

Union Park District Council
MINUTES / Committee on Land Use and Economic Development
Monday, May 19, 2025 6:30–8:30 p.m.
Zoom Meeting

Co-chairs: Dean Cummings and Mark Morrow

Committee meeting minutes submitted by: Mark Morrow

Committee members present: Paul Bakke, Scott Berger, Rachel Callanan, K. C. Cox, Dean Cummings, Tim Flanigan, David Guetschow, Joe Hughes, Reece Johnson, Mark Morrow, Ben Quam, Bill Richtman, Deanna Seppanen, Paul Toman

Committee member excused absence:

Staff present: Leah Timberlake Sullivan

Guests: Chris Cosgrove (Park Liquor),
Jake de Vera , Karen Lue (Women’s Advocates),
Mai Vue (Four Boys LLC 385 Lexington Parkway),
Kat Hughes, Mary Kay Palmer

Media: Jane McClure

1. Welcome and Introductions; Consent Agenda

Dean Cummings, co-chair of the Union Park District Council (UPDC) Committee on Land Use and Economic Development (CLUED), welcomed members of the committee and members of the community. The April 21, 2025 meeting minutes were approved. The May 19, 2025 meeting agenda was approved.

2. Discussion of Park Liquor, 140 Snelling Avenue North, Class N Off Sale Liquor License presented by Chris Cosgrove

ACTION: SUPPORT the requested Class N Liquor License.

Chris Cosgrove discussed his purchase of Park Liquor (both the building and the business).

For the last 10 years, Mr. Cosgrove has purchased and updated liquor-related businesses in Washington County. Twenty-five years ago Mr. Cosgrove worked in our area. He noted the shift to a more dense, more residential neighborhood. Park Liquor is Mr. Cosgrove’s first purchase in St. Paul. Mr. Cosgrove plans to retain the brand, restore the building, and fine tune the business.

Attendees expressed support for the continued presence of Park Liquor, and welcomed the investment in the building and the business.

Attendees expressed concern about the safety of the Snelling Avenue - Hague Avenue intersection, and offered suggestions to improve pedestrian safety including elevating the crosswalk to sidewalk level to slow traffic. Mr. Cosgrove was encouraged to discuss this issue further with UPDC’s Transportation Committee.

A motion to SUPPORT the requested Class N Liquor License was approved (unanimous).

3. **Discussion of Women's Advocates Emergency Shelter at 356 and 362 Cleveland Avenue North Conditional Use Permit**

presented by Jake De Vera and Karen Lu

ACTION: SUPPORT the requested Conditional Use Permit.

Jake De Vera from Women's Advocates (<https://wadvocates.org>) and Karen Lu, architect, presented plans for the conversion of the apartment buildings at 356 and 362 Cleveland Avenue North to an ADA-accessible emergency shelter for battered women, their families, and their pets. Women's Advocates currently operates emergency shelters for battered women and their families in 3 houses near the intersection of Grand Avenue and Dale Street. Mr. De Vera stated that they are viewed as good neighbors, and are committed to maintaining a positive reputation.

In Minnesota, there are 90 calls a day for emergency shelter, but only 5 beds available. In order to address the bed shortage, Women's Advocates received a grant from the Minnesota Department of Human Services to purchase 356 and 362 Cleveland Avenue North.

Note: 356 and 362 Cleveland Avenue North are zoned RM2 (see appendix 1).

The structures are identical 14-unit apartment buildings which were built in the 1920s. The south building (356 Cleveland Ave N) will retain its 14 unit layout. The north building (362 Cleveland Ave N) will be modified to an ADA-accessible 12 unit shelter, with a studio + 1 bedroom converted to a 2 bedroom unit. An ADA-accessible entrance and an elevator will be added.

Due to tuckpointing with an inappropriate mortar mix and to deferred maintenance, both buildings require restoration in addition to remodeling. Both buildings will have their roof replaced, windows replaced, and electrical services updated. Both buildings will have a sprinkler system installed and a security system installed. Both buildings will have their kitchens and bathrooms updated. There will be an enclosed area for trash, a pet run, 5 parking spaces, new landscaping, and new fences.

The project will take 6-9 months from start of construction to completion.

