy: On 1/9/26, Angela deposited tax levy checks in the total amount of **$95,209**
SSA 7: $66,815
SSA 8: $28,394
Angela expressed gratitude to Paul and Hitesh at the City for providing tax levy payments prior to the City receiving their tax fund payment. Angela mentioned we may be owed or may owe funds, depending on the amount that officially comes in to the City.

Cash Position on 1.12.26: Total Cash in the bank: $111,932
SSA 7: $79,347
SSA8: 32,586

Dylan reported that after paying some bills and paying back the line of credit, the SSA will have approximately $51K in the bank to start the year out.

Angela mentioned that everyone received a copy of the audit and she will need an official hard copy signature on the management representation letter. Dylan said he will take care of signing the document.

Angela mentioned the next tax levy payment might also be delayed a month or so due to another tax delay coming from Cook County. Angela will keep the board in the loop.

Angela asked the board if the SSA could go ahead and pay back the line of credit in full. Stacia asked for a motion to approve the request. Dylan motioned to approve paying back the full borrowed amount on the line of credit. Drew seconded the motion.
****

III. **Business/City Updates: Paul Zalmezak (**10 minutes)
   a) **City Updates**
      Paul reported that there will be a planned water main project on the east end of Central Street that will require coordination with impacted businesses. He said he will reach out to Angela for assistance.
   b) **Other Business**
      - Paul reported that they are still negotiating a lease at the west end service station property with a restaurant. He will share updates as soon as he has more information.
      - Paul reported that the Office Depot property sold for $6 million dollars to a local LLC for a sports-related use.
      - Angela asked Paul for assistance with a business that submitted an LOI at the former Starbucks property and is struggling to get the property owner to respond.
      - Angela asked Paul if he's heard anything from businesses about the situation with pennies running out. He said he hadn't heard anything and isn't aware of any local regulations on the matter.

- Stacia asked Paul if he had any updates on getting a sign for the Gichigamiin Museum. Paula added that the Evanston Art Center is officially recognized by National Museum Associations and would also like to have a sign for the Evanston Art Center. Paul said the board could help move the process along by making a case for signage for both organizations.
- Angela shared updates on the gateway mural project and said she's waiting on approval from the property owner at 1804 Central Street about using the building's wall for the mural.
- Sarah brought up the topic of Northwestern stadium concessions, expressing surprise at a restaurant's announcement of involvement. Jim responded suggesting he wasn't aware of this and will look into it as well as additional opportunities to collaborate.
- Paul and Angela will follow up with Jim to discuss various ideas for collaborative opportunities, like street banners.

IV. **New Year Past Reflections & Look Ahead: Angela Shaffer (20 Minutes)**
Angela gave a slideshow presentation with an overview of marketing/event/business updates.

a. 2025 Wrap Up

Angela provided a year-end review of 2025, highlighting achievements and challenges met in an effort to up the district's game.
- Angela shared how we juggled construction, dealt with a delayed park opening, and had rainy weather during events.
- Angela shared that we tried new event concepts, sponsorship pitching, TV appearances, and hired Ripple Public Relations.
- Angela talked about the current state of mind and how it's impacting events and retailers. There's reported retail uncertainty, and a few of our businesses reported a shift in the type of retail purchases made. Some businesses reported selling smaller items and accessories. Shoppers are mindful of their spending.
- Angela said Central Street has the opportunity to lean into community engagement initiatives, and really listen closely to what businesses need. She recommended having the first quarterly meetup in February at Lock Escape Room and will connect with Bane on his availability to host.
- Angela highlighted 2025 marketing goals and how we did:
We ended up with a 3% vacancy rate, 23% newsletter growth, 5000+ social media followers, and new programming initiatives.
- Angela presented 2026 marketing goals.

b. 2026 Event Schedule / 2025 Event Wrap-up

Angela discussed plans for upcoming events and marketing initiatives and gave a 2025 holiday event wrap up.

- **Holiday Stroll Tree Lighting**: Angela noted that the holiday stroll and tree lighting event had around 700-800 attendees, down from 1000 in 2024. Angela said even though more entertainers were hired, we still needed more. She said having two trolleys was definitely the way to go.

- Holiday lighting included a menorah in the park.
- **Late-er Night Central**: Angela said there were 28 participating businesses. Aside from shopping specials there was a pajama party, blood Mary making, pinot & pilates, gingerbread house making, and pet photos with Santa.

2026 Events Overview: Angela shared the 2026 event schedule and opened things up for discussion:

- Angela said it would be ideal to have regular live entertainment in the park on the stage.
- Angela asked the board for feedback regarding repeating Busker Fest or trying something new - Mid Autumn Moon Fest with ASPA Evanston.
- Angela summarized a Placer.ai report providing an overview of Busker Fest attendees. It was reported that approximately 2K people were in the area the day of the event, and that 600+ attended the event. We reached people as far as Chicago, Arlington Heights, Park Ridge and up to Highland Park. The highest concentration was around Evanston and the direct surrounding north shore communities.
- Sarah said she would hate to lose the momentum on Busker Fest, since she said we are the only community doing it. She also likes the idea of the Moon Fest and working with ASPA. She suggested hosting Moon Fest on the west end. Angela said she didn't know if that would be possible, because all community events have to be open to all businesses and ASPA wants to include as many businesses as possible.
- Paula asked what the major Busker Fest costs are. Angelal said the parking and entertainment. Paula suggested reaching out to local entertainment to help cut costs.
- Dylan asked if it would be possible to do two festivals. Angela said it would be hard to do back to back festivals and we now have to consider the Saturday home football schedule.
- Angela said she will connect with ASPA to get their thoughts on what's possible.
- Stacia said she thinks both events are very interesting and would create a draw. She agrees with Sarah that she hates to see us lose the momentum of Busker Fest, but she thinks we should look at our financials and really see what makes sense.
- Karen said she's neutral on both events. She said someone may discover her business in passing, but the events don't really translate into sales. However, she's about supporting all the businesses on Central Street.
- Due to time constraints, Angela said she would do a quick expense review for events and get back to the board so they can share their event feedback.
- Angela presented other ideas she's looking into. She connected with Majestic Photobooth to learn more about bringing a photobooth to Central Street for the community to enjoy. The photobooths also collect email signups. Would be great for growing the newsletter.

- Angela said she's working on the Annual Report and and would like to launch the new website in March.
- Angela provided a business update: Opening soon businesses include: Tails Together, Burl, and the tea shop. She said there is space availability next to Notice and next to Ten Mile. Both spaces housed real estate offices.

c. 2026 Goals / Open Conversation

- Jim will get back to us regarding Northwestern matters. He will connect with Paul and Angela on banner possibilities.
- Jim reported he is working on shuttle opportunities to bring people to Central Street and getting closer to making progress.
- Stacia shared her goals: She looks forward to composting opportunities on Central Street. She would like to see quarterly meetups happen. She said we should also be focused on recruiting for new board members, since some members will be rotating off.
- Bane said he would like us to do more of a push around encouraging businesses to seek reviews. He said reviews do a fantastic job of pulling in businesses from outside the local area and contribute to the economy of Central Street beyond purchasing something.
- Dylan agreed with Bane and said maybe we could help businesses with a playbook of how to solicit reviews. He said Sona Fitness has this incorporated into their software.

Drew motioned to adjourn the meeting at 10:06 AM. Dylan seconded the motion. Meeting Ended at 10:06 AM

Post Meeting Board Vote:

On February 3, the Board took a vote to renew the $50K Line of Credit.
Here is a link to the voting form with a majority vote. The Line of Credit will be renewed.