

**DOWNTOWN OAK PARK BOARD OF DIRECTORS' MEETING MINUTES**  
**June 11, 2024 VIA ZOOM**

**Present:** Frank Heitzman, Mike Fox, Mike Carney, Paul Beckwith, Tina Salerno, Michelle Vanderlaan, Jonathan Kaufman, Emily Egan

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

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

**Motion to Approve April 2024 Minutes:**

Approved: Tina

Seconded: Frank

All in favor

- Motion Carried –

**Finance Report – Mike Carney**

1. **Member Dues** - Approximately half the DTOP Members have paid their \$50 DTOP Member Dues (65 Paid vs. 67 Unpaid). This is a little below last year at this time when 73 had paid.

2. **Spring/Summer Plantings** - Woodlawns Landscaping has completed the summer planting. Half the bill or \$18,415 was paid in May and the remaining \$18,415 will be paid in June. This is the same cost as last year.

3. **Shopper's Reward Program** - A total of \$52,310 has been redeemed to Merchants for the Shopper's Reward Program. This is approximately \$18,000 under the \$70,000 budgeted. Historically, most of the money has been redeemed to the Merchants by this time of year.

4. **Extra Reserves and Snow Reserves Accounts** - The Extra Reserve Account totals \$236,140 and the Snow Reserve Account \$71,096.

a. Board Feedback/Questions

i. Paul - Making money on reserve?

1. Yes, reserves were moved into an account with the highest interest possible

ii. Frank - The amount in reserves seems high. How much should we have?

1. Mike F:

a. This is a good question that has come up before. Reserve has been very low in the past and the Board and staff made a big effort to replenish reserves.

b. Currently, snow reserves are meant to have at least enough for two removals.

c. Staff should ask Sesseti what regular reserves should be. In general, reserves are good to have in case Village payments are

delayed and it needs to be drawn on to cover expenses until SSA payment is received.

2. Jeff E:
  - a. In 1st quarter we usually dip in for Shopper's Reward and 3rd quarter we usually dip in sometime in July because the Village pays SSA for 3rd quarter in August for unknown reasons
    - i. When an SSA payment is received, the reserve is replenished.
  - b. In regards to the amount that should be in reserves, Sessetti provided a formula to account for covering any remaining bills in case of bankruptcy
    - i. Last evaluated reserves in 2021, at which time DTOPBA had \$150,000 in regular reserves
    - ii. The formula calculates 6 months of fixed expenses. In 2021, this was calculated at \$222,000.
    - iii. Snow reserves should have enough to cover 2 removals
      1. Estimated at \$35k per removal in 2021
  - c. Jeff can recalculate 6 months of fixed expenses for 2024 before budget planning for 2025
3. Emily E:
  - a. Budget kick-off letters coming this week to schedule meetings with Village regarding the 2025 budgets

5. **Line of Credit Renewed** - A form signed by Board members was sent in to approve the renewal

- a. Renewal is every two years
- b. Byline Bank will need audit results from last year
  - i. The audit being conducted right now should have results by the end of the summer
- c. Line of credit for \$150,000
  - i. DTOPBA has not used credit in recent years and will review need for line of credit again in two years

**Motion to Approve May 2023 Financial Statements:**

Approved: Tina

Seconded: Frank

All in favor

-Motion carried –

**Village Updates - Emily Egan**

1. **Economic Vitality Study** - Village has received 3 proposals and is currently reviewing and interviewing consultants
  - i. June 18th is the scheduled date for recommendation to be made to the Village Board to move forward with one for review

- ii. Board Feedback/Questions:
    - 1. Paul - Does the Village need anything from DTOPBA? Are any organizations involved in the study?
      - a. Emily - Not yet. The Village will come to organizations/districts/community once a consultant is on board and the process is underway
    - 2. Paul - What is the purpose of the study?
      - a. Emily - The purpose is to get an economic baseline for the community and to help strategically plan for future growth and development. The Village wants to be able to track this growth and development years into the future.
    - 3. Amelia - What other communities will Oak Park compare against?
      - a. Emily - The usual list includes Evanston, Glen Elen, Glenview, and Downers Grove, but we want consultants to tell us what we are missing and who else should we look at.
        - i. Michelle - Will they compare with any communities outside Illinois?
          - 1. Emily - Manager Jackson has brought that perspective in and they will consider outside Illinois communities, hope consultants will assist with finding best practices
- 2. Target - Emily and Cam Davis met with Target to discuss loss prevention efforts and the community. The Village is looking to support Target to ensure longevity in DTOP.
    - a. Discussed parking issues and is looking into creating pick-up spots for quick access to the store
  - 3. VOP Brand Refresh - Refreshed branding was unveiled at the most recent Village Board meeting
    - a. Used Famous Victory, which DTOPBA is using as well
    - b. Not a total change, but worked on the brand and imagery to update it
    - c. The presentation on the updated brand is available on the Village website