The Women's Advocates team presented their project to St. Paul Senior City Planner Kady Dadlez, and were informed that they will need a Conditional Use Permit for 2 reasons:

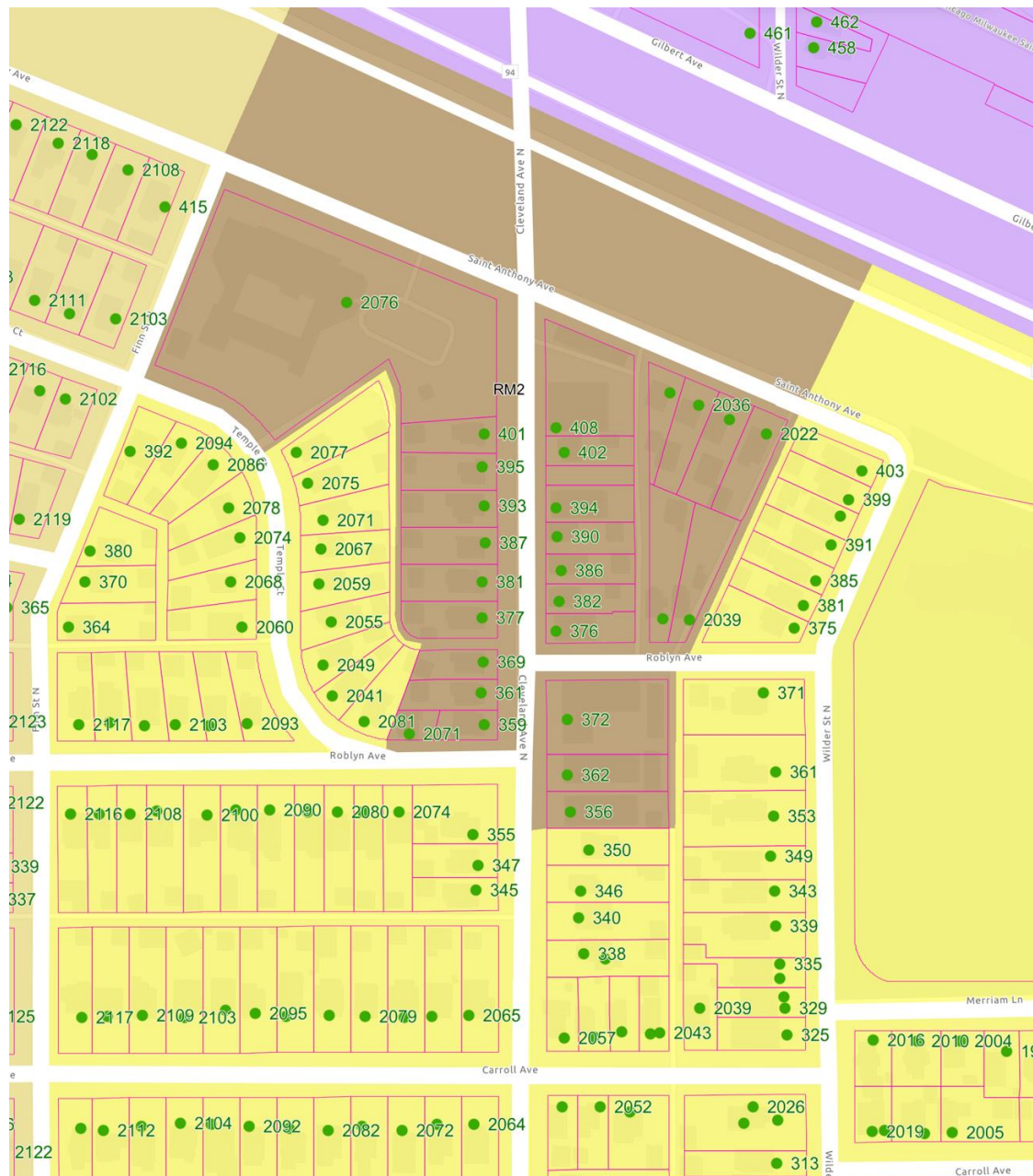
- (a) In residential, traditional neighborhood, Ford and OS-B2 business districts, a conditional use permit is required for facilities serving more than six (6) adult facility residents and minor children in their care.
- (b) The facility must be a minimum distance of one thousand three hundred twenty (1,320) feet from any other of the following congregate living facilities with more than six (6) adult residents: shelter for battered persons, supportive housing facility, licensed correctional community residential facility, emergency housing facility, or overnight. Shelter.

