

DOWNTOWN OAK PARK BOARD OF DIRECTORS' MEETING MINUTES
August 8th, 2023 VIA ZOOM

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

Staff: Shanon Williams, Jayne Furlong, Jeff Eng

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

Motion to Approve June 2023 Minutes:

Approved: Mike Fox

Seconded: Jeff Long

All in favor

- Motion Carried –

Finance Report – Jeff Long

1. TNO Updates
 - a. 4% more TNO Books have been sold this year vs. last (\$145k vs. \$139k)
 - b. Almost \$88k or 62% has already been redeemed to Merchants
 - c. DTOP will retain 50 cents per TNO ticket sold or almost \$12k so far
 - d. Due to increases in overall TNO Expenses, the expenses for June and July have already totaled about \$34k. Last year, the TNO Expenses totaled \$34k for all of June, July, and August.
2. 2024 Preliminary Budget Highlights
 - a. Increase in SSA for next year
 - b. Personnel and Event expenses increased due to inflation
 - c. Fall decorations decrease - no longer Mcadams, now Woodlawn rotation in containers
 - d. 4k budgeted for reserves, 2k for snow removal
 - e. Board feedback - Recommended a reintroduction of Shoppers Reward program due to increase in new residents over recent years

Motion to Approve July 2023 Financial Statements:

Approved: Mike Fox

Seconded: Erin Peyton

All in favor

-Motion carried –

Village Updates - Cameron Davis

1. Strong new business applications - 63 in Village, 16 in DTOP
 - a. DTOP - Lower than in past years but less available space
 - b. 6 projects almost in completion
2. Proposed Holiday Inn Express in DTOP on Lake St
 - a. Weeks from receiving full building permit but moving forward
 - b. Will have 70 rooms, second floor lobby, and another additional level built on top of existing structure
 - c. Building owner is developer
3. 1034 Lake Street project
 - a. Received building permit and has contractors registered
 - b. New building soon but unsure of exact timeline due to nature of the project
 - c. Board feedback - scaffolding and temporary facade is eyesore, can anything be done to improve during construction - Cameron to follow up
4. Development projects within the village - 32 currently
5. Parking utilization is good at this time and Cam can provide more details at future meetings if desired
6. Lot 10 rebuild
 - a. In design phase at this time
 - b. Portland Loo portion of plan has been tabled for now
 - c. Scheduled to start February 2024 and be completed before the end of the summer
 - d. Village will set meeting with Shanon after design phase for feedback as well as reach out to impacted businesses
 - e. Board feedback - Potential impact to Oaktobertfest or other DTOPBA events should be considered
7. Board Feedback
 - a. Potential crosswalk on Forest north of Lake St.
 - i. Concerns about safety due to garage, park, and pedestrian traffic merging
 - ii. Cam will address with Public Works to see if there is any action that can be taken but location may present additional safety concerns
 - b. Plan to update Ontario St
 - i. Plan is still to update to resemble DTOP but Cameron will follow up with more details

Marketing and Communications - Jayne Furlong

1. Digital Marketing
 - a. Socials
 - i. Increased for June/July
 - b. Emails
 - i. Prescott providing bi-weekly email blasts as part of "You Belong Here" campaign

