



APPROVED

**Central Street Evanston
Board Meeting Minutes
Wednesday, March 12, 2025**

Zoom Meeting

Attendees

Stacia DeSalvo
Dylan Johnson
Eric Green
Karen Graham
Drew Beckmann
Paula Danoff
Jim Konrad
Bane Srdjevic
Sarah Weitz

Staff:

Angela Shaffer

Not Present

Paul Zalmezak

Agenda

I. Call Meeting to order: Stacia DeSalvo

Stacia announced a quorum. Dylan motioned to call the meeting to order. Eric seconded the motion. The meeting was called to order at 9:02am.

- a. Approve [January 8 meeting minutes](#). Stacia asked for a motion to approve the January 8, 2025 minutes. Drew motioned to approve the meeting minutes. Dylan seconded the motion. The Board unanimously agreed to approve the minutes.

II. Treasurer's Report: Dylan Johnson

- a. Dylan reported total cash in the bank = **\$106,011**

SSA 7 = \$92,957

SSA 8 = \$13,054

- b. Tax Collection: Dylan reported the first tax collection is set to be distributed in late April or early May.

- c. Line of Credit: Dylan reported that the line of credit was renewed and that he and Stacia need to sign the documents. Angela will send Dylan and Stacia the bank contact.

III. **Marketing/Events/Business Updates**: Angela gave a [slideshow presentation](#) with an overview of marketing/event/business updates.

a) **MARKETING**

2025 Marketing Goals: Central Street 2.0 - Destination Central Street

Angela shared marketing goals for 2025 to make Central Street a destination.

- Expand our reach: Become a destination
- Ripple PR initiatives, storytelling, events that create a draw, grow newsletter subscribers, Kellogg/student initiatives
- Engage Central Street businesses: Quarterly mingles and education opportunities
 - a) Angela mentioned that nothing had been scheduled yet and mentioned Bane wanted to host the first one in February but we got off track. She asked if this was something we still wanted to do this year. The answer was yes, and Bane is still on board with hosting.
- Continue to fill vacancies: There are a few key locations still sitting empty.
- Enhance signage to prepare for more visitors: Gateway, wayfinding, and new mural approved in the City budget and still in the works with Paul's team.

Angela shared key projects still in progress:

- Annual report
- Transfer of website to new Squarespace platform
- Hello Lamp Post: Angela provided an update and shared the new signage with Bella bird as the new Central Street guide/mascot. (25 18" round signs will be placed throughout Central Street).

Eric asked about the Hello Lamp Post signs and suggested the signs go east of the parking lot and closer to the hospital. Angela said that is a conversation that would have to happen with NU and they would have to pay for it, but that we are planning to have a new kiosk near the parking lot as part of the gateway signage plan with the Evanston Thrives project.

EVENTS

2025 Event Goals: Central Street 2.0 - Destination Central Street

Angela shared event goals for 2025:

- Incorporate more arts & music into our events
- Find more money for events: sponsorships
- Increased event participation by businesses
- Continue to explore new event concepts: Destination events and consistent programming

Angela shared the annual event schedule and new event concepts/ideas:

- April: Central Street Restaurant Week
- May, June: First Fridays - Spring's ALIVE, Pride's ALIVE
- June: Independence Park Grand Opening Ceremony
- July: Sidewalk Sale
- August: First Friday's Vibe's ALIVE
- September: Central Street ALIVE Busker Fest
- October: Central Street Trick or Treat
- November/December: Holidays on Central

Restaurant Week: April 7 - 13

This is a new initiative to shed light on Central Street restaurants, especially since Independence Park is off limits in June for Takeout Picnic due to the freshly seeded grass. We currently have 13 restaurants on board.

First Friday ALIVE Series: May, June, August

ALIVE is an acronym that highlights what makes Central Street special:

Artistic, Local, Independent, Vibrant, Eclectic

*The ALIVE acronym is on point with our Central Street mission and vision.

Central Street ALIVE: September 20 Busker Fest - Celebration of the performing arts, with staged acts, buskers, face painters, and a tasting component for restaurants

Mid-Autumn Moon Fest: October 6 with Evanston ASPA

Mooncakes, Wine Walk, Lantern Making, Etc.

Northwestern Student Event with Spoon University (Aiming for Saturday, April 19)

Angela and Sarah have been working on trying to get a ticketed event to happen on Central Street with Northwestern students. Started with the idea to be a component of Restaurant Week, but they learned that the timing wasn't the best. They've been trying to find a way to get students to Central Street, because Central Street is a destination for when parents are in town and for special occasions. There are restaurants interested in participating in the student event.

- Learnings: Students don't have a lot of money, they have to come in an Uber because there is no NU shuttle to Central Street. Students can afford a \$20 ticket because they have to pay for transportation.
- Angela asked Jim if he has any updates regarding a possible shuttle that could come to Central Street for special events.

