

**URBANA PARK DISTRICT BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
MINUTES - SPECIAL BOARD MEETING
SATURDAY, APRIL 5, 2025
9:00 AM
HEALTH AND WELLNESS CENTER
2002 E. WASHINGTON ST.
URBANA, IL 61802**

A special meeting of the Urbana Park District Board of Commissioners was held on Saturday, April 5, 2025 at the Health and Wellness Center, 2002 E. Washington St., Urbana, IL at 9:00 a.m. The notice and agenda of the meeting were posted at the park district administrative office and at the location of the meeting. Copies of the notice and agenda were received by each commissioner of the district and by local newspapers, radio, and television stations at least forty-eight hours before the meeting in compliance with the Open Meetings Act of the State of Illinois. A copy of the notice and agenda is attached to the minutes. Also available for inspection are all documents that were reviewed or approved at the meeting.

COMMISSIONERS	PRESENT	ABSENT
President Michael Walker	X	
Vice-President Cedric Stratton	X	
Commissioner Laura Hastings	X	
Commissioner Roger Digges	X	
Commissioner Meredith Blumthal	X	

Also present were Tim Bartlett, Executive Director;
Corky Emberson, Superintendent of Recreation;
Laura Orcutt, Superintendent of Business Services;
Derek Liebert, Superintendent of Planning and Operations;
Sarah Roper, Commissioner-elect;
Ashley Withers, Commissioner-elect;
and Allison Jones served as Recorder.

1. WELCOME & CALL TO ORDER

President Walker called the meeting to order at 9:30 AM.

a. Remote Attendance

There was no remote attendance requested.

2. ACCEPT AGENDA

COMMISSIONER HASTINGS MADE A MOTION WITH A SECOND BY COMMISSIONER DIGGES TO ACCEPT THE AGENDA AS PRESENTED. A ROLL CALL VOTE WAS TAKEN, ALL SAID "AYE."

3. PUBLIC COMMENT

There were no comments from members of the public.

4. INTRODUCTIONS AND WARM UP

Board, staff, and attendees introduced themselves.

5. PLAN FOR THE MORNING

Director Bartlett stated that the goal for the workshop is to transfer knowledge, information, and advice to the newly elected Commissioners to help prepare them for the upcoming duties, as well as to continue to build staff and Board relationships.

President Walker stated that being on the Board is a great opportunity for service and recommends finding agreement among Board members whenever possible, as well as each person speaking their mind.

6. BEING A UPD COMMISSIONER...

a. UPDs Role in the Community

Director Bartlett reviewed the history of Illinois' taxing districts and noted that UPD's share of local tax dollars is just under 10%. He stated that this system lends professionalism and accountability to the work and that districts run many different unique facilities.

b. Commissioner's Role – Sharing from other Commissioners

Board and staff discussed strategies for decision making while remaining focused on the district's goals and focusing on inclusion.

c. Non-partisan role

Director Bartlett emphasized that Commissioners remain as non-partisan as possible in public dealings. Commissioner Blumthal noted that UPD has to work with local, state, and national legislators from all parties.

d. Avoiding Conflicts of Interest

Commissioner Blumthal noted that Commissioners should stay cognizant that FOIA and Open Meetings Act applies to UPD communications and meetings.

e. Annual Calendar – Meeting Schedules

Director Bartlett noted that the district keeps a list of regular Board meetings, Study Sessions, UPDAC meetings, and Urbana Parks Foundation Board meetings that is a useful guide.

f. Annual Calendar of Actions

Director Bartlett stated that the district also maintains a list of Annual Actions to be taken for operational purposes.

g. Serving on Study Groups: UPF Liaison, Finance, UPDAC, Policy

Laura Orcutt noted that Study Group appointments are done annually in May and President Walker commented that there cannot be more than two Board members per group in order to remain in compliance with the Open Meetings Act.

h. Working with CUSR

Director Bartlett stated that CUSR is a joint program with the Champaign Park District,

funded through both Districts.

i. Working with the Public

President Walker noted that public meetings can often get intense and suggests being opening to listening to all perspectives and referring additional questions to staff as needed.

j. Working with the Media

Director Bartlett recommended referring media inquiries to staff.

k. Working with UPDAC

l. Working with UPF

Director Bartlett noted that the UPD and UPF have a great relationship and that the UPF is constantly growing and changing with new Board Members.

m. Working with NAC

n. Working with Urbana Units of Government: City, Library, Schools, Township, others...

Director Bartlett commented on the importance of the relationship with these key agencies and the goal of maintaining a positive working relationship.

o. Required Board Trainings: FOIA, OMA

Director Bartlett highlighted the importance of compliance with OMA and FOIA.

