

Des Moines Downtown Neighborhood Association

Quarterly Board Meeting Minutes

February 4, 2026

Des Moines Central Library - Large study room

Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at **6:00 PM**.

Attendance

Board Members Present:

Miranda DiMaria, Jennifer Thiesen, Nick Fox, Jennifer Bright, Jon Cahill, Johnathan Walker-Bivans, Luke Ifland, David Jennings, Julie Feirer, Christine Comito

New board members were welcomed.

Approval of Previous Meeting Minutes

The vote to approve the previous meeting minutes was **tabled**, as the minutes had not been distributed prior to the meeting.

Election of Officers

The following slate of officers was presented and approved:

- **President:** David Jennings
- **Vice President:** Luke Ifland
- **Treasurer:** Miranda DiMaria
- **Secretary:** Christine Comito

Motion: Approve officer slate as presented

Result: Approved unanimously

Officer Reports

President's Report (Luke Ifland)

- Provided an update on the strategic plan
- Membership continues to grow and remains strong
- Emphasized focus on advocacy and expanding programming
- Noted the addition of a new Building Ambassador at R&T Lofts

Treasurer's Report (Luke Ifland, reporting on behalf of Treasurer)

- Reporting period ending January 31
 - Net decrease of approximately \$900 due to Annual Meeting expenses
 - January expenditures totaled \$1,407, exceeding the monthly budget by \$214
 - January membership income totaled \$506
 - Long-term goal of maintaining \$10,000 cash-on-hand
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Committee Reports

Social Committee (David Jennings)

- Annual Meeting was successful
- Venue, menu, and speakers were well received

Membership Committee (Jennifer Bright)

- 207 active memberships reported

Marketing & Communications Committee (Julie Feirer)

- Discussion on newsletter effectiveness and communication frequency

- Interest in sending shorter, more frequent updates when relevant
 - Mailchimp integration challenges noted (family and business memberships result in multiple email addresses)
 - Exploring Mailchimp pricing and options
 - Jon Cahill volunteered to assist with social media
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Committee Assignments

Committee chairs were confirmed as follows:

- **Marketing & Communications:** Julie Feirer (Chair)
- **Membership / Building Ambassadors:** Jennifer Bright (Chair); Johnathan Walker-Bivans assisting
- **Social:** Jon Cahill (Chair)

Board members were encouraged to assist across committees as needed.

2026 Board Meeting Schedule

The board discussed reducing formal working sessions to quarterly meetings to increase efficiency and engagement.

Proposed 2026 Board Meeting Schedule (6:00–8:00 PM, Des Moines Central Library):

- Wednesday, February 4
- Wednesday, May 6
- Wednesday, August 5
- Wednesday, November 4

Motion: Approve 2026 Board Meeting Schedule

Moved by: Christine Comito

Seconded by: Johnathan Walker-Bivans

Result: Approved unanimously

Community Programming & Events

- **Social + Learn events** to occur quarterly, typically two months following board meetings
- Target scheduling on the **first Wednesday of the month**
- Approved **\$250 budget per Social + Learn event**

Event Ideas Discussed:

City Hall tour, train horn discussion, water trails, soccer stadium, airport tour, building tours, art collections, movie night, Iowa Cubs night, business forums, Water Works tour, Indigenous history presentation, and library-hosted events.

Tuesday Together (Monthly – Second Tuesday)

Proposed locations and hosts discussed for February–May.

Approved **\$75 monthly budget** for Tuesday Together events.

Parks & Recreation and Police Engagement

- Parks & Recreation updates to be shared via newsletter rather than in-person
 - Police representation encouraged at Social + Learn events; potential for sharing statistics via email
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Annual Programming “Non-Negotiables”

The board identified core annual events:

- January – Annual Meeting
 - Quarterly Board Meetings
 - Quarterly Social + Learn events
 - September – Block Party
 - December – Holiday Party
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Governance & Compliance

- Conflict of Interest forms distributed; members instructed to disclose any conflicts or dual roles
 - Whistleblower Policy distributed
 - Board Member Agreement to be reviewed and signed by new members
 - Annual Board Self-Evaluation to be completed by prior board members
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Strategic Priorities

- Increase membership and engagement
 - Expand Tuesday Together and Social + Learn participation
 - Increase email and social media communication
 - Identify and pursue advocacy priorities, starting with small, achievable efforts
 - Explore partnerships with East Village and other downtown stakeholders
 - Support diverse and inclusive downtown initiatives
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Financial Controls

Internal financial controls were reviewed:

- Vice President serves as intermediary approver
 - Secretary and committee chairs provide secondary oversight
 - Due to conflict considerations, President may approve expenses and Treasurer may issue payment when necessary
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Grant Opportunities

The following grant opportunities were discussed:

- Polk County Betterment Grant
- AARP Grants (walk/bike audits, BCycle locations, event funding)
- Prairie Meadows Grants
- City of Des Moines Community Sponsorship Grant (block party)

Luke Ifland will organize grant efforts and invited interested members to assist.

501(c)(3) Status Conversion

- Organization currently operates as a 501(c)(4)
- Proposal to convert to a 501(c)(3) under the name **Des Moines Downtown Neighborhood Association**
- Conversion allows for tax-deductible donations; city relationship remains unchanged

Motion: Approve 501(c)(3) conversion and \$275 filing fee

Moved by: Johnathan Walker-Bivans

Seconded by: Jon Cahill

Result: Approved unanimously

Adjournment

Motion to adjourn moved by David Jennings, seconded by Luke Ifland.
Meeting adjourned with unanimous approval.