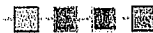




Urbana Park District



AGENDA
URBANA PARK DISTRICT ADVISORY COMMITTEE (UPDAC)
TUESDAY, MAY 24, 2011
7:00 P.M.
ANITA PURVES NATURE CENTER
1505 N. BROADWAY
URBANA, ILLINOIS 61801

- I. Awards and Recognition (6:30 pm)
- II. Call to Order – Regular Meeting (7:00 pm)
- III. Introductions – Welcome to New UPDAC Members
- IV. Approval of Minutes of the April 26, 2011 Meeting
- V. Reports
 - A. Chair
 - B. Director
 - C. Board Representative
- VI. New and Unfinished Business
 - A. Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats (SWOT) Activity Led by staff
- VII. What Can UPDAC Do
- VIII. Comments
- IX. Adjourn

*****This month's secretary is Ellen Kirsanoff*****

PLEASE NOTE: 6:15 p.m. Reception for Outgoing UPDAC Members and other Community Members

Urbana Park District Advisory Committee

Tuesday, April 26, 2011

Minutes

Attending: Deb Aronson, Maria Capps, Neal Gibbens, Kristen Hansen, Carl Larson, Scott Santeler, Mark Sweeney, Gary Wszalek, Nancy Delcomyn, Tim Bartlett, Corky Emberson, Vicki Mayes, Ellen Kirsanoff, Dawn Schaefer, Gary Bernstein.

The meeting was called to order by Deb A. at 7:05 pm.

Introductions were made around the room.

The minutes of the February 22nd, 2011 UPDAC meeting were reviewed and approved with no additions or corrections. There was no March meeting due to Spring Break.

Reports :

Deb A. gave her chairs report. She reminded folks that we received a mandate from our community to build a pool! Now we have the hard task of building something special that we can all be proud of. She asked Vicki to inform all about the King park properties being added to the park.

Vicki, during her director's report, told everyone that 2 new properties were added (fronting Lincoln Ave.), both bought by the city, house demolished, and leased to the park district for \$1 per year. Vicki also reviewed the TIF projects that are slated to happen in King Park this year. She reviewed other property purchases made in recent years, adding park land to both Crystal Lake Park and Victory Park.

Nancy D., during her Board Representatives report, thanks UDPAC for their support and help with all the work on the referendum. It made the difference between passage and not. Bonds for the Pool will be sold on May 10th. This is due to the ground work done prior to the referendum. EAB (Emerald Ash Borer) tree work continues to be done by staff in all the parks. She suggested folks drive by the new Kerr St facility to see the progress being made there. She thinks the park will actually look better than it did before this improvement. She also talked about reviewing the strategic plan and looking at our new directions. Scott S. asked if the general public can purchase the bonds. Vicki said no, they need to be sold in a competitive bid process, this makes it very difficult for individuals to buy. Only large institutions can front the large pot of money to purchase large lots like this. They are usually sold to banks, who then resell them in small blocks/batches to investors. There was further discussion of the what occurs during a bond sale.

CUSR Presentation:

Dawn S. introduced herself and staff (who were not in attendance due to work/programs). She reviewed the mission and vision statements of CUSR for everyone.

Programs offered are diverse and they work hard to serve all ages and range of abilities through their programs. There are three other full time staff, 70 part time staff, and 80+ volunteers who gave more than 1,700 + hours to CUSR. New with this current full time staff – each new staff not only has TR (Therapeutic Recreation) degree, but they also have their CTRS (Certified Therapeutic Recreation Specialist) certification. TR (CUSR) staff may be invited to sit in on IEP (Individual Education Plan) meetings held at the schools. This is a great way to help clients transition from school to the community. CUSR programs can be a bridge for many that helps them make the change from youth to adult.

CUSR is trying to fill the gap that DSC can't fill right now. They (DSC) are not taking any new clients and have not for the last 1 and ½ years, and they have a waiting list of 220. This is due to state budget woes. CUSR also does a lot of Special Olympics sports.

New ADA has many changes that will require changes to facilities, programs and parks. Agencies will have a block of time that they can make changes to become compliant with the new law. Also, the CUSR board is very interested in expanding services for outside the C-U boundaries. Countywide, there is a high need for services.

Dawn also talked about the Challenger league that plays each summer at AMBUCS Park. Each participant gets a buddy who plays on the field with them and makes sure that they fully participate. It's a very popular program.

A Q and A period followed, with many questions about program offerings and how they are offered. Kristen specifically asked about programs for Deaf and Hearing Impaired.

