

# Union Park District Council

## Board Meeting / April 5, 2023

Board President Sarah Dvorak / Minutes: Submitted by Amy Gage

**Members present:** Jerome Benner, Rachel Callanan, Bruce Corrie, Dean Cummings, Sarah Dvorak, Ellen Fee, Kirsten Fryer, Amy Gage, Joe Hughes, Lisa Mueller, Henry Parker, Allen Saunders, Demetrius Shaw, Kent Treichel, Claire Warren

**Members absent:** Scott Berger, Dan Elenbaas, April King | Open seats: Grids 1, 2, 6

**Staff member:** Leah Timberlake-Sullivan, executive director | **Guests:** Jane McClure, *My Villager*

**Welcome:** Sarah Dvorak, president, called the meeting to order at 7:04 p.m.

- *Action:* Parker/Treichel moved to approve the April agenda and the March minutes.

**Open forum:** Bruce said the Legislature is going to hear a bill to invest in the Midway and Lake Street neighborhoods that suffered damage during the civil unrest of 2020. Sarah said Mario's on Cleveland was selected as one of the best pizzas in the area, by the *Star Tribune*. Bruce recommended Pizza Karma, an Indian restaurant in the suburbs that uses naan bread.

### Committee reports

**Land Use and Economic Development:** Dean Cummings, co-chair, said CLUED has approved the equity scorecard, which has been years in the making. He suggested that board members review it during the next month, for board discussion in May.

- Henry asked about the scoring process and suggested it be called a questionnaire.
- Jerome said there could be ways to score residential projects.
- Bruce said the scorecard is a statement about UPDC's values and an engagement tool.
- Joe, the UPDC business rep, said he's concerned about a scorecard being a barrier to development. The city needs both housing and tax dollars, he said.
- Lisa shares concern about quantifying open-ended responses; on the other hand, a score could "give more teeth to this process." She suggested community recognition for developers who engage in the process with UPDC.
- Ellen countered that a quantitative score could eliminate any charges of bias.
- Amy asked that the Transportation section put the automobile/parking question last.

**Neighborhood Sustainability and Vitality:** Ellen Fee, co-chair, asked the board to support the committee's recommendation of \$1,600 for this year's microgrant program. Neighbors can apply for these small grants (\$200-\$400) for community engagement projects. Last year the committee gave out five grants. Leah said that amount is in our budget.

- *Action:* Warren/Saunders moved to recommend that UPDC budget \$1,600 for micro-grants in 2023. The motion passed unanimously.

The committee also is collaborating with St. Paul Parks and Rec for a sign for the No Mow area.

**Transportation:** Amy said the April 13 meeting of the St. Paul Parks and Rec Commission will focus on the Summit Avenue Regional Trail Plan. Sarah wants the Transportation Committee to discuss the issue at its April 10 meeting, since it has not yet issued a statement.

- **Cretin Avenue:** The committee discussed a 4- to 3-lane conversion, eliminating parking on the east side of Cretin between Summit and Selby and creating a turn lane. Simply eliminating parking, which UST has proposed to the city, would create a thoroughfare — though Jerome said that is Cretin’s purpose, to move traffic from I-94. Eliminating parking would remove about 45 spots. Councilmember Jalali met with UST officials and has concerns about pedestrian safety on Marshall, too. UST is pushing for crosswalks at Mississippi River Boulevard and at Selby, Jerome said.

**West Summit Neighborhood Advisory Council:** Henry Parker introduced a proposal to form a working group of WSNAC members and board members from UPDC and MGCC to bring WSNAC into deeper collaboration with the two district councils. WSNAC was created to provide a forum for neighborhood concerns related to the University of St. Thomas campus.

- Goals include reducing redundancies, making WSNAC less insular and intimidating, and giving it staff support. Henry volunteered to be a member of the working group.
- Jerome said the neighbors involved in WSNAC come from a small demographic of the neighborhood, geographically. They all are white homeowners, Amy added.
- The 2004 CUP requires the university to support WSNAC with \$10,000 per year.

*Action:* Parker/Gage moved to form a working group of WSNAC members, MGCC board members and UPDC board members focused on creating a proposal to bring WSNAC into closer coordination and partnership with Macalester-Groveland Community Council and Union Park District Council. The motion passed unanimously.

**Announcements:** Earth Day is April 22, 2023, and Sarah urged members to participate in the city-wide cleanup or attend another event. | Jerome said UST has applied to modify their liquor license. A legislative hearing will be on April 17, 10 a.m., hearing room 330, St. Paul City Hall. Feedback can be offered in person at the meeting or beforehand in writing. Call 651-266-8512 for more info, or email feedback to: [LH-Licensing@ci.stpaul.mn.us](mailto:LH-Licensing@ci.stpaul.mn.us)

**Staff report:** City contracts were submitted in March. The board should review its governing documents, especially bylaws. Leah completed an annual budget. | A Meeting Owl will allow for hybrid meetings. | UPDC will expand its recycling contract with the city, supporting senior citizens with “bulky item” removal. | A summer intern from St. Olaf College in Northfield has been engaged, and Kingsley Hollon-Coleman, the current intern from Macalester College, has accepted a 10-week part-time staff position for the summer. | Demetrius and Leah have been working on enhancements to Midway Peace Park, in concert with Ward 1 City Councilmember

Russel Balenger. Demetrius works at Skyline Tower nearby and has been pleased to see programming in the park, along with discussion of a water source and replanting trees.

Treichel/Parker moved to adjourn at 8:39 p.m.