President Walker commented that Board members should feel free to discuss UPD business with each other outside of Board meetings, but only one at a time. He noted that more than 2 Board members gathering and discussing UPD business is considered a public meeting and would need to be treated as such.

Laura Orcutt stated that new Board members must attend an OMA training within 30 days of taking office, and that while FOIA training is optional, it can also be useful information to know. She also asked Board to please forward any completion certificates or email receipts for trainings to the district for record keeping purposes.

p. Optional Board Trainings – IAPD Boot Camp, IAPD Conference/Programs/Master Commissioner

q. Statement of Economic Interest – Champaign County

Staff noted this must be completed by all Board each calendar year.

r. Other Related topics/Discussion...

7. UPD FINANCIAL PLANNING

a. Annual Goals

Director Bartlett stated that the UPD works to achieve a clean audit and the GFOA award annually.

- b. Annual Budget
Corky Emberson and Laura Orcutt reviewed the annual budget process and timeline. They also noted that the budget is influenced by Strategic Plans, fund balance, the levy, and Capital projects.
- c. Annual Wage/Benefits/Health Insurance*
Director Bartlett stated that in light of the impending closing of Health Alliance, insurance coverage through UPD will be changing.
- d. Financial Calendar
 - i. Levy
 - ii. Audit
 - iii. Capital Budget
 - iv. Other

8. UPD COMPREHENSIVE PLANNING

- a. Strategic Plan
Derek Liebert noted that the current UPD Strategic Plan centers on 4 pillars: You Belong Here, Placemaking, Health & Wellness, and Trails & Connectivity. Staff commented that evaluation and adjustment of the pillars would be needed in the next Strategic Plan.
- b. CARES – Climate Action Plan
Staff stated that the CARES Plan could potentially become a pillar of the Strategic Plan.
- c. UPF
- d. Capital Development Budget
Staff noted that comprehensive planning for Capital Projects typically includes one larger project per year, including regular playground replacement.
- e. ADA Plan
Derek Liebert commented that UPD is looking for a new consultant for the next ADA Transition Plan, to evaluate both the built environment as well as policies and programs.
- f. Park and Facility Master Planning
Derek Liebert stated that UPD conducts Master Plans for each individual park, which involves a lot of community input. He noted that Victory Park is the next on the schedule for an updated Master Plan.
- g. Other...
Board and staff discussed planning and agreed that *You Belong Here* should be elevated beyond a pillar of the Strategic Plan and that the UPD mission/vision could be updated to include a greater focus on inclusion.

9. AFFILIATED GROUPS/ROLES - for staff and Commissioners

- a. IAPD – Elected Officials
Staff noted that IAPD offers trainings, education, and legislative efforts on behalf of

Illinois parks, as well as multiple committees and opportunities for engagement.

- b. IPRA – Professional Staff
Staff and Board regularly attend the annual conference held by IAPD/IPRA.
- c. IPARKS – Risk Management Provider
- d. NRPA – both
Staff noted that the NRPA hosts a national conference annually.
- e. Other...
Central Illinois Recreation Council for Leisure Exposure.

10. STATE OF THE UPD

- a. Discussion on Current Status
Staff noted that overall, the district is financially stable and is providing important community services to the area.
- b. Challenges/Opportunities: Transitions in Admin, Rec, Planning/Operations
Board and staff discussed financial and policy changes occurring at the national level and the downward impact on local agencies and the Champaign-Urbana community as a whole.
- c. Big Moves – Current
Director Bartlett reviewed larger projects on the horizon that UPD will need to plan for and begin work on, including the following:
 - i. HAWC – Future Phases – Outdoor Recreation Development
 - ii. Weaver – Prairie Parks – Master Planning
 - iii. KRT
 - iv. King Park
 - v. Crystal Lake Park
 - vi. Saline Greenway – future
 - vii. Perkins Road Park Site – future
Director Bartlett commented on the desire to open the Perkins Road site to the public, but also ensuring UPD has the resources to care for the site properly.
 - viii. Other...
Staff reviewed upcoming major/long-term projects, including renovations at the Lake House, bridges, land acquisition, premiere event opportunities, and developing additional trail networks.

11. GENERAL DISCUSSION/SHARING

President Walker invited the newly elected Board members to ask question and share their thoughts and concerns.

Ashley Withers commented on wanting to learn more about the financial aspects of the district and that her experience on UPDAC has been helpful.

Sarah Roper stated that many of her questions were answered during the meeting and she is also glad to see the *You Belong Here* efforts remain front and center for the district.

Director Bartlett and Derek Liebert commented on maintaining relationships with legislators at the local, state, and national levels and keeping focus on projects and economic development opportunities.

12. ADJOURN

President Walker adjourned the meeting at 12:27 PM.

Cedric Stratton, Vice President

Timothy A. Bartlett, Secretary

(Seal)

Date Approved: June 10, 2025