



*It is the mission of the Urbana Park District to:*

-  *Improve the quality of life of its citizens through a responsive, efficient, and creative park and recreation system,*
-  *Pursue excellence in a variety of programs, parks and special facilities that contribute to the attractiveness of neighborhoods, conservation of the environment and the overall health of the community.*

**NOTICE AND AGENDA OF MEETING  
URBANA PARK DISTRICT BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS  
BOARD STUDY SESSION  
TUESDAY, APRIL 7, 2020  
6:30 PM**

**REMOTE MEETING VIA ZOOM**

MEETING VIDEO LINK: <https://zoom.us/j/423548027>

MEETING PHONE NUMBER: (312) 626-6799

MEETING ID: 423 548 027

*Board Study Sessions are designed for the Board to study, review and discuss specific topics. Actions are not typically taken during a Study Session, unless specifically noted on the agenda.*

**I. Call to Order**

**A. Remote Attendance**

*The Board is suspending the usual Remote Attendance Policy, and will allow all board members to attend this meeting remotely, pursuant to State Executive Order 2020-07, which temporarily suspends the remote attendance requirements of the Illinois Open Meetings Act due to the COVID-19 pandemic.*

**II. Accept Agenda**

**III. Public Comment**

*Any member of the public may make a brief statement at this time within the public participation rules of the Board. Please see the attached document for details regarding attendance and public comment via Zoom.*

**IV. Discussion**

- A. Organic Garden Program Focus Groups and Action Plan**
- B. COVID-19**

**V. Comments from Commissioners**

**VI. Adjourn**

Note: This Meeting Agenda and its supporting materials are on the UPD website at <http://www.urbanaparks.org/documents/index.html>, choose the "Public Meetings" category and search for the meeting information you wish to download.

## Public Input for Urbana Park District Board Study Session (Tuesday, April 7, 2020)

Anyone can attend the meeting virtually via Zoom. We ask that if you possibly can, please submit your public comments via email by 6:30 pm to [tabartlett@urbanaparks.org](mailto:tabartlett@urbanaparks.org) – these will be read per Urbana Park District Board rules and time limits.

You will be able to use a phone to call in:

- Join by calling (312) 626-6799.
- Callers will then be asked to enter the Meeting ID number followed by the # key. The Meeting ID number is 423 548 027.
- We ask that you please mute yourself until the time for public input.

You will be able to use a computer to address the Urbana Park District Board using Zoom:

- Make sure you have a microphone on your computer if you wish to speak. Please identify yourself for the record if you do speak.
- You do not need to install software to use Zoom. You can click “Join from your browser.” It appears that Zoom prefers for users to download and install their meeting client software on your computer. Choose the option you are most comfortable with, and note, it may be browser specific.
- You should see the meeting video stream through Zoom and hear people talking. The link to join by computer is <https://zoom.us/j/423548027>.
- Please turn off your webcam video feed as everyone connected will be able to see you and your background. This Zoom session will be recorded as part of the record.
- We will not be using the Chat or Participant windows for this meeting.
- You can find tutorials and help information here:  
<https://support.zoom.us/hc/enus/articles/201362193-How-Do-I-Join-A-Meeting->

As a reminder, public input can be received prior to the meeting via email as listed above. This is a work in progress, and we ask for your patience and thank you for your understanding, as we navigate this difficult situation.

