

Union Park District Council Board Meeting: minutes

April 6, 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 (9): Sarah Dvorak (Grid 7), presiding. Scott Berger (Grid 10), April King (Grid 5), Henry Parker (Grid 8), Claire Warren (Grid 4); plus, Bruce Corrie (Concordia University), Amy Gage (University of St. Thomas), Gregg Gridley (Desnoyer Park Improvement Association), Kent Treichel (Lexington-Hamline Community Council)

Members absent: Dan Elenbaas (Grid 11), Ellen Fee (at-large), Kirsten Fryer (at-large), Joe Hughes (business), Harmony Neal (Grid 9); open seats for Grids 1, 2, 3, 6, nonprofit, Skyline Towers and Macalester College

Staff: Abdulrahman Wako, executive director; Leah Timberlake Sullivan, program manager; Jonah Wexler, intern (Macalester College)

Meeting

Call to Order and Welcome: Sarah Dvorak called the meeting to order at 7:03 p.m.

Consent Agenda: Warren/Treichel moved to approve the April agenda and the March board minutes. Unanimous approval.

Climate Change Emergency spreadsheet: We'll host two speakers at the May 6 board meeting. Leah has put together a spreadsheet with ideas for proposed actions and reflection. The intent is to start broad, at the city level, and then go granular.

- The climate crisis should be part of committee workplans.
- This won't be a yearlong process but an effort to get actions going now.

Yum Doodle poll: The Executive Committee has organized a social outing for the board at Yum! on Snelling and Selby. The event will be Tuesday, April 26, 6-8 p.m. Dvorak is donating her gift card so the per-person cost will be lower.

Board meetings: Do we want to return to in-person meetings? Zoom meetings can be more inclusive and accessible; they're more efficient, due to less driving or commuting. We could meet in person once a quarter, for the team building and camaraderie. But is the pandemic going to stay away? The board will revisit the decision in two or three months.

Committee Reports and Updates:

Committee on Land Use & Economic Development (CLUED): Co-chair Corrie said CLUED

revisited the decision about the property on Selby, east of Fairview. Some neighbors brought detailed concepts. DSI told Wako the developer and neighbors are in conversation. The developer offered to go from five floors to four in exchange for support of the project, but agreement has not been reached. Corrie will do a reality check with neighbors.

- The city has a financial resource for more affordable housing units in projects; the money is available for only a fixed time.
- Wouldn't the climate emergency support having as many units as possible? Height will be an increasing issue, said Corrie.

Neighborhood Involvement Committee (NIC) and Environment & Parks: Co-chair Gridley said the group reviewed its workplan at its first combined meeting. The group will meet the third Tuesday of the month from 7 to 8:30 p.m. The committee will be busy with microgrant applications and will get an update about Cooperative Plating and its emissions.

<https://www.coopplating.com/>

Transportation: Co-chair Berger reported on a joint District Council transportation meeting that he and co-chair Lisa Nelson, Timberlake-Sullivan and committee member Debbie Meister attended. The UPDC district has far more transportation issues than some of its peer councils.

At the last committee meeting, the group got updates on:

- Snow blocking bike lanes in the winter.
- Vehicles making incursions onto the trail or pedestrian areas on Ayd Mill Road.
- The Summit Avenue Regional Trail is seeking federal funds that would mandate a raised bicycle or multi-use trail.
- Starbucks at Snelling and Marshall is converting to a bike- and walk-up window, and the company is piloting a recharging network elsewhere in the country.
- Presenters from Move Minnesota talked about Boost the Bus, an initiative to get priority signaling for buses. It would cost \$4 million to re-time lights.
- Snow Emergencies average 4-7 per year and each costs the city \$400,000 to \$800,000.
- The meeting April 11 will focus on I-94 renovations.

West Summit Neighborhood Advisory Council (WSNAC): Parker, a UPDC rep to WSNAC, said the group will meet again on April 12, 6:30 p.m.

Neighbors United Funding Collaborative (NUFC): April King will attend the next meeting, as a UPDC rep. Wako said the group has less than \$50,000 left to allocate to businesses.

Communications Task Force: Timberlake-Sullivan has submitted a first revision of a "dense document." She made a detailed Table of Contents, which makes the document more accessible. At some point, the board will need to review the entire document.

- Wako suggested that UPDC puts its bylaws and other documents through a similarly

thoughtful process.

Staff report: Community engagements and events are getting in the calendar. The Merriam Park recreation center has a new manager, who met with Wako to review cell tower funds and Ice Cream Peanut Butter & Jam. We have a summer intern from St. Olaf College, and we'll get two interns from the city. Jonah Wexler from Macalester College has only one month left.

- UPDC will collaborate with the Lexington-Hamline Community Council on the Citywide Cleanup on Saturday, April 23; the meeting point will be Midway Peace Park.

<https://www.stpaul.gov/departments/parks-and-recreation/natural-resources/volunteer-resources/citywide-spring-cleanup>

- The Vendor Opportunity program asks us to look for local vendors first.
- The city is looking for comments on Rent Stabilization, and commentary closes on April 22:

<https://www.stpaul.gov/departments/safety-inspections/rent-buy-sell-property/rent-stabilization>

Other items: Berger said the 2016 community plan needs work, and he urged board members to review it. Dvorak reminded the board that a historical study of Merriam Park was going on at the time, and many homeowners were worried about rezoning taking historic homes.

- Warren asked if UPDC could add an addendum to it, emphasizing our work with the Equity Development Scorecard. Ten years is a long time between reports. Parker said that could be submitted to the City Council for approval.
- Gage noted that many current neighbors, including a former board president, worked hard on the 2016 community plan and she hoped that the current board would not disparage it based on contemporary insights and conditions.

[Union Park District Plan 2016.pdf \(stpaul.gov\)](#)

Gridley/Berger moved to adjourn at 8:27 p.m.

Next meeting: Wednesday, May 4, 2022 | 7–9 p.m. | ZOOM