

# Union Park District Council

## Board Meeting: minutes

September 7, 2022, 7–9 p.m., via Zoom

President Sarah Dvorak, Secretary Amy Gage

*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), Ellen Fee (at-large), Kirsten Fryer (at-large), Harmony Neal (Grid 9), Henry Parker (Grid 8), Claire Warren (Grid 4); plus, Bruce Corrie (Concordia University), Amy Gage (University of St. Thomas), Joe Hughes (business), Allen Saunders (Desnoyer Park Improvement Association), Kent Treichel (Lexington-Hamline Community Council)

**Members absent:** April King (Grid 5). Open seats for Grids 1, 2, 3, 6, nonprofit, Skyline Towers and Macalester College

**Staff:** Abdulrahman Wako, executive director; Leah Timberlake Sullivan, program manager

**Guests:** Dean Cummings, CLUED co-chair; Chad Kulas, Midway Chamber of Commerce; Jane McClure, *My Villager*

### Meeting

**Call to order:** Sarah Dvorak called the meeting to order at 7:02 p.m.

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

**Reimagine the Midway:** Bruce Corrie introduced Midway Chamber of Commerce executive director Chad Kulas and a columnist at the *Midway Monitor*. He showed a logo created by a Concordia University senior capstone class. The idea for Reimagine the Midway came out of the civil unrest after George Floyd’s murder in Minneapolis in May 2020. Union Park is the first district council that the Reimagine the Midway group has approached.

- St. Anthony Park, Como, North End, Hamline-Midway and Thomas-Dale Frogtown will be among the other district councils they will approach.
- The Concordia class came up with a mission, vision and values that the group modified. Corrie, a leader on Reimagine Midway, came up with the value of “Shared Prosperity.” Kulas said it is “meant to be a little ambiguous.” Outreach to community groups and members will be a “guiding voice” in this definition.
- Berger asked about gentrification and the group’s stated goal of affordability. He mentioned that government subsidies likely would be required.

Kulas asked: What are the great things the Midway had before, build on that and make it work for more people? He challenged anyone to find a neighborhood with more diverse cuisine.

- Justin Borrell, general manager of Allianz Field, is on the Reimagine committee.
- They'll advise developers based on input the Reimagine group is getting from the community.
- Wako noted that it can be hard to come to "collective agreement" when so many entities are involved. Kulas said disagreements can be healthy. He wants to have respectful, "more mature" conversations.
- Corrie said the value of "shared prosperity" is an invitation to find common ground.

### **Committee Reports and Updates:**

**Committee on Land Use & Economic Development (CLUED):** Co-chair Dean Cummings said the group discussed the proposed amendments to the Rent Stabilization ordinance. CLUED questioned the 20-year exemption for new construction. Mitra told Cummings that she appreciated the input from a district council. He's been urging people to focus on the "super block" of the Midway, which he considers an area that could be ripe for gentrification. CLUED also discussed Cooperative Plating, whose air-quality permit is up for approval. That business will be visiting the September CLUED meeting. Mario's Pizza will come in September for permits related to outdoor dining in the back of the building. The chair of the city's Zoning Committee

**Neighborhood Sustainability and Vitality Committee:** Co-chair Ellen Fee said the group met outdoors at Midway Peace Park last time. They talked about a Midway Peace Park event in October centered around Skyline Towers, which is near the park. The committee approved the plan that UPDC staff has been working on.

- The event on Saturday, October 8, noon to 4 p.m., would be a fall-themed festival for about 500 people, with culturally relevant food. The budget is \$2,000 for food, \$700 for activities (yard games, a bouncy house) and \$300 for marketing and a permit.
- The money would come from UPDC cell tower funds, which the district council is using to share awareness of Parks & Recreation programming.

*Action: Parker moved that the board approve the Midway Peace Park proposal. Unanimous approval.*

**Transportation:** Co-chair Scott Berger described the traffic-calming forum at its August meeting; a PowerPoint was shared. / World Cleanup Day will be September 15, about noon to 2 p.m. Allianz is providing about 100 volunteers.

**West Summit Neighborhood Advisory Council (WSNAC):** UPDC representative Henry Parker thanked Amy Gage for her service to the neighborhood as director of neighborhood and community relations at St. Thomas.

**Neighbors United Funding Collaborative:** No report

**Communications Task Force:** The board has a month to peruse the extensive document and will vote on it at the October 2022 board meeting. The task force included Fee, Gage, Neal and Timberlake-Sullivan.

**Staff report:** Wako said everything is secured for the annual Ice Cream Peanut Butter & Jam fundraiser on September 17. We need more volunteers, especially for breakdown at the end of the event. / Wako led several orientations for new students at Macalester College, most of whom are not from Minnesota.

**Corrie/Treichel moved to adjourn the meeting at 8:15 p.m.**