

DOWNTOWN OAK PARK BOARD OF DIRECTORS' MEETING MINUTES

JUNE 14TH, 2022

VIA ZOOM

PRESENT: Eric Wagner, Jeff Long, Mike Fox, Tammie Grossman, Jimmy Chen, Susie Goldschmidt, Paul Beckwith, Eric Mazelis, Erin Payton, Mike Carney, and Terry Wilson

Staff: Shanon Williams, Anna Kosowski, Mary Icenogle, and Jeff Eng

Absent: Judith Lalor and David Schrodt

The Downtown Oak Park Board of Directors' meeting was called to order by Downtown Oak Park Board President, Eric Wagner at 8:35am via Zoom.

Introductions

1. The three new Board members (Erin Payton from the 19th Century Club, Mike Carney from Heitman Real Estate, and Terry Wilson from Kyuramen) were introduced and welcomed, along with DTOP's new Digital Marketing and Communications Manager, Mary Icenogle.
2. Each Board and Staff member introduced himself/herself.

Motion to Approve April 2022 Minutes:

Approved: Susie Goldschmidt

Seconded: Mike Fox

All in favor

- Motion Carried –

Finance Report – Jeff Long

1. Member Dues - To date, 65 out of 104 Members paid their Membership dues vs. 66 last year at this time. Jeff E. will send out a second reminder to those who haven't paid yet. A list of those who still haven't paid after the 2nd invoice will be given to Board members to follow-up.
2. Prescott Campaign - The Prescott Group was paid \$16,439 for their initial work and work done on the Membership Campaign, out of the \$50,000 budgeted for the year.
3. Shopper's Reward Program - To date, \$49,190 has been redeemed to Merchants compared to the \$60,000 budgeted. Approximately \$800 more was redeemed since May 1st. It is assumed that the bulk of redemptions has been submitted, which puts the program about \$10,000 under budget. Although the deadline to redeem the Shopper's Reward coupons was March 31st, a few Merchants are still bringing in coupons for redemption.
4. Extra Reserve and Snow Reserve Accounts - The Extra Reserve Account totals \$184,338 and the Snow Reserve Account totals \$62,150.
5. Gift Certificates - On page 9 is a comparison of the Gift Certificate Purchases and Redemptions post-Covid vs. pre-Covid. To date, the current Purchases are slightly higher than in the pre-Covid year of 2019 (\$9,755 vs. \$7,060). However, the current Redemptions are significantly higher than pre-Covid (\$28,410 vs. \$15,385), which is good for the Merchants.

Motion to Approve May 2022 Financial Statements:

Approved: Mike Fox

Seconded: Erin Payton

All in favor

-Motion carried –

Village of Oak Park Updates – Tammie Grossman

1. Covid Update – A reminder that Covid is not over. Oak Park is considered “High” in number of cases and number of hospitalizations, but not in actual hospital beds which would escalate the Village to the next level of mitigation. Tammie encouraged people to check out the Covid page on the Village website and stated that employees who test Covid positive should not report to work.
2. The Village did not opt out of the Cook County Minimum Wage of \$13.35. Therefore, businesses must abide by this minimum wage. Shanon will send out the Cook County Ordinance.
3. There has been a record level of 47 new businesses this year, of which about 50% have opened already.
4. The Delia building is in the process of being demolished with a sidewalk shelter in place and extermination of mice/rats.

Visit Oak Park Updates – Eric Wagner

1. Visit Oak Park has upgraded its website and has launched a \$135,000 digital campaign.
2. It has also started a media strategy to support new businesses, starting with the Farmer’s Market in the Chicago Tribune and WGN coverage of local businesses like Carnivore.

OPEDC Updates – Eric Mazelis

1. New tenants in the Shops of Oak Park included Sweet Greens and Wild Fork.
2. Talks with a serious tenant are taking place for the space in the Marshall Field’s building. The first floor and basement are open retail space. Above the first floor are offices which are fully rented out.
3. Mortar work is currently being done on the exterior work of the building.

