Placemaking Committee

5/22/2024

MINUTES

PRESENT: Louise, Charles, Trinity, Laurie, Katherine

Trinity moved to approve Draft Minutes from 3/20/2024 Meeting, Charles seconded, Vote passes unanimously.

Katherine updated the Committee on the Evanston Thrives initiatives. She met with Evanston Thrives consultants (along with the 9 other Evanston districts) to begin the process of creating gateway signage (paid for by ARPA funds) to the district. She requested major gateways at the corners of Main and Dempster on Chicago Ave and requested smaller pillars at every intersection in the district (think Halsted Street pillars). This money must be contracted / allocated by December 31 of 2024 and spent by the end of 2026 so the process will likely move quickly.

The committee asked Katherine to make sure these gateways were coherent with our current "We're Glad You're Here" signage, but also coherent with the rest of the city. Don't forget the guiding principle to connect the district east to west as well as north to south.

The committee recommended that we should also include see if we can include our own directory signage in this process so we can finally get it done. Katherine will follow up.

The committee also asked what we can do about viaduct beautification.

Regarding the Main Street festoon lighting project, Katherine reported that the City is taking the lead and a public works project manager has been assigned. The project cannot be completed until after Main St construction is completed. A meeting has been set for August 26th for MDM, Illuminight and Public Works to regroup and make plans.

Katherine reported on the Main Street Improvement Project. It's really bad. Many businesses are reporting their sales are down despite the free parking and signage. Some businesses are okay, but many are really gutting it out. The project is running a little behind. They hope to complete the north sidewalk by mid to late June and move to the south sidewalk on time, and have brought on extra crews to help achieve this goal. Charles will ping the alderman about communication accountability.

Katherine reviewed the placemaking initiatives for Main Street to help draw people to businesses during construction, including:

- Viaduct Signage on the Metra viaduct (paid for by the City of Evanston)
- "Touch a Truck on Main Street" event March 29 was a major success with hundreds of families coming to hang out with the city's working trucks. I have no data as to whether people stopped in to shop or eat afterwards.
- MDM Wind Signs at all four corners of Main & Chicago,
- TWO NEW WIND SIGNS PURCHASED to increase density
- Block Parties will remain in the alley in June and July
- Rotary Main Street Mini-Festival tentatively scheduled for October 20th

NEXT NEIGHBOR EVENT: MDM Summer Kickoff Block Party (Friday June 7th, 5:30pm-7:30pm) feat. The Paulina Project. Wine Goddess, YoFresh, Firehouse will provide food and beverage for guests, as well as other vendors.

Adjourn