URBANA PARK DISTRICT BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
MINUTES - SPECIAL BOARD MEETING
MONDAY, AUGUST 31, 2026
6:00 PM
PLANNING & OPERATIONS FACILITY
1011 E. KERR AVENUE
URBANA, IL 61801

A special meeting of the Urbana Park District Board of Commissioners was held on Monday, August 31, 2026, at the Planning and Operations Facility, 1011 E. Kerr Avenue, Urbana, IL at 6:00 p.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. UPTV taped the meeting for future airing.

COMMISSIONERS	PRESENT	ABSENT
President Cedric Stratton	X	
Vice-President Meredith Blumthal	X	
Commissioner Laura Hastings		X
Commissioner Sarah Roper	X	

Also present were Rachel Lenz, Executive Director;
Laura Orcutt, Superintendent of Business Services;
Corky Emberson, Superintendent of Recreation;
Derek Liebert, Superintendent of Planning and Operations;
Janet Soesbe, Community Program Manager;
Kern McCalla, Development Manager;
Leslie Radice, Aquatics Manager;
Jameel Jones, Outreach & Wellness Manager;
Amy Banner, Environmental Program Manager;
Peyton Perry, Park Planner;
Megan Owens, BlueSky Recreation Consulting;
Allison Jones served as Recorder.

I. Call to Order

President Stratton called the meeting to order at 6:03 PM.

A. Remote Attendance
There was no remote attendance requested.

II. Accept Agenda

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

III. Public Comment

There were no comments from members of the public.

IV. Discussion

A. Vision Workshop

Megan Owens with BlueSky Recreation Consulting welcomed the group and reviewed the goals and process for the workshop. She stated the evening will focus on values, mission, and vision for the Urbana Park District. Next, Board and staff participated in introductions and a welcome activity.

To continue, Megan Owens presented information on defining the values of the organization, which will lead to crafting an updated mission statement and vision statement. She noted that a mission statement should have breadth, durability, distinction, and be a challenge, and that a vision statement can be used to inspire and challenge the Board, staff, and volunteers. She noted that the UPD has expressed desire to move the "You Belong Here" philosophy to the forefront of its mission, emphasizing that everyone and anyone belongs here.

Next, Board and staff worked on defining values from agency philosophy, both individually and in groups. Each group discussed and brainstormed 2-3 values for the organization, such as building community, having integrity and passion, celebrating the uniqueness of the community, being welcoming to all, being community leaders, working towards organizational sustainability, having compassion and connection, being inclusive, and providing opportunity. Board and staff worked together to combine suggested values to come up with themes throughout the values: intentionally welcoming, community engagement, and "giving a damn." The groups then took a 15-minute break.

The group then discussed what the UPD is a direct provider of, including experiences, education, park access, and volunteering & employment opportunities. They also discussed what the UPD is an indirect provider of, including partnerships, throughout the community. Lastly, they discussed what the UPD is not of a provider of in any capacity, including mental health provider, restaurant, or licensed day care. Megan Owens led the group in a discussion regarding these direct/indirect services and if these reflect where the district wants to be.

Next, the group discussed the current mission statement and how it is received by the public. They considered if it is effective, welcoming, grounded in values, and reflect those who they wish to serve. Megan Owens stated that a mission statement should be short, snappy, include why the organization exists, who they serve, and what they're trying to do. The groups then brainstormed ideas and examples for the mission statement, including, welcoming spaces, boldly building, creating opportunities, neighborhood connections, intentionality, lifelong engagement, inclusivity, and quality.

V. Comments from Commissioners

There were no further comments from Commissioners.

VI. Adjourn

President Stratton adjourned the meeting at 8:32 PM.

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Cedric A. Stratton, President

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Rachel D. Lenz, Secretary

(Seal)

Date Approved: ____October 13, 2026_____