What can UPDAC do/comments:

Mark S. had a comment about the UIAC Egg Hunt – At the Egg Hunt they had there recently, Peanut based prizes and candy was given out, and there were several kids there with peanut allergies. It was a potential problem. Corky said he would work with staff to be more careful when planning for the future. He also told UPDAC that all summer camps have worked hard to remove all peanut based snacks from the menu of what is served to campers. This change happened a few years ago, and seems to be working well.

Neal G. asked about the APNC roof and the leak problem. Tim explained the issue, how the new roof will solve the leak, and the timeline for the work being done.

Vicki updated the UPDAC on the Busey Woods Gateway Trail project – the work will be getting started soon. Watch for the improvements. Also, the Barn in Meadowbrook Park is coming along nicely.

Scott S. Asked what all the wood chips are that are in Carle Park. Tim explained that it's from the tree work done in the park last year, and will be used on the path in the park. He also asked about Patterson Parklett. Tim explained about the clean-up of overgrown vegetation and how the park will probably be re-designed as a part of the Boneyard re-development the City is planning. Nancy went on to explain that costs of upkeep prohibit making good use of small mini-parks. They are not cost effective to own or operate.

Neal G. asked what the next steps in the pool process will be. Tim briefly outlined timeline of design team working through the summer and fall to finalize concept, design and budget, then be able to go to bid in December or January.

Gary W. asked, if all designs to date were just concepts, who gets to choose the final one? Vicki said we will have public meetings to preview the final designs to residents. The overall concept will not change, just the specifics of various components will become more focused. Gary also asked if any analysis of the voting pattern will be done to see what that might mean as far as underserved, or misinformed, or poorer socio-economic levels.

Nancy relayed some conversations that she had with folks about the pool. One was that there should be a special rate only for Urbana residents. There followed some discussion of pool use fees and yearly pass rates.

Neal G. pointed out that expanding the lap swimming time @ UIAC has been great! User numbers are way up. Mark S. pointed out that his daughter was VERY disappointed that she didn't get swimming lessons in 3rd grade. Staff explained why the school cut back on that use of the pool. Vicki pointed out that the staff at the UIAC has become much more diverse in recent years. It truly now reflects the population of Urbana, with more minorities working there.

Carl L. asked staff "what is it that UPDAC can do now this year and focus on". He felt that having the pool/referendum issue gave UPDAC real purpose and a job to focus on. He feels UPDAC can truly help the UPD if they have something like this to work on. Staff explained that next month's meeting will be a focused SWOT analysis activity. This will help UPDAC and the staff to identify issues, or concerns, and help to establish a "scope of work" for the coming year.

The meeting adjourned at 8:53 pm.

Respectively submitted by Ellen Kirsanoff.



Urbana Park District

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Phone 217.367.1536 / Fax 217.367.1391 / www.urbanaparks.org



TO: UPDAC
FROM: VICKI MAYES
DATE: 5-19-2011
RE: DIRECTOR'S REPORT

PLAYGROUNDS

Playgrounds are an important component of public park and recreation facilities. National health statistics indicate that children are healthier if they live near a public park or playground. Playgrounds are complex to care for and to design.

This week, in an annual comprehensive evaluation of every UPD playground, Wheatfield Park playground was found to have become unsafe and it was removed. Temporary equipment will be installed soon. Wheatfield was a wood playground and the major structural support components were treated wood, anchored and buried in the ground. Then in the summer of 2012, UPD staff will begin working with the Wheatfield Park neighborhood to plan a new playground. It is the practice of the UPD to engage neighborhoods and children in the playground planning process. This makes each playground unique and interesting. Urbana is small enough that it is easy for a family to take their children to experience many different playground environments.

Since 2006, UPD has replaced one playground a year. The useful life of a metal playground is 15-20 years. The useful life of a wood playground is less. Metal has much lower annual maintenance costs than wood. PrairiePlay was opened in 1994. UPD expects to begin planning the replacement of PrairiePlay by 2014 or earlier. Establishing a cycle that replaces one playground per year, will enable the district to maintain the safety and quality of its playgrounds.

The cost of a typical playground such as what you see in King, Victory, Crestview, South Ridge Parks is between \$75,000-\$90,000 for the equipment, accessible safety surfacing, drainage, accessible pathway to the equipment, and any landscaping such as trees, trash cans and benches. Installation is not included in this. The Carle Park neighborhood wanted to add the web-climber and raised \$22,000 in donations to add this to the playground. A certain percentage of each playground must be considered accessible and there must be an accessible pathway to the playground. UPD staff install most neighborhood park playgrounds and it takes between 8 and 12 weeks to complete. Equipment and materials for a playground in a signature park such as Meadowbrook will be about \$150,000-\$200,000. It is like that a contractor would be hired to install a large playground which would be an additional expense.

