

Union Park District Council

Board Meeting: minutes

October 5, 2022, 7–9 p.m., via Zoom

President Sarah Dvorak, Secretary Henry Parker

Griggs Midway Building, 1821 University Ave. W., room 330, St. Paul, MN 55104

Members present (11): Sarah Dvorak (Grid 7), presiding. Scott Berger (Grid 10), Dan Elenbaas (Grid 11), Kirsten Fryer (at-large), Harmony Neal (Grid 9), Henry Parker (Grid 8), Bruce Corrie (Concordia University), Joe Hughes (business), Allen Saunders (Desnoyer Park Improvement Association), Kent Treichel (Lexington-Hamline Community Council); April King (Grid 5), Joe Hughes (business).

Members absent: Ellen Fee (at-large), Claire Warren (Grid 4). Open seats for Grids 1, 2, 3, 6, nonprofit, Skyline Towers, Macalester College, and University of St. Thomas.

Staff: Abdulrahman Wako, executive director; Leah Timberlake Sullivan, program manager; Kensington Hollon-Coleman

Guests: Jane McClure, *My Villager*

Meeting

Call to order: Sarah Dvorak called the meeting to order at 7:05 p.m.

Consent agenda: Parker/Treichel moved to approve the October 2022 agenda and the September 2022 minutes. Passed unanimously.

Open Executive Committee Positions: Vacant Secretary and Vice President positions. Saunders expressed interest in joining the Executive Committee, but would be unavailable on Tuesdays and after 5pm.

Vote at 7:19 PM on Mario's Pizza action item:

Committee Reports and Updates:

Committee on Land Use & Economic Development (CLUED):

At the September CLUED meeting Dave Birkemeier, President of Cooperative Plating presented future construction plans which includes expansion through acquisition of adjacent property. Meeting with neighbors to share the plans.

Corrie on action item for Mario's Pizza: In the last meeting, we had a request from Mario's to expand their patio seating area. They have received agreement from the future next door frame business. Dvorak says that during the summertime, Mario's would move trash cans and such away for a patio space. The adjacent framing business will not use the space for parking or deliveries.

Action: The board voted unanimously to approve the proposed patio space.

Fryer introduces discussion on ICPBJ and planned events.

Leah announces Midway Peace Park Fall Fun for the Skyline Tower community, similar to a smaller ICPBJ, recruits volunteers for setup and breakdown of event. Leah instructs to keep an eye on the park, as it may become more well-known in the coming months.

Fryer inquiries about the Sambusa truck at the event—if the Sambusas will be free for attendants and if it's the same truck as ICPBJ.

Leah affirms.

Leah and Sarah discuss the event as a means for engaging the Skyline Tower community.

Saunders offers that Mario's Pizza is a good go-to for event catering in addition to Sambusa truck and Nellie's.

Leah outlines that ST staff and security will monitor the event as long as inflatables are up.

Neighborhood Sustainability and Vitality Committee:

Allen: No report from NSVC because of "Tuesday incident".

Saunders says that Desnoyer Park will be receiving reduced support for their ice rink from St. Paul Parks Department. The DPIA will likely request cell tower funds to support the ice rink.

Saunders asks for direction on how to go about applying for those funds. Wako instructs Saunders to complete a cell tower funds application and submit it to the Neighborhood Sustainability and Vitality Committee. Saunders asks if the funds can be used to purchase equipment. Dvorak doesn't think there is a limit, but that Wako will need to look into it.

Leah says that she believes the funds are dedicated for park planning and improvement. Dvorak believes that a DIPA event would align with this purpose.

Transportation:

Timberlake shares that she was speaking with some women about public transportation and invited them to join our Transportation Committee. The two women shared their non-optional experience of using public transportation. They have had some negative experiences using

public transportation.

Berger summarizes a letter outlining a higher frequency of negative experiences on light rail. These issues are highlighted as Metro Transit issues, and not nationwide issues with public transit.

Parker is proud of the letter and the work of the committee and thanks everyone for their contributions.

*Action: Parker moves to approve letter.
The letter passes unanimously.*

Berger comments that committee members made an effort to ride public transit and make observations, specifies that there is a spreadsheet with the observations.