Though attendees acknowledged that there are supportive housing facilities in our neighborhood, no concerns related to the addition of an emergency shelter were identified.

One CLUED member noted that the proposed location of the elevator shaft could cause engineering challenges, and encourage Ms. Lu to discuss this with their engineering consultants.

A motion to SUPPORT the requested Conditional Use Permit was approved (unanimous).

Appendix 1 – Zoning Map



Appendix 2 – Zoning Code Sec. 65.160. - Shelter for battered persons.

One (1) main building, or portion thereof, on one (1) zoning lot where adults and children who have suffered assault or battery live on a 24-hour-per-day basis for a period of time generally not to exceed thirty (30) days and are served by a program certified by the state department of corrections.

Standards and conditions for shelters for battered persons serving more than six (6) adult facility residents and minor children in their care:

- (c) In residential, traditional neighborhood, Ford and OS-B2 business districts, a conditional use permit is required for facilities serving more than six (6) adult facility residents and minor children in their care.
- (d) The facility must be a minimum distance of one thousand three hundred twenty (1,320) feet from any other of the following congregate living facilities with more than six (6) adult residents: shelter for battered persons, supportive housing facility, licensed correctional community residential facility, emergency housing facility, or overnight. Shelter.

- c) In RL-H2 residential, traditional neighborhood, Ford, OS-B3 business and IT-I2 industrial districts, the facility must serve sixteen (16) or fewer adult facility residents and minor children in their care.
- (d) The facility must not be located in a two-family or multifamily dwelling unless it occupies the entire structure.

https://library.municode.com/mn/st._paul/codes/code_of_ordinances?nodeId=PTIILECO_TITVIIIZOCO_CH65ZOCOANUSDEDEST_ARTII65.100.REUS_DIV365.150.COLI_S65.160SHBAPE

Appendix 3 – Conditional Use Permit Additional Requirements

In addition to meeting all conditions listed under a specific use, there are general conditions that must be met for all Conditional Use Permits as follows:

- The extent, location and intensity of the use will be in substantial compliance with the Saint Paul Comprehensive Plan and any applicable subarea plans which were approved by the city council.
- The use will provide adequate ingress and egress to minimize traffic congestion in the public streets.
- The use will not be detrimental to the existing character of the development in the immediate neighborhood or endanger the public health, safety and general welfare.
- The use will not impede the normal and orderly development and improvement of the surrounding property for uses permitted in the district.
- The use shall, in all other respects, conform to the applicable regulations of the district in which it is located.

The Planning Commission may impose such reasonable conditions and limitations in granting an approval as are determined to be necessary to fulfill the spirit and purpose of the zoning code and to protect adjacent properties. Conditions may be modified by the Planning Commission when strict application of such conditions would unreasonably limit or prevent the otherwise lawful use of a piece of property or an existing structure and would result in exceptional undue hardship to the owner of such property or structure; provided, that such modification will not impair the intent and purpose of such condition and is consistent with health, morals and general welfare of the community and is consistent with reasonable enjoyment of adjacent property.

<https://www.stpaul.gov/departments/safety-inspections/building-and-construction/zoning-appeals-and-variances/conditional-use-permit>

4. Discussion of Four Boys LLC 385 Lexington Parkway North Variance Request presented by Mai Vue

ACTION: SUPPORT the proposed amendment to the Rent Stabilization Ordinance.

Mai Vue and her husband presented their plans for 385 Lexington Parkway North. The Vue's own a staffing agency (Premier Staffing Group, Inc) in St. Paul's east side. They would like to move their business close to the Green Line to improve transit options for the people they serve.

The lot is zoned T3, and is within 0.25 mi of the Lexington Green Line station. The lot is vacant. To the south is a 4 story building (375 St. Anthony Avenue). To the north (across Central Avenue) is a gas station (1 story). To the north of the gas station is the new 6 story apartment building The Nine at Lexington Station (411 Lexington Parkway North).

The Vue's vision for 385 Lexington Parkway North is a two-story L shaped building with 12,000 sq ft on each floor and a floor area ratio (FAR) of 0.7, which will cost around \$8 million to build. The first floor will be commercial. The Vue's will occupy 8,000 sq feet (Premier Staffing 2800 sq ft, and a restaurant/bar 5200 sq ft). They will lease 4,000 sq ft (food hall vendors). The second floor will be apartments (12 units). The Vue's do not have the capital required to expand their project beyond 2 stories. Though they have not sought other investors, they stated that they are open to the possibility.