Marketing – Anna Kosowski

1. “We Are DTOP” campaign has started to promote a better understanding of what DTOP does. The DTOP website has been updated with a better description of DTOP and a new boundary map, along with a pop-up link to subscribe to the eBlasts.
2. The Prescotts have sent out 11 eBlasts to date with topics on geographical boundaries, SSA funding, DTOP history, DTOP membership, local shopping, parking, directories, business shout outs, job postings, gift certificates, etc. The eBlasts get sent to about 5,000 email addresses and the statistics indicate an increase in the open rate.
3. Also, incorporating other ways to keep DTOP in front of people through the Wednesday Journal and Tik Tok.
4. Shanon, Anna, and Mary are looking at ways to introduce DTOP to the residents of the 4 high rises. They will connect with the property managers in this effort.
5. TNO started two Thursdays ago with great weather and attendance. About 700 TNO books were sold at the first one and about 650 at the second one, numbers similar to pre-Covid TNO in 2018 and 2019. There are 21 restaurants participating and music scheduled every week. There has been a very positive response and no pushback to the increase cost of \$5 per book. A raffle is being held to collect emails at TNO with a \$250 prize in DTOP Gift Certificates at the end of each TNO month.

6. Upcoming events include the Sidewalk Sale in July in conjunction with the Hemingway District, Oktoberfest in September, and the Cookie Walk and Sleigh Rides in December.

New Business- Shanon Williams

1. The new Village Manager, Kevin Jackson, will be invited to the July Board meeting. It was suggested to invite him to a TNO evening as well.
2. Shanon asked each Board member to review, sign, and return the “Basic Requirements of the Board of Director Form” which she sent out.

Old Business- Shanon Williams

1. The Strategic Plan was written in 2019, but postponed due to Covid. Now the plan needs to be revise in the following areas:
 - a. Marketing – promote businesses, promote DTOP to understand the funding and to increase membership, promote the staff and highlight the work, and revamp Gift Certificate Program
 - b. Events – bring back all events in 2023
 - c. Advocacy – ongoing work with local organizations regarding homelessness/panhandling, promote parking and permits, listening to and advocating small businesses, support businesses through the MAC
 - d. Governance – priorities include Policy Manual, Committees’ Roles and Accountability, Bylaws amendment.
2. Board Members are encouraged to join the committee(s) they feel compassionate about (i.e., Governance, Strategic, Landscape, Finance, and MAC).
3. Although the Membership Drive started late with a May 16th deadline, it will continue in an effort to get the remaining to join. The “Do you know DTOP?” campaign started with the first email to members on May 3rd and a second email going out today. The purpose of the emails is to educate property owners and merchants about DTOP and the resources available to them. The Prescott Group is contracted through October with a possible extension through the end of the year after and assessment in September.
4. Terry asked about the Department of Justice compliance requirements regarding the SSA. Shanon will pass along the information to Dave Schrodtt to review.
5. The new maps and kiosks at Holley Court Garage, Lake Forest Garage, and Fleet Feet are up and look great! Thank you to Tammie for her help with the new kiosk at the train station.
6. The Banner Program has begun and so far, 33 of the 52 banners have been sold. The empty positions will be filled in with DTOP banners.
7. Any DTOP member in good standing will receive a \$30 discount for the OPRF Chamber Economic Luncheon. Sign up on the Chamber’s website and Liz will bill DTOP for the discount

Erin asked about the recent shootings in front on the 19th Century Club. Tammie recommended that she contact Chief Johnson to come out and speak to the members of the 19th Century Club. Erin also asked for any recommendations for companies that install security cameras. Mike will send her some contacts.

Motion to adjourn: Downtown Oak Park Board of Directors’ Meeting at 9:33am by Board President, Eric Wagner.

Approved: Mike Fox

Seconded: Jeff Long

All in favor

-Motion Carried –