

## **DOWNTOWN OAK PARK BOARD MEETING MINUTES**

**JUNE 9, 2020**

**VIA ZOOM**

**Present:** Cindy Summers, Viktor Schrafer, Jeff Long, Mary Ludgin, Judith Lalor, John 'Woody' Linton, Tammie Grossman & Eric Wagner.

**Absent:** Robbin O'Harrow, Naiyana McCaffery

**Staff:** Shannon Williams, Anna Kosowski, Naomi Soto, Jeff Eng

The Downtown Oak Park Board of Directors meeting was called to order by President Cindy Summers at 8:35am.

### **Motion to Approve May Minutes;**

Approved: Mary Ludgin

Second: Tammie Grossman

All in favor: Unanimous

### **Motion to Approve May Financial Report;**

Approved: Mary Ludgin

Second: Tammie Grossman

All in favor: Unanimous

### **Jeff Eng / DTOP Accountant**

Jeff wanted feedback on whether or not we should renew our line of credit with Byline Bank. The cost of the renewal is \$1,150 a year. Mary Ludgin suggests we should keep the Byline Bank line of credit given the insurance that it represents for a modest amount of money and feels it's an investment we should make.

### **Cindy Summers / Executive Board Officers**

- President: Cindy Summers
- Vice President: Judith Lalor
- Treasurer: Eric Wagner
- Secretary: Robbin O'Harrow

### **Shanon Williams / DTOP Executive Director**

Shanon developed a DTOP Delivery Drivers rate package for merchants. Drivers are offering their delivery services to merchants for a small fee. She also got in contact with

a local web management agency — Chicago Producers, Inc. on Madison Street in Forest Park. Chicago Producers will provide a *free* 1 hour consultation to merchants that are interested in learning how to better their digital efforts. So far 8 merchants have signed up.

Jenny Shepperd of Jenny Shepperd Public Relations was brought on to help keep the Downtown Oak Park district at the forefront of the media. DTOP was featured on 2 News network placements; NBC & Fox and 2 article placements. We have a monthly contract & can terminate at any time.

**Anna Kosowski / DTOP Director**

### **MERCHANT ADVISORY COMMITTEE ZOOM MEETINGS**

- April 9: Discussed COVID-19 effect on 2020 marketing & promotion plans
- April 16: Follow up after board meeting
- April 23: Invited other merchants to join meeting, no agenda
- April 30: John Lynch with OPEDC as guest
- May 21: Regularly scheduled MAC **EVENT RECAP**
- Cancel summer/fall 2020 events (Thursday Night Out, Uncork, Art dans la Rue, Oaktobefest)
- Consider a digital shopping event in place of Sidewalk Sale
- Wait to determine status of winter events

### **REOPENING MESSAGING**

We are transitioning social media to reflect the district is reopening & vibrant!

### **DTOPDELIVERS.COM**

- Resource for community to find online shopping, delivery & pick-up information from Downtown Oak Park businesses.
- **Updated to include NOW OPEN & OUTDOOR DINING**
- 5,825 pageviews as of June 5
- Downtown Oak Park is promoting this page:
  - Wednesday Journal pop-up ad (May 19)
  - Wednesday Journal print ads (May 13)
  - Wednesday Journal eblast (May 6)
  - Downtown Oak Park eblast (April 6, April 16, April 29, May 14, June 4)
  - Street Banner
  - Digital screens in downtown developments

- Better Lake Street shared in their email newsletter
- Postcard
- Social media ads

## **52 Reasons to Experience Local**

- Shop Local campaign originally planned to launch before construction.
- [downtownoakpark.net/52reasons](http://downtownoakpark.net/52reasons): An experience around every corner. Discover 52 Reasons to love where you live, shop, eat and explore. Find your happy place every day and each week of the year in Downtown Oak Park.
- Currently implementing 52 reasons to experience local messaging in the following:
  - Email blasts
  - Window decals for businesses (Visual Impact media install)
  - Big belly trash compactor signage (Visual Impact media installed)
  - Social media posts
  - Park District digital ad

*Example: Bike ride & coffee? Thank YOU for supporting local businesses during Lake Street construction & social distancing!*

*Discover 52 Reasons to love where you live, shop, eat and explore. Find your happy place every day and each week of the year. Find all 52 reasons [here](#).*

*Share your reasons to experience local! #52reasons @downtownoakpark*

## **BETTER LAKE STREET REWARDS PROGRAM COMMUNICATIONS**

- Reward program begins May 1st details at [downtownoakpark.net/betterlakestreet](http://downtownoakpark.net/betterlakestreet)
- Began promoting program:
  - Eblast (April 29, May 14, June 4)
  - Wednesday Journal Eblast (May 6) / WJ ad (May 13)
  - Envelopes inserted in Wednesday Journal
  - Better Lake Street & Oak Park River Forest Chamber shared in their newsletters
  - Social media posts

- Postcard
- Sent promotional information to merchants to share to their audiences.

Save your receipts when you support local businesses in Downtown Oak Park, Hemingway District or Pleasant District between May 1 & August 31, 2020 — Receipts from online shopping & delivery purchases will also be accepted.

Earn \$25 in reward certificates by spending \$20 or more at five participating businesses with a grand total of \$200 or more. Reward certificates must be used September 1 through October 15, 2020 at participating businesses.