The proposed 2 story project has a floor area ratio (FAR) of 0.7.

The lot is zoned T3, and is within 0.25 mi of a light rail station – therefore, the required minimum FAR is 1.0.

Comments in favor of a variance for this project included:

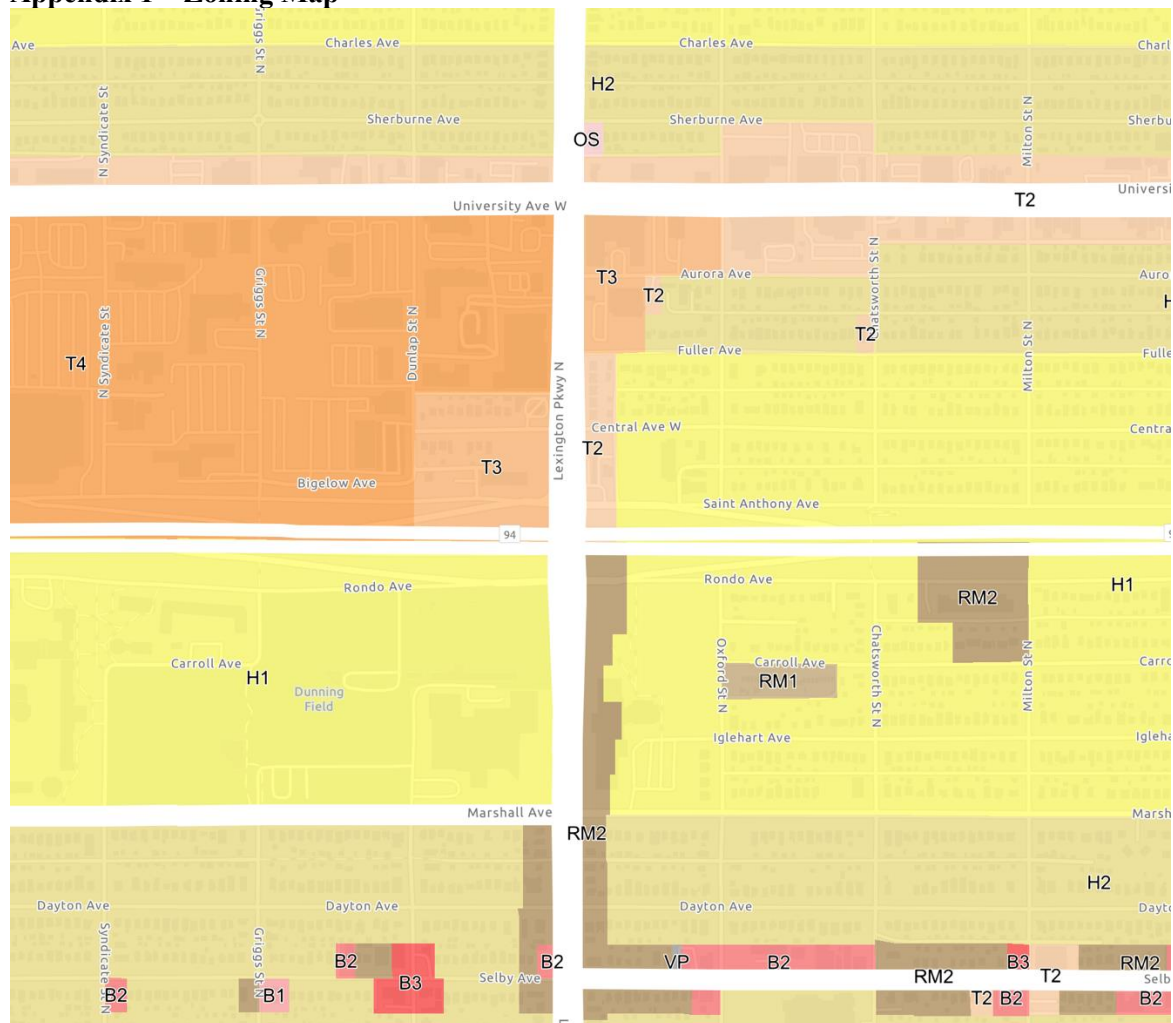
- The lot has been vacant for many years.
- The addition of a third floor would add requirements, including an elevator, which will increase the cost per sq ft.
- A below minimum dimensions project in the Highland Bridge development was recently approved by the City.

