



APPROVED

**Central Street Evanston
Board Meeting Minutes
Wednesday, November 13, 2024
Zoom Meeting**

Attendees

Stacia DeSalvo
Dylan Johnson
Eric Green
Karen Graham
Drew Beckmann
Paula Danoff
Jim Konrad
Paul Zalmezak

Staff:

Angela Shaffer

Not Present

Sarah Weitz
Bane Srdjevic

Agenda

I. Call Meeting to order: Stacia DeSalvo

Stacia announced a quorum. The meeting was called to order at 9:02am.

- a. [Approve September 8, 2024 Minutes](#): Stacia asked for a motion to approve the September 8, 2024 minutes. Dylan motioned to approve the meeting minutes. Drew seconded the motion. The Board unanimously agreed to approve the minutes.
- b. Stacia welcomed new Board members Karen Graham, owner of Sew on Central, and Drew Beckmann, owner of Heroines & Heroes, and had them share information about their businesses and what they hope to contribute as a Board member. Sarah Weitz was not able to attend the meeting.
- c. Stacia opened up the conversation for feedback regarding this year's Annual meeting.

Drew shared that this was his second Annual Meeting that he's attended. He reported that he liked the venue and the presentations and the opportunity to talk with everyone. He believes we covered the pertinent information and were transparent about our financials. He appreciated the ability to have informal conversations about how people are feeling about issues like park construction and working around various challenges. He appreciated the strong attendance by a diverse group of business owners that he hasn't seen in other communities.

Karen really appreciated having the City of Evanston present to have those one-on-one conversations and learn more about how they are working to support Evanston businesses.

Stacia said the meeting seemed well-attended with a nice full room of business owners.

Angela thanked Paula for hosting the meeting at the Evanston Art Center.

Jim said he wonders if it would be helpful in the future to share updates from Northwestern regarding accomplishments and projects in the works.

Stacia DeSalvo agreed with Jim that it would be a nice addition at next year's Annual Meeting.

II. Treasurer's Report: Dylan Johnson/Angela Shaffer

a. Dylan reported total cash in the bank = **\$74,700**

SSA 7 = \$72,162

SSA 8 = \$2,538

Tax Levy check expected in November in the amount of \$94,876.00

SSA 7 = \$68,018.00

SSA 8 = \$26,858.00

b. Financial Update: Dylan reported that Angela completed the audit and the taxes have officially been filed.

Stacia shared with the new Board members that 70% of our funding comes from SSA 7, which is the central and east end and 30% of our funding and spending comes from SSA 8 on the west end. She said we do our best to allocate funds accordingly throughout the district when it comes to events and other programming efforts.

Angela confirmed what Stacia said and mentioned that even though the majority of our funding comes from SSA 7, we still think globally and make sure we think of all businesses when we do our programming. Everyone matters.

- III. **Event/Business Updates:** Angela gave a [slideshow presentation](#) with an overview of business updates and events.

EVENTS

- Angela shared highlights from the Central Street Trick-or-Treat event. There were 800+ attendees this year and 44 participating businesses in the new two-hour time span. A storyteller was added to the mix along with EAC's trick-or-treat bag making.
- Angela commented that Drew shared valuable feedback that he had a steady flow of attendees for the first 90 minutes in his store and then it was more consistent the last 30 minutes. He received great feedback about his business and his sales transactions were up 125% from the prior Saturday.
- Angela shared that she's working on the Holiday Stroll planning and shared the breakdown of the schedule. She mentioned that there are currently 23 businesses offering a special promotion. She said this year since there is no tree lighting, due to the park not having electricity, that she added in free trolley rides for some showstopping excitement.
- Angela reported that the holiday decor is up. Lights are in the trees and on buildings and our holiday plantings are getting planted on Friday the 15th.

