

# Union Park District Council

## Board Meeting: minutes

August 3, 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), Ellen Fee (at-large), Kirsten Fryer (at-large), April King (Grid 5), 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)

**Members absent:** Dan Elenbaas (Grid 11), Allen Saunders (Desnoyer Park Improvement Association), Kent Treichel (Lexington-Hamline Community Council); open seats for Grids 1, 2, 3, 6, nonprofit, Skyline Towers and Macalester College

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

### Meeting

**Call to order:** Sarah Dvorak called the meeting to order at 7:09 p.m.

**Consent agenda:** Parker/Corrie moved to approve the August 2022 agenda and the June and July 2022 minutes. Passed unanimously.

### Committee Reports and Updates:

**Committee on Land Use & Economic Development (CLUED):** Co-chair Bruce Corrie said the committee supported 1185 Laurel for a garage variance. He also discussed a presentation from the Reimagine Midway committee, on which he and Gage serve as part of their Midway Chamber of Commerce board work. Corrie shot a video on various aspects of the Midway neighborhood, including assets such as Como Park. A class at Concordia University, where he teaches, gathered early-stage data.

- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HMulZyebUCA&feature=youtu.be>
- The group's goal of "shared prosperity" will emerge from meetings with district councils and other community groups. Wako emphasized the importance of green spaces and the environment, which draw communities together.
- Reimagine Midway wants to present to the UPDC board in September. How do UPDC members define a reimagining of the Midway? Will a member of UPDC join the Reimagine Midway committee?
- How is the group different from Neighbors United Funding Collaborative (NUFC)? The boundaries are larger, from I-280 to the State Capitol and from Larpenteur to Selby. How

do we tap into these diverse economic engines and resources, such as colleges, school systems and parks?

Reimagine Midway came about because Corrie saw business owners and others being reactive in a region that is “almost an economy in and of itself.” He wanted contributors to create a “people-centered economy.” The group has discussed how to think creatively about the Super Block (Allianz Field and the former Herberger’s site). CLUED co-chair Dean Cummings will lead a discussion about that.

- The group has spun out from the former Midway Chamber Foundation: <https://www.midwaychamber.com/>
- Who should we be talking to? What are priorities? From there, Reimagine Midway will come up with a game plan.
- Gage mentioned possible collaborations with the likes of Friends of the Mississippi River (<https://fmr.org/>) and Friends of the St. Paul and Ramsey County Parks and Trails (<https://friendsoftheparks.org/>).
- Midway Chamber Executive Director Chad Kulas and Tony Mendoza, board chair, will come to the UPDC board meeting in September.

**Neighborhood Sustainability and Vitality Committee:** Co-chair Ellen Fee said the group discussed the low- to zero-waste plan for Ice Cream Peanut Butter & Jam (ICPB&J). Last year we had no volunteers at the stations, “interrupting” people as they dispose of items. Gage and Warren both volunteered to help monitor the five stations. The committee will have an outreach table, and she encouraged other committees to do the same.

- Cleanup of the no-mow area at Merriam Park happened in July. New people showed up, not previously associated with UPDC. They may create a sign with a logo.
- The August 15 committee meeting will be at 7 p.m. at Midway Peace Park and discuss initiatives for the park. Cell tower funds are available.

**Transportation:** Co-chair Scott Berger described the July on-site meeting at Merriam Park Library, where B Line representative Cody Olsen spoke. The Bus Rapid Transit buses will be 60 feet. / The committee will host a Pedestrian Safety & Traffic Calming forum on Monday, August 8, 6:30 p.m. / Two of co-chair Lisa Nelson’s Capital Improvement Budget (CIB) proposals were funded: bike racks at parks and an improved crossing at the northern terminus of Ayd Mill Road. It currently has site-line issues and a “complex system” that confuses bikers.

- Nelson now would prefer the city examine the crossing to Midway Peace Park, especially for children who live at Skyline Tower. The mayor’s capital budget is due in mid-August. Berger shared a letter from the committee co-chairs, proposing that CIB funds go to the Midway Peace Park project (\$65,000) instead of Ayd Mill Road (\$75,000). Nelson authored both proposals. Both are in Ward 1.

*Action: Parker/Fryer moved to approve the letter. Approved unanimously.*

**West Summit Neighborhood Advisory Council (WSNAC):** UPDC representative Henry Parker

said that WSNAC will meet via Zoom on Tuesday, August 9, 6:30 p.m. The agenda includes a look at the Summit Avenue Regional Master Trail Plan (<https://engagestpaul.org/summit>), the D1 athletic facilities that the University of St. Thomas seeks to build (baseball, hockey, softball), and a housing task force that will examine the relevance, merits and drawbacks of the Student Housing Overlay District a decade into its existence:

<https://www.stpaul.gov/departments/safety-inspections/rent-buy-sell-property/maintaining-your-property/one-and-two-family>

**Neighbors United Funding Collaborative and Communications Task Force:** No reports.

**Staff report:** Wako reported on the significant activities underway for the annual Ice Cream Peanut Butter & Jam fundraiser on September 17. Food trucks, two bands, sponsors and exhibitors are falling into place. Board members will need to volunteer.

- He urged people to check out the Mississippi River tours of the proposed changes to the lock and dams, which he said is akin to the scale of the Rethink I-94 project.  
<https://fmr.org/lock-focus-group-tours>
- The UPDC 2022 contract with the city has been ratified.
- UPDC does not have a table at Little Africa this year, but Wako encouraged board members to attend the event on Sunday, August 7: <http://littleafricafest.com/>
- Wako will do a new-student orientation at Macalester College about neighborhood organizing on issues like affordable housing.
- He suggested that UPDC sponsor a cleanup at I-94 by the Aldine Bridge? The property is owned by the Minnesota Department of Transportation (MnDOT).

**Fryer/Fee moved to adjourn the meeting at 8:37 p.m.**