



## **Placemaking Committee**

3/11/2026

### **MINUTES**

PRESENT: Charles, Patti, Lori, Rob, Katherine, Claire, and Louise.

The meeting began with approval of the draft minutes from the January 21, 2026 meeting. Patti moved to approve the minutes and Lori seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously. The committee discussed preparations for the Earth Day Neighborhood Cleanup scheduled for April 18. At the time of the meeting, two volunteers had signed up to participate. Members were encouraged to share the volunteer sign-up sheet widely to recruit additional participants. The group is also currently recruiting thank-you treats for volunteers, and BCP has committed to providing nut bark.

An update was provided on the Evanston Thrives Gateway Mural project. An inspiration meeting and site visit with artist Darius Dennis took place on February 13. It was reported that the building where the mural will be installed requires tuckpointing, which the landlord plans to complete this spring. As a result, the mural installation is expected to occur in the summer. A photo folder of neighborhood scenes and Main-Dempster Mile events has been shared with the artist for reference. Darius Dennis is expected to present design suggestions at the next Placemaking Committee meeting on May 13, barring any unforeseen delays.

Additional mural updates were shared. Rob Lentz of Open Studio Project is currently conducting a community engagement survey, and committee members were asked to complete the survey and sign up for the associated community engagement workshops. It was also noted that artists involved in the Main Street mural project are currently exhibiting work at Open Studio Project. Members were reminded about a new mural intended to be installed at the CTA underpass at Greenwood and Sherman, just north of the Dempster CTA station. The mural's theme is "Children's Culture: Innovations and Inventions from Evanston," inspired by an exhibit at the Evanston History Center and referencing the interactive style of the Wilson, North Carolina Whirligig Museum. The ITA mural initiative is also currently in discussions with Union Pacific.

The committee began discussing the timeline for 2027 budget planning, which will start at the May meeting and conclude in July with a recommendation for the Board to consider during the August or September meetings. Preliminary items suggested for inclusion in the budget include district-wide pressure washing estimated at \$25,000, mural repair estimated at \$5,000–\$6,000, and festoon light replacement and repair estimated at \$6,000–\$7,000. Members also brainstormed potential "blue sky"

investments that other Special Service Areas provide but the district currently does not. Ideas included adding an extra day of trash pickup service or targeting problem areas for additional collection, new holiday light pole décor, potential support for the Dempster Street bridge lighting project, and new rebate programs. Current rebate programs include security cameras, annual plantings and planter hardware, tents for sidewalk sales, and snow removal. Additional possibilities discussed included façade improvement grants for awnings or blade signs and the creation of a tenant attraction package.

An update was provided regarding the planter urns. Green Edens will clean out the urns in March or April, and they will be replanted in time for the Earth Day Neighborhood Cleanup. The new plantings will include planter stakes that read “Planted with Love by the Main-Dempster Mile.”

The committee also discussed directory and gateway signage funded by Evanston Thrives. Installation is expected within the next two to three months, as referenced in the Annual Report.

Festoon lighting was discussed for both Dempster Street and Main Street. The Dempster Street lights require bulb replacements and line repair, which are currently unbudgeted. For Main Street, the process with Illuminight will begin once the supplier returns to the United States.

Finally, the committee noted that proposals for the bridge lighting project have been received, but there are no updates at this time. The project is funded and managed by Evanston Thrives.

The meeting adjourned.