Angela shared a broad event schedule for 2025 with anticipated goals:

- Host our regular signature events
- Try new event concepts
- Get sponsorships to help pay for our events
- Increase business participation
- Expand our reach - Host events that appeal to a broad audience

Angela shared the annual event schedule and presented some new ideas/concepts to consider for 2025:

- History Central Project/Tours
- Student Restaurant Week with Spoon NU
- Independence Park Gran Opening
- Busker Fest
- Taste of Central Street
- Crawl Event (Wine crawl or other)
- First Fridays or other type of repeat concept (but we need biz buy in)

MARKETING

Angela shared 2024 marketing successes. She shared our 3.5% vacancy rate. She shared our initiatives to engage with our businesses. She mentioned the hiring of Ripple PR to help us grow beyond our local communities. She reiterated the initiatives with Northwestern & Kellogg.

Angela shared 2025 marketing themes:

- Theme for 2025: Central Street 2.0 = Above and Beyond
- Evaluate our programming. Are our programs/events worthy. Do they have a reach component?

Angela shared 2025 Marketing Goals:

- Expand our Reach through PR, storytelling, and events
- Continue to explore new marketing ideas
- Engage with Central Street businesses (internal)
- Work with Kellogg on marketing initiatives
- Continue to fill vacancies

Angela provided a Ripple PR Update:

- Ripple is conducting business interviews to tell stories
- Press releases have been sent to the media
- Ripple created a curated gift guide and sent it to the media
- Ripple is brainstorming new event concepts for 2025
- Angela shared Hello Lamp Post updates and showed the planned signage for the districts. Completed a walking tour with Public Works.

Eric asked about the Trolley stops for the holiday event. Angela provided an update with the various planned locations.

Eric offered to host a Central Street mingle event at Ten Mile House in 2025.

Dylan shared his interest for more outreach via the NU athletics, and how that might help our relationship and visibility with NU students. He's interested in the new emerging athletics NIL program where athletes are influencers on social or other. He doesn't know how it all works, but he thinks it would be a great idea to explore and find out about rates. Might be a great way to crack into the campus bubble by getting a couple of athlete influencers.

Dylan said they have a couple of NU students working at Sona Fitness.

Karen agreed that students are taking their classes and buying fabrics, so they are finding Central Street, but we could do even more to attract students.

Dylan learned that students used to be able to ride the 201 for free and that it went away. Dylan asked Jim if he knew anything about that.

Jim commented that there used to be a program with CTA and the 201 bus, but that they don't have that anymore and that they are working on implementing a new shuttle program with the acquisition of 12 new buses. NU is no longer offering free rides via the 201 bus. Jim will continue to follow up and report on this.

IV. City Updates: Paul Zalmezak

Angela reported on behalf of Paul with updates. She shared that the City is working on gateway signage for all the districts, including Central Street. Angela shared that we will be getting a mural on the east side of the Metra track to welcome people to Central Street. She is working directly with Art Encounter and making sure the Evanston Art Center is included in the program. We will get the opportunity to select a muralist for our mural.

V. Northwestern Updates/Matters

Eric asked Jim about the electric sign outside Ten Mile House announcing sporting events. It's located at the southeast corner of Eastwood/Central. Eric said it's great and hoped there might be a chance for it to become something more permanent. It's a great communication platform, and his restaurant patrons happened to notice it.

Jim said he will look into the sign and find out more about it.

Stacia asked Jim if there are any additional NU updates.

Jim has another meeting with Turner Construction. He still wants to plan for the major construction that will be happening and will be looping in Eric to the conversation. Still a plan to include the restaurants who want to be involved. No new updates at this point. Turner asked for menus for the workers, but not all menus are appropriate for a 30 minute lunch. There is still work to be done.

Jim mentioned that he's anxious to see how the Kellogg project goes when it comes to gathering student insights about Central Street.

Dylan shared that he hopes we get some good information from these opportunities with Northwestern and said it's really up to us to make sure we execute these things and encouraged Drew and Karen as new Board members to bring new ideas to the table so we can work together and collaborate to get things done.

Jim said he will try and get more information about Dylan's suggestion around NIL.

Meeting Ended at 10:00 AM