

DOWNTOWN OAK PARK BOARD OF DIRECTORS' MEETING MINUTES
March 2024 VIA ZOOM

Present: Jeff Long, Frank Heitzman, Susie Goldshmidt, Mike Fox, Mike Carney, Erin Payton, David Schrodt, 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 8:31 am via Zoom.

Motion to Approve February 2024 Minutes:

Approved: Mike F

Seconded: Erin Payton

All in favor

- Motion Carried –

Finance Report – Jeff Long

1. SSA

- a. The SSA for the 1st Quarter of 2024 was received from the Village.

2. Sponsorships

- a. A total of \$7,500 in Sponsorships were received from Byline Bank for Thursday Night Out, Oaktobefest, Shopper's Reward, and Winterfest.

3. Rent - Visit Oak Park

- a. Visit Oak Park has begun paying \$1,000 per month for rent for sharing DTOP's office space.

4. Snow Removal

- a. Snow Removal for January and February was almost \$5,000 under budget, as the snowfall continued to be below average.
- b. If March is also below average, then another \$2,500 will be saved.

5. Office Supplies and Expenses

- a. Office Expenses are over budget by about \$6,500 because new office furniture purchased in December of last year was paid for in February. It was budgeted for last year, but paid for in this year.

6. Oaktobefest

- a. A deposit of \$10,000 has been paid to Indestructo for Oaktobefest tent rentals.

7. Extra Reserve and Snow Reserve Accounts

- a. Funds are once again being added to the Extra Reserve and Snow Reserve Accounts.
- b. With the receipt of the SSA, the Extra Reserve Account has been replenished to \$235,065.

8. Shopper's Reward

- a. The Shopper's Reward Program is about the same as last year. As of February 29th, 1,091 books with a value of about \$54,550 were given out - vs. last year's 1,044 books with a value of \$52,200.
- b. About \$14,080 has been redeemed to Merchants vs. the \$15,740 last year.

Motion to Approve February 2023 Financial Statements:

Approved: Mike Fox

Seconded: Tina Salerno

All in favor

-Motion carried –

Village Updates - Cam Davis

1. Economic Vitality Study

- a. Started a market study in Phase 1
- b. Looking at losses outside the community
- c. Board Feedback/Questions:
 - i. Susie - Will the study provide business recommendations for what Oak Park is missing?
 1. Cam - Study will show what sectors are being lost to other areas
 - ii. Susie - How long will the process take?
 1. Cam - 6-8 months and it is already started
 - iii. Susie - Is the study specific to Oak Park geography or is it a radius?
 1. Cam - It is a specific radius beyond just Oak Park

2. Lot 10 Project

- a. Will be before the Board soon for approval
- b. Village is keeping Shanon updated
- c. Board Feedback/Questions:
 - i. Mike Fox - Is the project covering the sidewalk to the train, including North Blvd?
 1. Cam - It covers the sidewalk to the landscaped area before North Blvd.

3. Parking at Harlem/Lake Shopping Center

- a. Owners are trying to address the towing issue by zoning for pay structure in lot
- b. Shopping at the store in the center will be free with validation, not shopping at those stores will be paid
- c. Board Feedback/Questions:
 - i. Mike Fox - Did the original redevelopment include anything about allowing other DTOP businesses to the lot for parking for their businesses?
 1. Cam - No language in the redevelopment regarding other businesses using the lot.

4. New Business Licenses

- a. Jan/Feb had 17 new

5. Facade Improvement Grant

- a. 9 in 2023 (best ever)

- b. 6 applications in so far this year
 - c. Have business owners contact Cam if they are interested in applying
6. **Outside District**
- a. Madison Street - Construction around Pete's Market project may interfere with traffic
 - b. Pleasant District - Porter building obtaining permits to open to rentals soon

Marketing - Amelia Dellos

1. **Black History Promotion** - spotlighted black-owned businesses for Feb
 - a. Put a call out for owners wanting to participate and sent questions for a response
 - b. Utilized for Around Downtown web post, E-blast, and social media
 - c. Eblast had 47% open rate
 - d. Following up with Women's History Month for March
2. **Social Media Best Practices**
 - a. Post
 - b. Engage with DTOPBA posts
 - c. Suggest content by sharing information with DTOPBA staff
 - d. Amelia is available for assistance with social media
 - e. Board Feedback
 - i. Susie - wants more training, help with best practices
 1. Amelia - Before the events, staff will send tips for engaging with social media campaigns such as tags, information to share, etc.
 - ii. Michelle - Is there a social media consultant DTOP businesses could use to learn socials, help with websites, etc?
 1. Staff will look into it and get back to Board
 2. Susie - Chamber of Commerce may have recommendations for local services

Events - Jayne Furlong

1. **Jazz Thaw**
 - a. Overall successful based on initial feedback from businesses, bands, and attendees
 - b. Board Feedback/Questions
 - i. Susie - On Takeout 25 Facebook group, community member felt advertising was less prevalent than last year
 1. Amelia - Advertised everywhere we usually did, but we will add that Facebook group for future events
2. **Cultural Caffeine Tour**
 - a. Will be a week-long promotion featuring discounted signature drinks at participating businesses that highlight what makes each business unique
 - b. Community members can collect stamps for each drink they try to earn a branded travel mug
 - c. Businesses have responded positively to initial inquiries about participation
 - d. Will be trying to promote to the upper floor businesses with this promotion

Old Business

1. Committees

- a. DTOPBA staff liaison should be helping schedule the first meetings
- b. Gift certificate committee is on hold for now

2. Branding

- a. Saw the first visuals yesterday
- b. Verbal identity being created for communications and marketing language
- c. Will be brought to the Board

New Business - Shannon Williams

1. Nominating Committee

- a. Met to discuss upcoming elections
 - i. Jimmy not rerunning - need a Merchant
 - ii. Jeff Long moving off board - need a Treasurer
 - 1. Board Feedback:
 - a. Susie - Jeff Eng is very helpful to the Treasurer so he would be a great resource for anyone interested in this role

2. Sustainability at Events

- a. Met with Public Works on Sustainability
 - i. Meeting went well, Village is very supportive of events at the moment
 - ii. Spoke about expanding Oaktoberfest one block west on North Blvd
 - 1. Public Works was receptive

3. Lot 10 Project

- a. Electrical for events - Village met with ComEd to discuss viability
- b. Hoping for new wine event in 2025 in Lot 10
 - i. Uncork - wineries were having issues attending due to staffing and weren't making money
 - 1. Would have to change overall structure but would have similar vibe

4. April Board Meeting

- a. Moved to 3rd week in April due to staff conflicts

5. Special Event Feedback Session with Village of OP

- a. Cam - was asked to get feedback from leadership about what were impediments to starting new events and what would be helpful for the Village to do to support
 - i. Feedback was it takes upwards of 3 years to get a new event operating the way you want, so if Village could offer assistance with promoting and reducing permit fees over 3 years for new events that would be helpful

Consent Reports

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

Motion to adjourn: Downtown Oak Park Board of Directors' Meeting at 9:21 am by Susie Goldschmidt, Board President.

Approved: Jeff Long

Seconded: Cam Davis

All in favor

-Motion Carried –