Comments against a variance for this project included:

- The lot is on a bus route and is close to a light rail station.
- The developers have not pursued additional investors, so it is unknown if the capitol to add a third story could be raised.

A motion to SUPPORT the requested Variance was approved (4 aye, 3 nay, 2 abstentions).

Appendix 1 – Zoning Map



Appendix 2 – Traditional Neighborhood Dimensional Standards

T3								
1-family dwelling	8—12 units/acre(b)	3500(b)	30	25	35(e)	15— 25(i)	(k)	15
2- family/townhouse	10—20 units/acre(b)	2000(b)	20	25	35(e)	10— 25(i)	(k)	15
Multifamily	0.5—3.0 FAR(d)	n/a	n/a	25	45(e), (g), (l)	10— 25(i)	(k)	(k)
Nonresidential or mixed use	0.5—3.0 FAR(d)	n/a	n/a	25	55(e), (g), (l)	0— 10(j)	(k)	(k)

Footnote d) 1.0-3.0 FAR in light rail station areas for lots more than twenty-five thousand (25,000) square feet in area, with no maximum FAR in T4. The floor area of structured parking above or below space used for principal uses, up to an amount equal to the floor area of the principal uses, may be counted toward meeting the minimum FAR. For lots more than twenty-five thousand (25,000) square feet partly in a light rail station area, minimum FAR shall be prorated upon the percentage of the lot in a light rail station area.

Appendix 3 – Zoning Code Definitions

Chapter 60 Zoning Code – Article II.- 60.200. General Definitions

Light rail station *area*. The area within a one-quarter-mile radius from the centerpoint of a light rail transit station platform. For split platform stations, this is measured from the centerpoint between the two (2) platforms.

[Note: University to Snelling = 0.25 mi]

Appendix 4 – Variance Requirements and Process:

A variance is specific to a project, and is only valid for 2 years (with an option to extend for up to 1 additional year).

According to [Sec. 61.601](#) of the zoning code, the Board of Zoning Appeals must make the following findings before they can grant a variance:

- The variance is in harmony with the general purposes and intent of the zoning code.
- The variance is consistent with the comprehensive plan.
- The applicant has established that there are practical difficulties in complying with the provision, that the property owner proposes to use the property in a reasonable manner not permitted by the provision. Inadequate access to direct sunlight for solar energy systems constitutes a practical difficulty. Economic considerations alone do not constitute practical difficulties.
- The plight of the landowner is due to circumstances unique to the property not created by the landowner.
- The variance will not permit any use that is not allowed in the zoning district where the affected land is located.
- The variance will not alter the essential character of the surrounding area.

In granting a variance, the board or commission shall make written findings stating the grounds upon which the variance is justified.

In granting a variance, the BZA may attach reasonable conditions to their approval. The BZA does not have the authority to allow a use that is not otherwise permitted in the zoning district.

For the purpose of determining whether “The plight of the landowner is due to circumstances unique to the property not created by the landowner”, CLUED should consider the following:

*It is not whether the developer can convince you that their project is unique, it is whether another developer can convince you that their project is similar.

Process:

The Board of Zoning Appeals (BZA) will conduct a public hearing within 4 weeks of the application’s submission. (For proposals that also require a Conditional Use Permit or a Nonconforming Use Permit, the Planning Commission may act as the Board of Zoning Appeals.)

Appeals are decided by the City Council.

A zoning variance is specific to the proposed project and is valid for two years unless a building permit is obtained within the time frame and construction is proceeding according to the terms of the permit. The zoning administrator may grant an extension not to exceed one additional year. However, this request must be made before the variance expires.

<https://www.stpaul.gov/departments/safety-inspections/building-and-construction/zoning-appeals-and-variances>

5. **Discussion of the City’s Proposed Revisions to Traditional Neighborhood Zone Regulations presented by Dean Cummings and Mark Morrow**

St. Paul is in the process of updating the Traditional Neighborhood Zoning Districts Zoning Code. Written comments will be accepted through July 14, 2025 at 4:30 PM (spencer.miller-johnson@stpaul.gov).

