**UNION PARK DISTRICT COUNCIL**

**MINUTES**

**Meeting of the Board of Directors**

**Wednesday, April 3, 2024, 7:00-9:00pm**

Held on Zoom

Submitted by Kirsten Fryer, UPDC Secretary

**Members present:**

Rachel Callanan (Grid 3)

April King (Grid 5)

Sarah Dvorak (Grid 7)

Dean Cummings (Grid 9)

Scott Berger (Grid 10)

Kirsten Fryer (At Large)

Ellen Fee (At Large)

Demetrius Shaw (Skyline Tower)

Kent Treichel (Lexington-Hamline Community Council)

Allen Saunders (Desnoyer Park Improvement Association)

Lisa Mueller (Macalester College)

**Staff present:** Leah Timberlake Sullivan (Executive Director)

**Guests present:**

Carolyn Wolf—United Village

Scott Cocharan—Local Rumor

Chris Durfee—neighbor to United Village

Jane McClure—The Villager

Robert’s OtterPilot

Mark Marrow, CLUED co-chair

Patty Lammers—SPPD

**Members absent:**

Claire Warren (Grid 4)

Henry Parker (Grid 8)

Dan Elenbaas (Grid 11)

Joe Hughes (At Large Business)

Bruce Corrie (Concordia University)

Jerome Benner (University of St. Thomas)

**Open Seats:**

Grid 1

Grid 2

Grid 6

At-Large Non-Profit

Sarah Dvorak called the meeting to order with a welcome and Happy Earth month greeting.

Scott Berger moved, April King seconded to approve the agenda and March minutes.

**Patty Lammers, SPPD Annual Crime Report**

Sarah Dvorak welcomed Patty Lammers, Saint Paul Police Department Crime Prevention Coordinator to give the SPPD Annual Crime Report. Highlights included:

Western is the largest district—Frogtown-Minneapolis; Highland-Roseville. UPDC encompasses grids 102-104, 122-124. Decreases across the board between 2022 and 2023. Criminal damages, drugs, domestics, burglary, and assaults. Criminal damage went up a little bit, but significant reduction in weapons discharges. The perception was that we were seeing more crime, but statistically, it did go down across the city in 2023.

Auto theft—increased education for residents—increased reporting. Gave out anti-theft devices and manufacturer recalls/security upgrades.

Burglary—increased education for residents, redistribution of investigators back into the individual districts. 7 full time investigators now in Western district (v. 1 in 2022). A major arrest in 2023 saw a 40% drop in burglaries from arresting one individual. Recovered hundreds of stolen items (including many high end items).

Assaults/Weapons—ASPIRE—part of gangs/guns—disrupt gunfire before it happens, in afternoon and late night shifts, looking for would be/could be shooters/victims. Many are juveniles (12-early 20’s)—going to intervene. Working with office of neighborhood safety for early intervention and disruption. Non-fatal gun shot unit, homicide has a 90% solve rate; non-fatal had a 30% rate. Now treating every non-fatal gun shot like a homicide—full forensic team, search warents, etc. Seeing a lot of success. Using Colorado as a model. Hoping to get shootings solve rate up to 80%. It is a small percentage of the population that uses and carries guns.

What’s next:

Copper Wire theft—$1.2 million of damages across the city. Most of the major parks and a lot of the residential streets have been affected. Task force of investigators from across the districts. 19 arrests. County attorneys office has charged as felonies. Daylighting keeps wires live at all times. New lights have access panels further up on the pole. Senate and House have bills around copper wire theft—prove ownership, licensure to sell the wire. Metal dealers/scrappers/police departments.

Drugs on University & Snelling — new officers assigned specifically to University and Snelling. Trying to prey on people in recovery. Working with owners of buildings around there. Aggressive solicitors, HART team addressed families. Human trafficking is looking at this area because we know that individuals are working for someone else

Western District Monthly meetings 3rd Tuesday of each month at 9:00 am and 6:00 pm at the Western District.

Questions:

Speeding—

Traffic enforcement unit was dissolved. Driving patterns changed significantly during Covid. Out of control speeding on residential streets and freeways. Statewide. Most departments are down 30-40%, SPPD is down 20%. Partially replaced with TZD—state grant, officers work overtime shifts. Email Patty about problem areas. Seat belts, distracted driving. Most of the pull-overs are education. Can file online reports with license plate, and a letter will be sent.

Green Line/Working with Metro Transit

SPPD does not respond on the Green Line or platforms, but works closely with Metro Transit Police. A lot of complaints at community meetings are related to Metro Transit, specially related to drug use.

SPPD was behind on misdemeanor crimes during COVID. There were some people with 7-8 cases. Taking gun crimes very seriously.

Specifically around domestic violence, if you’re not sure, call 911. Officers are trained with a domestic violence models. SIP trains property managers and owners can recognize signs of domestic violence.

Patty will double check on the grids to make sure that all of UPDC was covered with the statistics.

