



Marketing & Event Committees

8/9/2023

DRAFT MINUTES

PRESENT: Karla, Zubin, Jackson, Denise, Evan, Susan, Katherine

Karla moved to approve [Draft Minutes of 6/14/2023 Meeting](#), Zubin seconded. Vote passed unanimously

Katherine went over the guiding principles for the 2024 Budget Discussion.

- Carryover income is decreasing as we have spent down or earmarked COVID carryover. We no longer have the capacity for growth.
- If we add any large events, they need to be ticketed or well-sponsored events that can self-fund. MDM's portion of any "free" event should be around \$2500.
- ED recommendation – Have a strategic focus on bringing people from outside the district into the district

With these guiding principles in mind, the Committee discussed its main functions – marketing outreach and events.

2024 MARKETING OUTREACH / ADVERTISING

Susan suggested investing in video content that highlights MDM.

- A summer day in Evanston – summer focus for advertising. Staycation / Close-cation take advantage of the lake, "If you have 3 summer days / 6 hours / one beautiful Saturday in Evanston, what would you do. Family focus, singles focus, solo focus"
 - Game day in Evanston – what do you do before or after the games?
 - Holiday shopping day in Evanston –
 - Winter Wellness day in Evanston –
 - Foodie focus – foodies want to travel
 - Jackson will share his "Galena for a day" video

Susan mentioned that she has drone equipment. Evan shared that her husband is a licensed drone pilot.

NU has volunteers we might leverage, like their Marketing Club. Susan mentioned that the Food and Ag Kellogg group is looking for a project. Engineering school has a freshman project requirement – Archway for entry in the district

2023 HOLIDAY CAMPAIGN: Katherine asked for the Committee's input on Intentional Ad strategies for the Holiday CVB Ad Co-op, as the North Shore Convention & Visitor's Bureau will share costs with us up to \$5000.

For context, Katherine shared previous years ad campaigns included direct mail (2022) and CTA train campaigns (2018-2019). She shared other things the committee has considered in the past but declined, including CTA Bus ads and WBEZ radio ads. Finally, she shared a suggestion from the CVB: a digital marketing campaign organized by [LocalIQ](#), Evanston based. We can tell them what we want and they can work with us in our budget and desired outcomes.

The committee discussed what would be our desired outcomes for a digital marketing campaign:

1. Measurable results Website clicks, adds to the mailing list, additional followers on social
2. At least 6 weeks, ideally 8 weeks of run
3. Focused on both holiday shopping and also our holiday events

The committee suggested store specific videos for Reels/TikTok – 30 seconds of edited holiday content – to be coherent with our marketing strategy going forward.

2024 EVENTS

The Committee agreed to spend another year executing the current event calendar, as it seems events are growing in both awareness and numbers.

EVANSTON THRIVES UPDATE: Katherine shared the [Pre vs Post-Pandemic Foot Traffic Report](#) from Economic Development city staff, plus [Roundtable](#) and [EvanstonNow analysis](#). The Economic Development Committee has created a [scoring tool](#) for the 100+ priorities on their [Implementation Matrix](#). Katherine will share this information with businesses.

Katherine debriefed with the committee on the 2023 Sidewalk Sale, including the Kickoff Party (20 bingo players, wonderful energy from the Pridewalk Sale), the [Final Map of participants](#) and the [Feedback Survey Results](#). Katherine says that the businesses themselves are the ones that drive this event. MDM simply promotes what they already are doing. We can request, but we cannot force them to do more than one day's worth of sale, which was one of the themes of the feedback.

Katherine debriefed the committee on the status of upcoming events:

- Evanston Wine Walk (Sept 14), including ticket sales, sponsorship sales, and participating businesses. Shorefront Legacy Center has agreed to activate participating stores by loaning them Shorefront artifacts to host for the evening. Most will be posters with the biographies of prominent black Evanstonians, plus some books and journals as well.

- Annual Celebration (Oct 12). Currently looking for a location. This event will be a celebration of 2023 accomplishments, and we will give a donation to Shorefront Legacy Center from the Wine Walk.
- Spooky Saturday Block Party Saturday (October 28). Block Party will include a DJ, apple cider or other fall treats, and most important, the Pumpkin Carving Contest (Katherine asked for help recruiting Pumpkin People)! Will include breakout into new categories so there are more prizes this year too.
 - If either of the winners of the last two years' contests win again this year, they will be asked to retire and that category will be named after them. They will become the judges for next year's winners.
- Small Business Saturday, same as recent years, with a Shopping bag giveaway, map of any sales or special events ([link to last year's map](#)) and "Spend \$100 on the Mile, get a gift bag filled with local goodies" promotion
 - Hometown Holiday Stroll (with increased budget woo hoo!)
 - This event will include mugs for guests, free cider or hot cocoa throughout the evening, a map of sales or special events ([link to last year's map](#)), [Holiday Tree Decorating Contest](#) Voting, caroling by St. Luke's, plus several new elements:
 - NEW - [Living Windows](#) - \$100 stipend to participating businesses, \$250 prize
 - NEW – Strolling Carolers at both ends of the district
 - NEW - Luminaria in front of participating stores

Adjourn