

DOWNTOWN OAK PARK BOARD OF DIRECTORS' MEETING MINUTES
January, 16 2024 VIA ZOOM

Present: Jeff Long, Frank Heitzman, Susie Goldshmidt, Mike Fox, Mike Carney, Erin Payton, David Schrod, Cameron Davis, Paul Beckwith, Tina Salerno, Michelle Vanderlaan, Jimmy Chen

Staff: Shanon Williams, Jayne Furlong, Jeff Eng, Amelia Dellos

The Downtown Oak Park Board of Directors' meeting was called to order by Board President, Susie Goldschmidt, at 8:33am via Zoom.

Motion to Approve November 2023 Minutes:

Approved: Mike Fox

Seconded: Michelle Vanderlaan

All in favor

- Motion Carried –

Introduction - Shannon Williams

1. New Marketing Director - Amelia Dellos

Finance Report – Jeff Long

1. **Winterfest Revenue and Expenses**

- a. Winterfest Revenue totaled about \$22,000 vs. \$20,000 budgeted, and Expenses totaled about \$18,000 vs. the \$20,000 budgeted. This resulted in a Net of about \$4,000 for Winterfest vs. \$0 budgeted.

2. **Holiday Light Grant and Decor**

- a. The Holiday Light Grant of \$5,000 was received from the Village. Holiday Decor Expenses totaled about \$62,000 vs. \$65,000 budgeted.

3. **Snow Removal**

- a. Snow Removal for January through March and November through December was under budget by almost \$12,000 (about \$38,000 vs. \$50,000) due to lower than average snowfall.

4. **Home for the Holidays**

- a. Home For the Holidays came in about \$3,800 under budget. Expenses totaled about \$3,200 vs. the \$7,000 budgeted.

5. **Extra Reserve and Snow Reserve Accounts**

- a. For the year, the Extra Reserve Account totaled about \$235,000 and the Snow Reserve Account about \$70,000.

6. **Shopper's Reward**

- a. Shopper's Reward is off to a strong start. After the first month, 291 books were given out vs. 211 last year. This is even higher than the 164 given out in pre-pandemic 2019.

7. Gift Certificates

- a. Gift Certificates Sales were down this year about \$7,000. Sales totaled almost \$48,000 vs. about \$55,000 last year. However, the Gift Certificate Redemptions to Merchants were on par with last year, about \$47,000 this year vs. about \$48,000 last year.

8. Board Feedback/Questions

- a. Susie - Cybersecurity Insurance
 - i. Do we have any cybersecurity insurance or can we add any?
 - 1. Shanon to explore possible options

Motion to Approve December 2023 Financial Statements:

Approved: Mike Fox

Seconded: Michael Carney

All in favor

-Motion carried –

9. 2024 Budget

- a. Tabled the wine event in 2023
- b. Visit Oak Park rent will add \$11k to revenue
- c. Not using funds budgeted for the board consultant
- d. Add \$1k to Member awning grant
 - i. Several grants issued last year, is a great benefit for membership
- e. David King assisted with lease negotiations to resign lease at 1010 lake Street for 3 years
- f. \$10k budgeted for rebranding
- g. Board Feedback/Questions
 - i. Paul - SSA Increase
 - 1. How will the increase affect the average owner?
 - a. Mike F - 4.56% of total bill for commercial owners, condo owners are exempt

Motion to Approve December 2024 Budget:

Approved: Mike Fox

Seconded: Paul Beckwith

All in favor

-Motion carried –

Village Updates - Cameron Davis

1. New Business Licenses

- a. 103 for the year
 - b. 25-30% in Downtown Oak Park
 - c. 31 development projects - less than last year but healthy
- 2. Parking**
- a. Holley Court is up 8% for daily parking - Down from 2019/pre-pandemic still
 - b. Permit parking has recovered to pre-pandemic levels
- 3. Restaurants**
- a. 8 set to open throughout the community
 - b. 2 possibly to open in DTOP
- 4. Comedy Club**
- a. Has officially opened in DTOP
- 5. Board Feedback/Questions**
- a. Susie - Vacancy in DTOP
 - i. Are vacancies tracked by the Village?
 - 1. Have not previously had a list but are working to develop one
 - ii. Can we do more to become a competitive market for larger retailers to have a regional presence in our district?
 - iii. Any interest or plans for 1144 Lake Street (old Borders space)
 - 1. The building has many unique considerations that are challenges to potential renters