**Committee reports and updates**

* Land Use & Economic Development (CLUED)
  + Local Rumor (Blue Door Space) – Class N License request

Scott Cochran looking to open Local Rumor in the old Blue Door Space. Scott is a Union Park resident. Has wanted to open something in that space since he moved into the neighborhood about 2 years ago. Menu will be new American comfort food, with local breweries on tap, N/A, and craft cocktails. Planning to be open 7 days, no later than midnight. Weekday hours will likely be 10:00 pm, 9:00 pm on Sundays. Liquor license is until midnight. Capacity will be approximately 50-60 seats. No major remodel/reconstruction. Goal is to open by June 1, depending on liquor license. Would enforce ordinance no smoking ordinance (20-30 feet from entrance). Will look into bike parking (Leah spoke to UPDC support for bike racks).

Dean Cummings moved Union Park District Council write a letter of support for the Class N liquor license for Local Rumor. April King seconded. Approved unanimously.

* + United Village Update and Variance Requests and Appeals (Carolyn Wolf to represent United Village)
    - Variance requests: Appeal of the variance specific to the hotel block

Exec board supports, contingent that the full board could not discuss.

Hotel, with structured parking running along Simpson. Proposed drive lane (and appeal on April 10). Drive lane runs parallel to University to accommodate Metro Transit transformer. Staff report & zoning, approved. Planning commission rejected. Review with City Council on April 10. CLUED supports a front entrance on University to encourage economic engagement with University businesses.

Dean Cummings moved to write a letter of support for the variance appeal. Scott Berger seconded. Approved unanimously.

* + - Variance requests: Office Building and Food Pavilion.

Block B2 and interim surface parking for B1, 4 variances for restaurant pavilion in F1.

Variances for interim parking—

1. related to 60 feet of total lineage (300 feet). Does not meet zoning code.

2. Set back—should have 6 feet from the building itself

3. Landscaping—zoning code requires permanent, decorative fence, additional landscaping—reinstating that this is an interim lot, so asking for variance associated with permanent fixtures

CLUED voted to approve these variances, with modifier that this is a temporary variance support—5 years is the length of the interim permit.

Dean Cummings moved to support these variance requests. Allen Sanders seconded. Motion passed with 5 ayes and 3 abstentions.

-Four variance requests related to the Food Pavilion

-Primary entrance: zoning requires street grid entrance, this proposal is pedestrian

-Window openings on North building north and east, and on south building

East elevations do not meet opening requirements—due to intent for local artist to create artwork that flows between buildings

CLUED supported the entrance variance and glazing. Concern was about east facing solid wall.

Dean Cummings moved per CLUED recommendation—support 1, oppose 2-4. No second needed, as it came from committee. Passed unanimously.

* + 1984 Marshall Ave
    - Rezoning Request (RM1 To RM2) was denied by Zoning and the Planning Committee. The item now goes in front of City Council on April 17. At that meeting, Councilmembers will vote to either reconsider the Planning Commission’s decision or deny the application.

Student occupied house on the SW corner of Marshall and Moore. Currently Zoned RM1. New owner would like to rezone property to RM2 to put in 7 townhomes, oriented towards Moore. Recommendation at zoning committee was to deny change. Planning commission voted 12-2 to deny change. Owner is appealing to City Council, whether to accept recommendation of planning commission. CLUED vote was 6-4 to recommend the zoning change. Variance requests were rejected in 2017, zoning study from River to Hamline in 2018 included 27 meetings with public input and it was determined that RM1 is the proper zoning for that corner. Dean’s recommendation is to not approve it, though motion will come from committee to change from RM1 to RM2. No plans were provided until after the committee meeting. 7 letters of opposition to RM2 were received, but several were supportive of RM1 with variance. City failed to make a proper public announcement about the zoning request.

Dean Cummings moved to oppose the request. Rachel Callanan seconded. The motion passed with 7 ayes and 2 nays.

* Neighborhood Sustainability & Vitality Committee (NSVC)

Per NSVC recommendation, Dean Cummings moved to approve the Cell Tower requests for first rung of park improvement funds from the Cell Tower for legacy events: Ice Cream Peanut Butter & Jam ($4000), Desnoyer Park Picnic ($3500) and Desnoyer Park Fire & Ice ($600). Motion passed unanimously.

Ellen Fee noted that applications for micro-grants are open now.

* Transportation

April King highlighted the city-wide walkability study spearheaded by the MacGroveland Community Council available at <https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSeaIu8roe8R-fMwztkCoIwH5hd_DnP_IXZoHOvlaRO2scxRIw/viewform>

April King also noted that the City of St. Paul successfully petitioned MnDOT for variance on Concordia to convert from 2 lanes to 1 with a bike lane. Further noted were the ongoing discussions and conversations around Re-Imagining I-94

**Staff Report**

Leah Timberlake Sullivan will email the staff report, given the time. She noted that UPDC is moving offices to share space at the Spruce Tree building with Hamline Midway Coalition and Midway Chamber of Commerce. The move will start on April 15, with the office at the Griggs Building vacated by May 1. She welcomes help moving, particularly from anyone with a large vehicle!

Moving to Spruce Tree—we need help moving! Anyone with a truck is Move starts April 15. We will be vacated from Griggs Space by May 1.

**Adjourn**

April King moved to adjourn at 9:04 pm. Rachel Callanan seconded. Approved unanimously.

Next meeting will be on May 1 at 7:00 pm.