

Union Park District Council
MINUTES / Committee on Land Use and Economic Development
Monday, July 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: Paul Bakke, Scott Berger, K. C. Cox, Dean Cummings, Tim Flanigan, Reece Johnson, Mark Morrow, Paul Toman

Committee member excused absence:

Staff present: Leah Timberlake Sullivan

Guests: Mike Hahm (United Village)

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 June 16, 2025 meeting minutes were approved.

The July 21, 2025 meeting agenda was approved.

2. Update Regarding United Village Update presented by Mike Hahm

Mr. Hahm provided an update on United Village:

○ **Phase 1 – Construction Update:**

Funding has been secured for the restaurant pavilions, the office building, and the hotel + parking structure, and most of the required permits have been approved.

Mortenson and subcontractors have begun work on the footings and foundation of the restaurant pavilions and the office building. This will be followed by work on the footings and foundation for the hotel and adjacent parking structure.

Though it is too early in the construction process to provide precise completion dates, the development team hopes that the restaurant pavilions will be completed by summer 2026, the office building by fall 2026, and the hotel by winter 2026-2027.

○ **Phase 2 – Planning Update:**

The development team has submitted to the City an advanced discussion document outlining their vision for the lot between the loon sculpture and the hotel (“A1”), and for the lot to the east of the hotel (“E”).

On the lot between the loon sculpture and the hotel, the team would like to create a horticultural plaza.

On the lot to the east of the hotel, the team would like to build a music venue.

○ **Phase 2 – Planning for Interim Uses of Lots F2 and G (Between the Music Venue and PK’s Playground)**

The development team is refining their vision for interim uses of lots F2 and G. They are contemplating a open area that could accommodate a variety of activities such as an open air market, drive in movies, and temporary parking during the spring, summer, and fall; and a skating rink during the winter.

3. St. George Greek Orthodox Church Construction Update – Cancelled due to the lack of a presenter

**4. University of St. Thomas Liquor License Expansion –
Cancelled due to the lack of a presenter**

**5. Neighbors for Responsible Living and Development (NRLD) Update
presented by Timothy Flanigan**

Mr. Flanigan stated that NRLD meetings have been well-attended, with over 160 people at their most recent meeting (July 1). In March, NRLD submitted to the City a proposed modification of the Student Overlay District's definition of student dwelling. On July 3 they received a response from the City that no changes to the definition of student dwelling will be made.

A committee member stated that City staff does not always listen to you, and does not always respond to your request.

**6. Discussion of the Closing of Cub Midway
presented by Dean Cummings**

Mr. Cummings shared with the committee today's announcement that the Midway Cub (1440 University Avenue West) will close August 2, and that 96 store employees will be laid off September 22.

Committee members expressed concern about the impact of the loss of Cub on the most vulnerable members of our community, though it was also noted that Cub is no longer the least expensive grocery store in our neighborhood.

Committee members shared their thoughts about factors that contributed to the closure, including:

- Management did not do everything that they should have done to keep shoppers safe, the store stocked with food items and shopping carts, and the shopping experience efficient and desirable. It was noted that the retail companies that are doing well at this time have invested heavily in loss prevention strategies.
- The City did not do everything that they should have done to keep shoppers safe and the shopping experience desirable. It was noted that the Holiday Station on Snelling closed earlier this year due in large part to concerns for the safety of their staff. Members expressed concern that enforcement of infractions is inconsistent and follow through with consequences is lacking. In contrast, the City of Roseville's Police Department worked with local businesses and the Minnesota Organized Retail Crime Association, which resulted in 29 arrests in March.
- A legal requirement that a tenant must obtain an affidavit from the property owner before they can declare to the police that a person is trespassing. This requirement is a barrier to crime reduction. Furthermore, this requirement establishes an unhealthy relationship between the landlord and the tenant, with the tenant acting as a dependent of the landlord, and the landlord acting as the custodian of the renter.
- The strip mall design, with its large parking area, has not aged well and is not optimal use of the limited amount of available space. As opposed to a land value tax, the City's property tax does not capture the potential value of the City's limited land mass, enabling suboptimal land use.

Committee members shared their thoughts about how UPDC could strengthen our existing businesses and attract new businesses, including:

- Conducting exit interviews of businesses that are closing or relocating:
 - Identify pain points.
 - When this is the only location of the business and the business is closing, identify why the business is closing.
 - When the business is relocating or when there are other locations of the business that remain open, identify why this location closed (comparative data).
 - Share this information with local businesses and City leaders.

