

Union Park District Council
Board Meeting / December 7, 2022
Board President Sarah Dvorak
Notes: Submitted by Amy Gage

Members present: Scott Berger, Rachel Callanan, Sarah Dvorak, Dan Elenbaas, Ellen Fee, Kirsten Fryer, Amy Gage, Joe Hughes, Henry Parker, Allen Saunders, Demetrius Shaw, Kent Treichel, Claire Warren

Members absent: Bruce Corrie, April King, Harmony Neal

- Open seats: Grids 1, 2, 6, Macalester College and University of St. Thomas

Staff members: Abdulrahman Wako, director; Leah Timberlake-Sullivan, program manager

Sarah Dvorak, president, called the meeting to order at 7:30 p.m. She said new members will be seated this evening and will get a “new member” orientation.

- *Action:* XX/Berger moved to approve the agenda changes.

Seating new board members: Rachel Callanan, Grid 1; Amy Gage, nonprofit seat; Allen Saunders, Desnoyer Park; Demetrius Shaw, Skyline Towers are the board members being seated this evening. Claire Warren (Grid 4), Scott Berger (Grid 10) and Henry Parker (Grid 8) also are up for

- *Action:* Parker/Fryer move to seat the board members provisionally seated at the annual meeting in November. Unanimous approval.

Executive Director search: The executive committee will be the interview and hiring committee. Joe Hughes said he wants to give his full vote of confidence to Leah. She’s done a good job, and it would make for a smooth transition. She lives in the community, which is not a requirement, but Dvorak called it “extremely helpful.”

- Wako’s last day will be December 30, and he will stay on in an advisory capacity.
- Cover letters were not required, and Leah Timberlake-Sullivan was the only candidate who submitted one.

Board secretary: Dvorak said the board needs a secretary, who is part of the executive committee. That group will now meet Thursdays at 5 p.m. Fee expressed some interest but cannot meet at that time.

Committee reports and updates

CLUED: Land Use and Economic Development did not meet in November. The upcoming meeting will address the affordable housing project at 1619 Dayton, for which a conditional use permit was submitted.

Neighborhood Sustainability and Vitality: Co-chair Ellen Fee said the committee has designated money from the Cell Tower Funds for an ice sweeper for the Desnoyer Park ice rink. Saunders has purchased one for \$5,640, an increase from the \$4,000 the committee originally granted.

- Saunders said they worked with the city to get a John Deere X350 tractor with a cab and a 48-inch snowblower attachment that, long term, would meet a variety of needs. The Desnoyer Park board agreed to purchase a \$500 blade for the machine.
- The winter picnic and bonfire, with hot dogs, s'mores, hot chocolate and cider, will be Wednesday, December 28.

Action: Parker moved to approve the committee's recommendation. Unanimous approval.

Transportation: Co-chair Scott Berger said the meeting focused on the Allianz Field transportation management plan. Russ Stark, chief resilience officer; Ward 4 City Councilmember Mitra Jalali; and a representative from the St. Paul police all attended.

- Transit use is down significantly since the pandemic. Traffic lights are retimed during events to give cyclists and pedestrians more time to cross the busy streets.
- Traffic management extends only to I-94. They prioritize high-risk or high-volume intersections. There's a desire for patrons to stick around and patronize businesses.
- Hughes, who is involved with the Selby-Snelling Business Association, said game days don't provide a "huge windfall." Callanan asked if there are marketing opportunities for businesses inside the stadium itself. Transportation co-chair Lisa Nelson is in touch with Justin Borrell, a manager at the stadium.
- The joint meeting of Transportation Committees met today (December 7). Proposals included changes for Snelling Avenue by the Fairgrounds.

West Summit Neighborhood Advisory Council: Henry Parker said the University of St. Thomas has posted the director of neighborhood relations position that Amy Gage previously held.

Staff report: Wako said the month was slower, after the annual meeting. Intern Kingsley Hollon-Coleman is working on a holiday shopping guide. They'll also put out a restaurant guide for winter months. Staff will meet with Andy Rodriguez, director of the city's Parks and Recs department, to sift through past applications for Cell Tower Funds and potentially use past years' funds.

- He asked committee co-chairs to make time for their 2023 work plans and analyze what they got done in 2022.
- Staff will send an email to new board members for committee assignments.
- The city's community engagement coordinator, Cat Beltmann, is leaving the city; she was a liaison for the district council executive directors. And Sarah O'Brien is stepping away from the ED post at the Hamline-Midway Council. Wako works closely with her on the Neighbors United Funding Collaborative. <https://midwayunited.org/>
- Timberlake-Sullivan asked about whether we will resume in-person meetings.

Treichel/Parker moved to adjourn at 8:11 p.m.