Events and Communications - Jayne Furlong

- 1. Holiday Events**
- a. Overall successful and received positive feedback from the community
- 2. 2024 Event Calendar**
- a. Signature Events Schedule
 - i. Jazz Thaw - March 9th and 10th
 - ii. Thursday Night Out - Thursdays from June 6th through August 29th
 - iii. Shop Outdoor Sale - July 18th through 21st
 - iv. Oaktoberfest - September 13th and 14th
 - v. Winterfest - December 7th
 - vi. Home for the Holidays - December 21st
 - b. Minor Events Schedule
 - i. Merchant Mingles - February 22nd, June 26th, November 7th
 - ii. Annual Meeting - May 23rd
 - iii. Pride Night at TNO - Thursday in June TBD w/Chamber of Commerce
 - iv. Small Business Saturday - Saturday, November 30th
 - c. New Events
 - i. Cultural Caffeine Tour - April 22nd through 26th

1. Focusing on the diversity of coffee/tea/etc. available in the district
 2. Still in development
 - ii. Hispanic Heritage Event - Date TBD (End of September/Early October)
 1. Staff will connect with Hispanic business owners to discuss possible event ideas and dates
 - iii. Halloween Event - October 26th
 1. Event details TBD
3. **Restaurant Week**
 - a. Working with Visit Oak Park and OPRF Chamber of Commerce for a week-long dining event beginning February 23rd and culminating in “Bite Night” on March 1st
 - b. Providing DTOP restaurants with information on participating in the week-long event as well as Bite Night
4. **Jazz Thaw**
 - a. New for 2024: Adding Sunday Jazz Brunch at 3 or 4 restaurants, making this a two-day event
5. **DTOPBA Website**
 - a. Was fairly active throughout the holiday season, with merchants sending in promotions/events/specials fairly regularly
6. **Merchant Advisory Committee**
 - a. Opening up monthly MAC meetings to all businesses, not just standing committee members, to increase engagement and connection
7. **Board Feedback/Questions**
 - a. Susie - High Rise Communications
 - i. Are there more ways we can connect merchants with the high-rise residents?
 1. Staff to consider options

Marketing - Shannon Williams and Anna Kosowski

1. **Shopper’s Rewards**
 - a. Shopper’s Reward Promotional plan implemented, including high-rise happy hours and Small Business Saturday
 - b. 291 books were given out vs. 211 by this time last year. This is even higher than the 164 given out in pre-pandemic 2019.
2. **You Belong Here Campaign**
 - a. Ended in December
 - b. Huge open rates for holiday eblasts (42-50% when the industry standard is around 20%)

3. Board Feedback/Question
 - a. Susie - Small Business Saturday
 - i. Room for growth with this event
 1. Staff to consider options for expanding on 2023 event for 2024

New Business - Shannon Williams

1. **2024 Board Calendar**
 - a. Outline provided to the board
 - b. Upcoming - Nominating Committee to be formed soon for annual elections
2. **Ad Hoc Committees**
 - a. Erin is assisting with creating guidelines for four new committees
3. **Lot 10/North Blvd Project**
 - a. Shanon discussed electrical needs for events with Village
 - b. Losing 7 parking spots, but there will be more handicap parking and EV charging stations
 - c. Lighting to be improved
 - d. Changing to a one-way lot East to West in order to expand sidewalk
 - e. Will feature permeable pavers
 - f. Cameron - Final approval set for April, projected to begin project late spring

Old Business - Shannon Williams

1. **Rebrand Update**
 - a. Famous Victory will be reaching out with questionnaire email
 - b. 3 options will be presented to the MAC and Board
2. **Open House**
 - a. Scheduled for Tuesday January 23rd at 5:30 pm to open new office space and welcome Visit Oak Park
3. **Maintenance Agreement**
 - a. \$37k reimbursement from Village for plant maintenance per agreement
4. **Board Feedback/Questions**
 - a. Mike F - Marion Street Heated Sidewalks
 - i. Need to ensure McAdams is salting and shoveling Marion Street sidewalks since heated sidewalks do not work
 1. Shanon to follow up with McAdams

Consent Reports

- a) Executive Director – Shanon Williams
- b) Marketing – Anna Kosowski
- c) Events/Communication- Jayne Furlong

Motion to adjourn: Downtown Oak Park Board of Directors' Meeting at 9:38am by Susie Goldschmidt, Board President.

Approved: Cameron Davis

Seconded: Susie Goldschmidt

All in favor

-Motion Carried –