- Working with the City's economic development agencies (The St. Paul Port Authority, the Housing and Redevelopment Authority) to accelerate development in our district.

7. Graffiti on Billboards Near the Intersection of University Avenue and Snelling Avenue presented by Leah Timberlake Sullivan

ACTION: INFORM the City that the continued presence of graffiti on the side of 1605 University Avenue West and on 2 billboards on top of 1605 University Avenue West is unacceptable, and the length of time that it is taking the Department of Safety and Inspections (DSI) to remove the graffiti on the side of 1605 University Avenue West and remove the 2 unsightly billboards on top of 1605 University Avenue West is unacceptable.

Ms. Timberlake Sullivan informed the committee that there is graffiti on the side of 1605 University Avenue West and on 2 billboards on top of 1605 University Avenue West (north and west of the Union Park District Council offices in the Spruce Tree Center). Mike Koch and Jason Skar of MetroPlains Management, LLC (the building managers for the Spruce Tree Center) have repeatedly notified the Department of Safety and Inspections since December 2024. The Spruce Tree Center is currently at 55% occupancy, and, as a result of this graffiti and the boarded up CVS, they are having difficulty attracting new tenants and retaining current tenants.

On June 10, 2025, Mr. Koch met with Andrew Shanley, Investigative Commander for the Police Department's Western District, and with Jenne Nelson, Ward 4 Interim Legislative Aide.

On June 12, 2025, Andrew Shanley, Investigative Commander for the Police Department's Western District, sent an email to David Hoban, Deputy Director, City of St. Paul's Department of Safety.

On June 12, Mr. Hoban sent an email to Commander Shanley which stated:

"First, acknowledging that this process has taken a long time, thank you for your patience and my apologies.

We have been working with Parks and through the process to find a vendor that will be able to accomplish the work. The areas that need to be addressed are not in the usual line of work for graffiti removal performed by the city. They are large and in locations that are difficult to access for several reasons.

That said, Parks has hired a vendor, and the PO has been issued. Currently Parks is working on coordinating timing with them and where this fits in with their scheduling and coordinating.

I hope this helps and I am available for questions, so please feel free to contact me in the future."

On June 26 and July 8, Mr. Koch sent emails to Mr. Hoban, but has not received a response.

A motion was approved to inform the City that the continued presence of graffiti on the side of 1605 University Avenue West and on 2 billboards on top of 1605 University Avenue West is unacceptable, and the length of time that it is taking the Department of Safety and Inspections (DSI) to remove the graffiti on the side of 1605 University Avenue West and remove the 2 unsightly billboards on top of 1605 University Avenue West is unacceptable.