The district has 11 playgrounds. There are 4 parks that do not have playgrounds yet but need to have playgrounds added because of the neighborhoods adjacent to them. Parks that need playgrounds are Chief Shemauger, Perkins Road/Judge Webber, Lohmann and Weaver Parks. Most of the new playgrounds have been designed with a neighborhood group.

- Playgrounds that have been replaced include: King Park, Victory Park, Crestview Park, Carle Park and South Ridge Park.
- Playgrounds that have had temporary equipment installed that meet safety guidelines include: Blair Park, Wheatfield Park and Sunnycrest Tot. Each of these playgrounds is scheduled for a playground replacement in the next 5 years.
- The playground in Crystal Lake Park near the large pavilion has had features added. The old, unsafe playground pieces that were in the center of Crystal Lake Park were removed about 5 years ago and not replaced.
- PrairiePlay at Meadowbrook Park will need to be replaced in the next 4 years.
- District staff are currently working with the AMBUCS Club to design and replace the playground at AMBUCS Park.

Until recently, most school playgrounds were open to the public. With growing concerns about school safety, more and more school playgrounds are no longer open to the general public even when school is not in session because more school grounds are being fenced.

What makes a good playground?

Playgrounds should be rich in choices and should provide a variety of experiences that encourage exploration. In designing playgrounds this is what UPD staff consider. One UPD staff person is a Certified Playground Safety Inspector and two are certified in playground construction.

Protection from hazards

- Is it in a fenced or protected area? Is it an area that is free of equipment hazards?
- Does the surface of the playground provide impact-absorbing materials to protect from falls?
- Is the area clean and free of environmental hazards?
- Is it an area without major physical barriers that impair supervision?
- Is there an established inspection process for the playground to keep it in a safe condition? This inspection process should be annually, seasonally, weekly and daily.

Play environment

- Are there sunny areas that provide healthy conditions for example to aid the body in use and production of vitamins C and D. Are there shady areas to protect children from the sun?
- Can children use the playground in a variety of weather conditions? Children should be out of doors as often as possible and experience different weather.
- Is it possible to have interaction with parents or others caring for the child that supports but does not interrupt the child's play?
- Is there access for children with disabilities?

- Does the playground provide for an opportunity for children to make noise?
- Does the environment offer experiences with natural materials and elements – grass, trees, leaves, flowers, bugs, butterflies, birds, etc.?
- Is there an opportunity to listen to the sounds of the natural and built environment?

Freedom of choice

- Does the playground provide freedom of choice for the activities that children want to do?
- Can children choose their playmates? This allows children the opportunity to work out rules of social order, cooperation and conflict resolution.
- Is the playground design such that it provides sustained play time for socio-dramatic and constructive play?
- Are there private places? Children need the opportunity to have privacy and quiet in group situations.
- Is there open space for running and big movement, for organized games? A general rule is that the playground should be adjacent to an open space area for running and organized games.
- Does the playground encourage sensory play, dramatic play, quiet play, exuberant play?

Gross motor activity

- Gross motor activity is very important to the physical, intellectual and emotional development of the child.
- These are activities that encourage gross motor activity: climbing, crawling, rocking, rotating, sliding, swinging, riding, balancing, bouncing, gymnastics, hanging, gliding, scrambling.

National safety guidelines

The National Consumer Product Safety Commission (NCPSC) provides guidelines for playground safety that are followed by the Urbana Park District. In addition the American Society for Testing and Materials (ASTM) and International Playground Equipment Manufacturers Association (IPEMA) have developed standards for manufacture and performance.

Safety guidelines:

- Resilient protective surfacing to cushion falls. Over 79% of accidents on playgrounds are from children falling. UPD uses a manufactured wood product that is designed to cushion falls from a variety of heights including the 19' height of the climber in Carle Park. The surface must be maintained at a depth of 12', be free of standing water and be free of debris. They must also not become compacted. The manufactured wood fiber is designed so that the pieces bind to each other which creates an accessible surface.
- Adequate use zones. A use zone is the area under and around the playground equipment where a child might fall against equipment or be hit by moving equipment. Typically the use zone is 6' from the equipment. The entire use zone must be covered with safety surfacing. Special areas for protection include the bottoms of slides and swings.
- Elimination of safety hazards. These include protrusion and entanglement hazards, entrapment in openings, proper spacing of equipment, tripping hazards, pinch, crush,

shearing and sharp edge hazards, guardrails on platforms, equipment found to be not suitable for a public playground.