- ii. High Rise emails to be revitalized in coming months
 - c. Print
 - i. Directory cards given out to businesses and tourist attractions
 - 1. Board Feedback
 - a. Explore ways to combine all 3 cards into one piece of media so people aren't just taking one and missing the other two
 - b. Suggestion to add QR code to access maps and information
 - i. Would be easier to update more often
 - ii. More cost effective than 3 print pieces
 - d. Website
 - i. Planned update of pictures
 - 1. Working with Photographer Jamilla Yipp to gather new content
2. Events
 - a. Shop Outdoor Sidewalk Sale
 - i. 21 businesses participated - 11 from DTOP
 - ii. Leveraged digital and print advertising to engage community
 - b. TNO
 - i. Ahead of last year in book sales
 - ii. 26 restaurants participating - largest number ever and including new businesses as soon as they open
 - iii. Pride TNO biggest night of sales in history of event
 - iv. Artist Market - great community feedback but one vendor incident raised concerns about vetting process
 - 1. Board Feedback
 - a. Review concept and execution at end of this season
 - b. Maybe limit to 1 day a month
 - c. Maybe create a formal contract for vendors with rules and expectations
 - v. Sustainability efforts going well and well received by community
 - 1. Coordination with the village around waste removal has been positive
 - c. Oaktoberfest
 - i. Planning has begun for 2023 event
 - 1. Permit submitted
 - 2. Music lineup announced
 - 3. Coordinating with vendors
 - 4. Outreach for Kids Area participation going well
 - 5. Outreach for restaurants has begun
 - 6. Volunteer coordination with partner organizations underway
 - 7. Need a new zucchini car track - in process of designing
 - 8. Will be updating collateral pieces, inventorying existing supplies, and researching marketing opportunities

- d. Winterfest and Home for the Holidays
 - i. Santa confirmed for events
 - ii. Beginning planning and supply ordering
- e. Toddlin Around Town with Collaboration for Early Childhood
 - i. Will be offering businesses opportunity to participate
 - ii. Culminates with Root Beer Garden at Oaktobefest

New Business - Shannon Williams

1. Board Engagement Projects
 - a. Presented 4 priorities for board engagement
 - i. Sustainability Plan
 - ii. Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion
 1. Frank has begun formulating a DEI statement, which will be provided to the Board to be built on in committee
 - iii. 2nd Floor Business Outreach
 1. Cam will request a list of business licenses in DTOP to help identify
 2. Realtor David King suggested as a possible resource for occupancy information
 - iv. DTOP Gift Certificate Program
 - b. Board Feedback
 - i. Suggested committees for 3-4 people addressing each topic meeting once a month
 - ii. Feel these are all long term projects
 - iii. Would like district involvement beyond the Board
 1. Invite membership to participate in committees
 - iv. Shanon to email Board members to gauge interest in specific committees as a starting point for formation of committees
 - a. Will include list of existing committees and members
2. Lease Expiration
 - a. Current office lease expires in March
 - b. No desire to move due to benefits of this location
 - c. Realtor David King has offered to assist with lease negotiations, which will ideally include remodeling the office space
 - d. Potential opportunity to share office space with Visit Oak Park
 - i. Board Feedback
 1. Mike Fox recommends DTOPBA being the leaseholder
 2. Benefits DTOPBA financially and has possible cooperative benefits as well such as Visit Oak Park ED's previous experience in similar organization
 3. Has been previously proposed
 4. Board generally in favor of this possibility
 - a. Concern that Visit Oak Park may not have the budget to join spaces

- b. Will continue to explore the details of this option
- 3. Homeless Encampment on North Blvd.
 - a. Local organizations working on issue but advise ti will take time due to lack of resources at this time
 - b. DTOPBA is engaged with the Homelessness Coalition and will continue to advocate for businesses and residence of the district on their concerns
 - c. Board Feedback
 - i. Concerns about harassment and drug use driving away customers, residents, and businesses
 - ii. Sleeping outside is not illegal so limited action can be taken unless there is a threat to a person or illegal activity
 - iii. Board would like to be proactive about addressing concerns by educating district about larger issue of homelessness and what they can and cannot do to address concerns
 - 1. Suggest a one-sheet of “Do’s and Dont’s”
 - 2. Cameron Davis recommends connecting with Vanessa Matheny at the Village to assist with material

Old Business - Shanon Williams

- 1. You Belong Here Campaign
 - a. Rolling out campaign with Prescotts, which will run through the end of the year
 - i. Postcard for campaign presented to Board

Consent Reports

- 1. Executive Director (Shanon)
- 2. Marketing (Jayne)

Motion to adjourn: Downtown Oak Park Board of Directors’ Meeting at 10:16 am by Susie Goldschmidt, Board President.

Approved: Cameron Davis

Seconded: Mike Fox

All in favor

-Motion Carried –