Verbal testimony will be accepted during the Planning Commission public hearing July 11, 2025.

The committee will review the updates and consider comments during the June 16, 2025 meeting. Mr. Morrow urged committee members to pay particular attention to the proposed changes to the maximum building heights.

<https://www.stpaul.gov/departments/planning-and-economic-development/planning/current-activities/tdistrict>

6. **Staff Report presented by Leah Timberlake Sullivan**

- Union Park trash clean-ups will resume June 21 from 9:00 AM – 11:00 AM.
(Meet at PK’s Place Playground.)
- UPDC will host 2 meetings with the AIRNET support team to learn about local air quality monitoring. The first meeting is May 27 from 6:30 PM – 8:00 PM at Spruce Tree Center, Suite 301.
- The Selby-Snelling Business Association received a \$70,000 grant to create an attraction to draw more visitors to this area. The Association is accepting proposals through the end of June.
- Metro Transit’s B Line will begin service June 14. UPDC has been selected as one of the organizations to promote the new service. Activities under consideration include:
 - lessons on how to use the B Line to shop for groceries (possibly including a complementary personal size shopping cart)
 - a Tuesday Taco Tour.

7. **Announcements**

- Members of UPDC recently met with Kraus Anderson (who owns the shopping mall on University Avenue with Cub Foods) to discuss the ongoing challenges faced by Cub Foods, including public drug use, shoplifting, and cart theft.

8. **Follow-Up**

- Breakaway received their requested noise variance for this year's festival (June 6 and June 7). The promoters have re-oriented the stage and will reconfigure the speakers to reduce the spread of sound beyond the festival.
In addition, they will provide a community feedback line, and will adjust sound levels in real time based on that feedback.
- Revision of the definition of student dwelling - Tim Flanigan reported that he has had several meetings with St. Paul Planning Director Yasmine Robinson. Ms. Robinson told Mr. Flanigan that the City has held meetings regarding the student dwelling definition, but has not provided Mr. Flanigan with a timeline for a decision on whether they will revise the definition.



Union Park District Council
MINUTES / Committee on Land Use and Economic Development
Monday, April 21, 2025 6:30–8:30 p.m.
Zoom Meeting

Co-chairs: Dean Cummings and Mark Morrow

Committee meeting minutes submitted by: Mark Morrow

Committee members present: Scott Berger, Dean Cummings, Tim Flanigan, David Guetschow, Joe Hughes, Reece Johnson, Jim Marti, Mark Morrow, Ben Quam, Paul Toman

Committee member excused absence: Bill Richtman

Staff present: Leah Timberlake Sullivan

Guests: Ward 1 Councilmember Anika Bowie, Cathy Capone Bennett (Twin Cities Housing Alliance), Kevin Incitti, Noelle Jacquet-Morrison

Union Park District Council
MINUTES / Committee on Land Use and Economic Development
Monday, March 17, 2025 6:30–8:30 p.m.
Zoom Meeting

Co-chairs: Dean Cummings and Mark Morrow

Committee meeting minutes submitted by: Mark Morrow

Committee members present: Paul Bakke, Scott Berger, KC Cox, Dean Cummings, Sarah Dvorak, Tim Flanigan, Joe Hughes, Reece Johnson, April King, Jim Marti, Mark Morrow, Lisa Nelson, Ben Quam, Deanna Seppanen, Paul Toman

Committee member excused absence:

Guests: Mike Hahm (United Village), Jarrod Fucci, Amy Dunn (Breakaway Festival), Thomas Fischer, Brennan Bonon, Seamus Healy, Tim Tibesar (2054 Laurel / Woodstock UST), Kathy Duffy

Union Park District Council
MINUTES / Committee on Land Use and Economic Development
Monday, February 24, 2025 6:30–8:30 p.m.
Zoom Meeting

Co-chairs: Dean Cummings and Mark Morrow

Committee meeting minutes submitted by: Mark Morrow

Committee members present: Scott Berger, KC Cox, Dean Cummings, Sarah Dvorak, Tim Flanigan, Reece Johnson, Mark Morrow, Ben Quam, Paul Toman

Committee member excused absence:

Guests: Mike Hahm (United Village), Amy Gage, Bill Richtman