## **Marketing - Amelia**

- 1. Branding
  - a. Launched new DTOPBA branding at Annual Meeting
    - i. In March 2023 the Board voted to change the organization's name and in October 2023 DTOPBA engaged Famous Victory for the rebrand
    - ii. Currently working on the roll-out plan for the new branding, which will include:
      - 1. Website
      - 2. Letterhead/Office materials
      - 3. Emails
      - 4. Socials

5. Marketing flyers
6. Light Pole Banners

- b. Board Feedback/Questions:
  - i. Paul - What is the plan for changing the light pole banners? And what is the cost for businesses?
    1. Shanon - Within the next week information will go out to sponsor banners. The cost is \$75 for members, and \$150 for non-members.
  - ii. Michelle - Did we get a Black and White version of the new logo?
    1. Shanon/Amelia - Staff will request one from Famous Victory.
2. Marketing Updates
  - a. New updated maps going up around the district
  - b. Directory cards are being printed and will be passed out soon
  - c. New sponsor for Thursday Night Out - RUSH Oak Park
  - d. Board Feedback/Questions:
    - i. Paul - Should the Board help source sponsorships?
      1. Amelia - If Board members identify potential sponsors, send them our way!

## **Events - Jayne Furlong**

1. Thursday Night Out
  - a. The first TNO of 2024 (June 6th) was the biggest night ever with 964 books sold
  - b. Updates to event for 2024
    - i. Redesigned site layout to alleviate congestion
      1. Ticket tent on Westgate
      2. Beer and Wine tent on Marion near Lake
      3. Tables and chairs are more spread out and extend up Marion toward Lake
    - ii. Added extra bike racks to Westgate
    - iii. Adding a port-a-potty to Lot 3 starting June 13th that will only be accessible during event hours
    - iv. Based on the success of Pride Night in 2023, added 3 new Theme Nights to utilize Lot 3 for special TNOs throughout the season
  - c. Thursday Night Out website updates
    - i. Added FAQ page with commonly asked questions about the event
    - ii. Updated "Parking" page to "Getting Here" to promote more sustainable options for attendance like biking, walking, and public transit
    - iii. Created and added an Event Map to the "About" page
    - iv. Added Theme Night descriptions to the "About" page
  - d. Board Feedback/Questions:
    - i. Paul - Has DTOPBA considered selling DTOP-branded chairs at events?
      1. Shannon - This has not been done before. Staff will consider the potential of this idea.

- ii. Paul - Are we doing digital advertising with Wednesday Journal?
  - 1. Amelia - Yes, we are doing digital, print, and an e-blast through Wednesday Journal in addition to other digital marketing. Will also be exploring paid Facebook advertising options.

### **New Business**

- 1. Paul - Has there ever been a bus specifically to go between Oak Park districts?
  - a. Mike F - Village sponsored one previously but no one used it and it was very expensive
  - b. Emily - The sustainability group suggested this recently with an electric bus, so it could be reconsidered.
  - c. Shanon - DTOPBA may explore this kind of option for the Sidewalk Sale with Hemingway District
  - d. Michelle - This could be great during Lot 10 construction for all businesses in the district

### **Old Business**

- 1. Lot 10 Updates
  - a. Emily - An A-frame sign is going up to help direct people during Lot 10 closure
  - b. Shanon - Commissioned Joe Kreml to create a video about the Lot 10 project for use on website/e-blasts/socials
    - i. Would focus on helping people navigate parking and show people what is going on with the Lot updates
  - c. Amelia - "Lot 10 Tuesdays" - Staff will be putting out social and e-blast features on businesses in the project area

### **Consent Reports**

#### **a) Executive Director – Shanon Williams**

- 1. Triton Merchant Enrichment Seminars - Shanon met with Triton's continuing education staff to discuss Triton's program for bringing teachers out to conduct seminars for DTOP businesses on topics they would find helpful.
  - a. 30-minute presentations on any topic
  - b. Will ask MAC for feedback on topics
  - c. Board Feedback/Questions:
    - i. Michelle - Suggested Google ads and marketing for a topic

#### **b) Marketing – Amelia Dellos**

#### **c) Events/Communication- Jayne Furlong**

**Motion to adjourn:** Downtown Oak Park Board of Directors' Meeting at 9:29 am by Mike Fox, Board Vice President.

Approved: Mike C

Seconded: Michelle

All in favor

-Motion Carried –