Jim: He's working with NU's Department of Transportation. He said there is a loop shuttle that runs from 6 PM to 1 PM, and he's trying to see if it can start earlier that Saturday and travel further to Central Street and extend the route for the rest of the day, or at least until the event is over.

Angela said it's an ongoing issue per the student research presented and various conversations that Central Street is hard to get to and the school should really consider expanding their route permanently.

Jim said it's something they would then need to consider for all other areas in Evanston.

Sarah said she thinks we should still try to do the event with Spoon at a later time. Angela and Sarah will make a decision this week about whether to move forward. Sarah said our only other option was Wednesday night, but she thinks we'd get better attendance on a Saturday, and Saturdays are also good because all the shops are open. Sarah also said it's a small investment for restaurants, because all they would have to do is give out a sample.

Eric said Ten Mile House is happy to participate. He said it would be good to have an event on campus too. Sarah said she went to a meeting on campus that Peter Braithwaite organized and spoke to someone in charge of Student Affairs that has interest in doing a Taste of Central Street event on campus with Central Street restaurants (possibly Jeremy Shank). But Sarah believes that would be a lot more effort for our restaurants, since they would have to travel and set up a table. Jim said he would follow up on that.

Stacia said DeSalvo's is willing to participate in the April event. She said they would be happy to have garlic knots available during regular hours. No extra challenge. If transportation is a limitation, they are willing to do it all day.

Angela said Spoon came to them and Spoon wants to have a specific time slot where the students will see each other together at the event.

Stacia said trying something new is how we find out if it works or not.

IV. Business/City Updates: Angela

- Central Street Construction project: Held an official groundbreaking and Angela will be attending weekly construction meetings. Construction is scheduled through October 31.
- Free Parking at Central Street parking meters between Eastwood and Hartrey. Does not include parking lots or side street meters.
- Paul is working to get permission from Chase bank for extra employee parking during construction.

V. Kellogg Special Meeting: Angela (15 minutes)

[Link](#) to NU presentation deck

Angela opened up a discussion regarding the Kellogg presentation:

Dylan thought the report was comprehensive and offered great ideas. The report studied how Big 10 universities drive engagement with local businesses. Dylan thinks the Evanston/NU relationship is more comparable to an Ivy League school scenario than Big 10 schools like Madison and Iowa City. Dylan would be interested in seeing a comprehensive analysis with a comparable town/school scenario.

Jim agreed with Dylan.

Dylan mentioned his concerns with the friction between NU and some of the Central Street businesses. Angela agreed with Dylan that if we're going to celebrate homecoming and get involved in NU activities, there might be some barriers to break.

Paula said from her experience of volunteering at Northwestern, she understands that the draw for many of the students that choose to go to Northwestern is the fact that they are close to Chicago. Paula said the Art Center has been learning more about attracting the 55+ group. She believes grad students and professors and alumni are a better target market for Central Street. And, many of them already live nearby.

Angela responded to Paula. We used this research study as an opportunity to learn more about the student market and how students feel about Central Street. This is data we didn't have access to and felt the students involved in the study had the ability to pull this information together for us.

Drew said he learned a lot from the study and thinks we're getting closer to understanding the Central Street target market. Drew said some of our Central Street businesses want to tap into the student market, but if \$20 is all they can afford for a tasting event, then they probably aren't a great market. Drew mentioned there are departments at Northwestern that are reaching out to him about hosting events in his space. He's trying to get a better understanding of why they are reaching out vs. getting a space on campus.

Sarah said we've only talked with one group at NU. She thinks undergraduate students would frequent our businesses on the street. Not necessarily every day, but she thinks it's worth a try to reach them. She thinks they just have a lack of knowledge about Central Street and we need to educate them about Central Street.

With regard to one-off events for students, Jim isn't ruling out the opportunity to make special transportation available. NU will own their own buses. Dylan thinks getting a sponsorship from Windy City might even be a good idea.

VI. Northwestern Updates: Jim/Eric

Central Street restaurant connections during construction:

Jim said early on there wasn't much emphasis on the opportunity for larger orders, but there is now a desire to connect with Central Street through their catering menus. Jim hasn't heard about the plan for reaching construction workers and the tent is up. Jim is trying to prioritize Central Street restaurants.

Eric said the process to introduce Central Street restaurants to the construction team has been challenging. When he talked with restaurants, five responded, but they didn't know how they could execute. The connection process has taken two years. Eric wants to help the restaurants. The initial discussion was how to help Central Street restaurants during construction. Eric said the construction is far along and nothing has happened, so

he thinks he should start thinking about what we can do for Central Street businesses once the stadium actually opens.

Jim doesn't want to give up during construction since there is still 18 months to go. He wants to get the catering menus to the construction team.

Sarah said restaurants should send digital catering menus to Jim and Jim can forward to the team. Jim said we'll also continue the conversation about restaurants and getting food to the stadium once it's open.

Eric will reach out to the restaurants and ask them to forward their menus to Jim.

Meeting Ended at 10:06 AM