Harmony asks if the green line is still scary during the day time, and Berger replies that issues tend to happen more in the evening.

Harmony asserts that the solution is to lift folks out of poverty

Corrie suggests sharing the letter with the Midway Chamber.

April suggests that the Metro Transit security hotline may not be sufficiently visible.

Scott notes that the residential transit pass program is something that he spoke about previously—Metro Transit has a program wherein multi-family homes can request a pass at significantly reduced pass, from about \$120 to around \$14 a month. It's been found that the discounts help the transit system through increased ridership.

Scott touches on Rethinking i94—there's a conflict brewing between something Rondo and Our Streets. States that we're looking to bridge conflict despite a surprising amount of drama.

Scott announces the findings of the Summit Trail survey, highlights that the opposition to the Summit Regional Trail are a "stretch" based on the nature of comments provided.

Fryer highlights the inaccuracy of a comment on the Summit Trail stating only "smooth ride," asserting that the comments don't necessarily line up.

Berger intends to read all of the comments on the trail.

Dvorak comments that the numbers were extremely skewed towards opposition to the trail, expresses concern as to where statistics are coming from and who is giving feedback.

Berger pushes back against the concern for Summit's trees, stating that there would be little impact on trees along Summit Ave.

Elenbaas recalls personal conversations with Summit residents, who he states overwhelmingly oppose the trail although they may be confused on what the trail would mean.

Dvorak has been following the issue for a long time, states that it wouldn't affect the roadway on Summit.

West Summit Neighborhood Advisory Council (WSNAC):

Parker: Introduces resolution to call for St. Thomas to appoint a new neighborhood liaison in light of Amy Gage's absence. He highlights Amy's contributions and asserts that it's critical for UST to fill the vacant position.

Berger asks if there is any indication that UST does *not* intend to fill the position.

Parker responds that Gage gave notice to UST 3 or more months ago, and that UST concerningly has not posted the position.

Action: Berger moves to adopt the resolution.

Motion passes with 1 abstention from Corrie.

Neighbors United Funding Collaborative:

Wako explains that NUFC had a hold on all applications in September. Next week, he'll send an application from the advisory to executive committee.

Isabel continued working past her contract in June. She'll be paid what she's owed so that NUFC can undergo structural changes. He hopes that by end october-early November NUFC will have affairs in order.

Communications Task Force:

Timberlake introduces a document. Board members seem to like it.

Timberlake states that the document is not in response to any incident, but is intended to provide protection to UPDC in emergency situations. The document stipulates that board members can speak independently of UPDC and express their opinions.

King asks if board members can state publicly how they would vote on something that might come before the board.

Timberlake responds that this isn't explicitly addressed, but that it would be inappropriate to speak publicly about voting intentions, but that when speaking in one-on-one settings with residents it'd be permissible to be clear about voting.

Berger: "Aren't we a political body?"

Timberlake counters that although UPDC is involved in politics, its mission is more oriented towards communication between citizens and government.

Action: Fryer moves to approve the document.

Motion passes unanimously.

Dvorak thanks the council for a job well done and asks Timberlake where the document is housed.

Timberlake responds that it's in the drive titled Executive Communication Policy

Staff report:

Wako reiterates that Midway Peace Park Fall Fun is the first community event at the park since its grand opening in 2020.

He next outlines the UPDC Annual Social where the council holds elections and celebrates accomplishments. A space has been secured at McNeely Hall at UST. A council member is also speaking at the event. Food and alcohol will be provided.

Wako asks that everyone RSVP to get an idea of how much food is needed.

Wako outlines that much work is needed for recruiting board members before the elections and that board members should reach out to people who might be interested, and asks board members to create summaries of their committee work to highlight at the event.

Wako states the eVites will be distributed by this Friday.

Money can now be withdrawn from Old National Bank after many years of seizure.

No-mow event at Merriam Park is announced, Saturday Oct 22nd.

Wako asks board members to fill out ICPBJ survey and announces University Avenue cleanup on October 15th. World cleanup day with Allianz was a huge success and had roughly 30 volunteers, thanks to Berger and Nelson. He announces the publication of the October newsletter as well.

Corrie thanks Wako and Leah for their work.

Parker moves to adjourn the meeting at 8:30 p.m.

Motion passes unanimously.