More program details here: [bit.ly/2W9nAgW](https://bit.ly/2W9nAgW) Find online shopping, delivery & pick-up information from 35+ Downtown Oak Park businesses at [DTOPDELIVERS.COM!](https://DTOPDELIVERS.COM)

## **PUBLIC RELATIONS & ADDITIONAL MERCHANT MARKETING RESOURCES**

- Jenny Shepherd Public Relations
  - <https://www.fox32chicago.com/video/688782>
  - <https://www.chicagotribune.com/suburbs/oak-park/ct-oak-outdoor-dining-tl-0604-20200529-tubqrm4xq5dtpgrtp3nvo54ioe-story.html>
  - <https://www.nbcchicago.com/news/local/retailers-prepare-for-customers-to-return-to-stores-in-illinois-phase-3/2279632/>
- We continue to post business updates for merchants on our social media channels

## **LAKE STREET CONSTRUCTION COMMUNICATION UPDATES**

- Downtown Oak Park eblast
  - April 6: Reasons why for Lake Street Improvement Project
  - April 16: More trees coming to Lake Street
  - April 29: Lake Street in DTOP is currently closed, but sidewalk access remains OPEN - Better Lake Street Reward Program
  - May14
  - June 4 eblast
- Social media posts
- Wednesday Journal eblast (April 10)
  - Wednesday Journal results: 7,684 Delivered / 3,524 Total Opens / 542 Clicks
  - Oak Park Eats results: 2,087 Delivered / 1,365 Total Opens / 187 Clicks

- Wednesday Journal eblast (May 6)
  - Wednesday Journal results: 7,702 Delivered / 3,123 Total Opens / 173 Clicks
  - Oak Park Eats results: 2,108 Delivered / 1,119 Total Opens / 73 Clicks
  - Forest Park Review results: 1,731 Delivered / 610 Total Opens / 35 Clicks

### **DOWNTOWNOAKPARK.NET - NEW WEBSITE**

- Developer recommendation to update outdated website
  - The current theme was custom built around 2014. It has not been updated since 2014 and is not update-able (most themes are updated every 6 months, so compare that with not being updated in 5 years). This means that the theme's display and functionality is fundamentally flawed. For this reason, the DTOP site has a limited lifespan, and is buying time with every year a developer can continue to make fixes and keep it working. The current theme necessitates that only PHP 7.0 be used on the server end, and this is a serious limitation forcing the site to use 2014 server standards (this is why you are being charged an extra monthly service charge by 1&1), along with many other forced limitations to the website.

### **Shanon Williams / Better Lake Street Reward Program**

The BLS Reward Program redemption phase has started. David Masser created a special program to track where customers are spending their rebates. Cece will be here Friday & Saturdays from 10am-4pm to assist guests. So far 13 booklets have been redeemed.

**Cindy Summers** / Outdoor dining is going well.

### **Tammie Grossman / Village of Oak Park**

The village is getting ready for phase 3 of the reopening process. They are waiting for state guidance for what phase 3 could look like since they're getting conflicting guidance from the paper.

- Opened up about 15 dining locations on the Friday after Memorial Day
- Growing pains;
  - Merchants want as much space as possible
  - Other merchants do not want dining tables in front of their business.
  - Lot 3 - Book table wants it for curbside pickup but others want it for outdoor dining.

- Westgate closed off for outdoor seating; picnic tables available to the public.
- Thursday Night Out - Shannon still working with Cameron from Waste Management on garbage & containers. Everything should be ready to go by June 18th.

The Village of Oak Park is looking for ways to save money/expenses. Ways of doing this;

- Delayed sidewalk reconstruction to convert into outdoor dining on oak park ave and lake.
- Go back in Feb of 2021 and do their sidewalks - merchants in Hemingway District are okay with that decision.

Rave Alert System — Rave alert system to give the latest updates on things going on in the village; emergency alerts via cell phone/text message

- Business alert option

### **Cindy Summers / Outdoor Dining**

- Shanon put together a package for outdoor dining
  - Closed westgate yesterday
    - 10 picnic table
    - Working with Cameron Hendricks at Waste Management on garbage, containers & hand sanitizer.
    - Randy (McAdams) will sanitize tables in the AM & Afternoon.
- Extra seating on thursday night
  - 20 tables
  - Close marion south of Lot 3 to Lot 10? (need to confirm)
  - 2 people hired to clean in between seatings
  - DTOP Beat Officer Alvin Standford will monitor
  - Lots of requests from restaurants on Lake Street
    - Lake St restaurants delivery services went down when outdoor dining started
- Village has been very supportive throughout this whole process. Thank you Tammie!!! :)

### **Viktor Schrader / OPEDC**

Vik gives the latest updates on new businesses in Oak Park;

- Five Guys leased to a taco concept - Taco del Tio

- Interest in some of the other smaller vacancies in DTOP
  - Nothing to report yet
- Victory Italian opening in Pleasant District. Anthony Gambino owner of Flat Top (previously in Oak Park) is the owner.
- Wine Shop & Pottery Making Studio going in across from Poor Phils in Pleasant District.

### **Eric Wagner / Visit Oak Park**

Eric gives us Visit Oak Park's latest updates;

- Organic social efforts
- Waiting for state of IL to see what their plans are to get back into the market
- Frank Lloyd Wright doing tours again
- Slow comeback
- Waiting for more information on budget

**Shanon Williams** / Summer planters going in June 16th

**Motion to adjourn the June Board of Directors meeting by President, Cindy Summers at 9:07am.**

Moved: Mary Ludgin

Approved: Jeff Long