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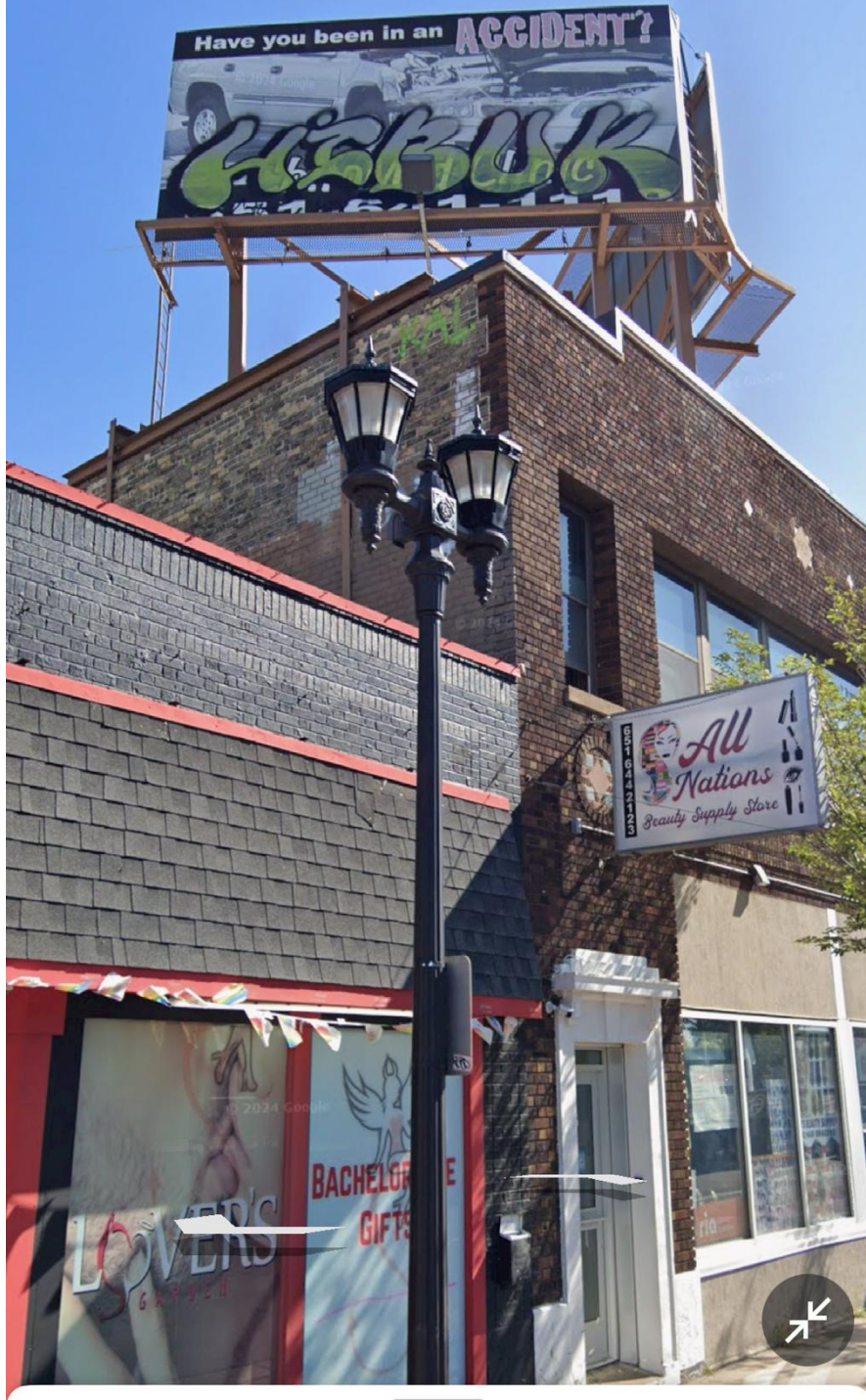
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8. Staff Report

presented by Leah Timberlake Sullivan

- Metro Transit's B Line began service June 14. UPDC's promotion of the new service has included 7 tours, with participation by more than 200 people (many of whom have never ridden public transit).
- The Selby-Snelling Business Association received a \$70,000 grant to create an attraction to draw more visitors to this area. UPDC submitted the following proposals:
 - Mailer (8 page) describing the Selby-Snelling businesses to be mailed to 18,000 addresses.
 - Bike corral (replace a street parking space with bike parking)
 - Funding to boost existing events (Spring Fling, Holiday Event)
- The Housing Task Force continues to develop its recommendations.
- This year's Ice Cream, Peanut Butter, & Jam will be held September 20 in Merriam Park.
- Planning for this year's Midway Peace Park Fall Fun Day is underway.
- The Snelling University Alliance (of which we are a member) has submitted a Request for Proposal to develop a vision for the area.

9. Follow-Up

10. Announcements

- The League of Women Voters, the Midway Chamber of Commerce, and Union Park District Council are co-hosting a Ward 4 Special Election Candidate Forum July 22, 2025 (tomorrow) from 7:00 PM – 8:30 PM at St. Paul Neighborhood Network's studios.

11. Open Forum

Committee members noted that, for many infractions including parking violations, the City uses a complaint-based approach. If there is no complaint, there will be no enforcement.

A concern was raised about the high cost of housing for students on and around the University of St. Thomas campus.



Union Park District Council
MINUTES / Committee on Land Use and Economic Development
Monday, June 16, 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, Rachel Callanan, Dean Cummings, David Guetschow, Reece Johnson, Jim Marti, Mark Morrow, Lisa Nelson, Bill Richtman, Paul Toman

Committee member excused absence: Tim Flanigan

Staff present: Leah Timberlake Sullivan

Guests: Mike Hahm (United Village), Nick Slade

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

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