Two websites with additional tips and tricks:

<https://www.groovehq.com/blog/zoom-tips-and-tricks>

<https://www.colorado.edu/ocg/ocg-staff-resources/meeting-resources/zoom-meeting-tipstricks>



**Organic Gardens**

**2019 Focus Group  
Studies**

**Urbana Park District**







Requesting  
Participation

**Meadowbrook Park  
Organic Gardens**

2 Focus Groups  
14 participants

**Victory Park  
Organic Gardens**

4 Interviews  
Almost Every User

**Race / Ethnicity**

Caucasian / White	2
Asian	4
Latinx	1
African American	0
Chose not to respond	11
Total	18

**Gender**

Male	10
Female	8
Total	18

**Age**

Number of participants who shared their age	13
No response	5
Median age of participants	58.5



Results

# Organic Gardens Study

*“A place to  
receive visitors, a  
chance to share.”*





User  
motivations  
and valued  
services

***“....and in Urbana tree city there’s not much sun.”***

*“The park is a pleasant place to  
maintain communal interaction  
and private endeavor.”*

*“I receive good energy for the body and soul.”*

***“It is so important for people to grow their own food. I’m baffled how  
disconnected we are from our food source. The food is practically free if you  
grow it yourself.”***

**Services that were  
perceived to foster ease  
of access were also  
prioritized by the  
organic garden users.**





**Why would others be less likely to take advantage of the organic gardening program?**

***"I wish we could encourage more gardeners to garden.  
But I'm retired so I have more time, and it does take a lot  
of time. But I also had a garden there when I worked too.  
So it's what your priorities are, I guess."***

***"For what we've invested we'd be better off  
in a CSA (Community-supported agriculture  
program)."***

***"There is a change in culture that's going on.  
People are too busy playing video games."***



Perceived  
investment in the  
gardens and staff

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*“It did seem to me early on it was much more a focus of the park district. I mean, little things, like I don’t really care about weeds and stuff, like that, but one time and I don’t know who the garden coordinator was, but it was—they would crack the whip if there were weeds and things like that. And I don’t really know how that would increase or what—how that would relate to the vacancy or the people not coming out for it or not. But it definitely has not been a focus...”*



***“We definitely noticed, especially with the tomatoes and some other stuff, fertility going down the last couple years without the manure.”***

***“But the most crucial thing is the soil is not rich in organic matter. It has some nutrients, definitely, but the more the organic matter is there, the better the farm. People like us would be encouraged to farm every year. That’s my point.”***



Workshops and education

Study participants from both organic garden locations were perceived to be experienced gardeners who needed less education and training.

Most attendees were not sure if  
they would take the time to  
participate in programs or events.

However, they felt, “What’s good for the organic gardener is good for the entire community,” meaning any program that would be offered by UPD related to organic gardening would be good for the community.





User fees


A majority felt the program was affordable for their household

Many felt start-up costs were a barrier for new gardeners

Study participants were “willing to pay a bit more for more amenities,” such as manure, organic material amendments to the soil, fence rental and installation services, and more staff oversight with increased communications.



Communication

- 
- Phone
  - Text
  - Email
  - Kiosk

Overall - perception was increased investment in staff would help.



# Priorities

# Victory Park



**1. Replace the raised bed gardens that were removed.**

**2. Amend and rotate soil in raised beds.**

- Increased communication through on-site postings
- Reclassifying from neighborhood garden to community garden
- Expanded marketing and promotion of the organic garden program
- The continued use of Grossbach Drive as an accessible roadway and
- parking area for the organic gardens

# Meadowbrook Park



- 1. Amend soil with organic material and compost/manure**
  - 2. Organize and enact an invasive species and wildlife management plan**
  - 3. Mitigate drainage and compaction issues**
- Tool/equipment storage and rental system
  - Standard fencing system with help to erect the fence if needed
  - Revision of the user guide
  - Seed and vegetable sharing program



*“It is pleasurable to work in a garden. It is extremely satisfying to eat what you have grown organically.”*

It's been a lot  
to take in!



Reactions?

Questions?

Thoughts?

# Garden Action Plan

Meadowbrook & Victory Park Organic Gardens



**Urbana** Park District

# Communication

## Completed:

- Updated Garden Manual
- Created a fillable form to send to returning gardeners to ensure we have up-to-date contact information
- Modified the “Find Your Garden Plot” section of the manual to better describe plot markings

## Ongoing:

- Update Kiosk periodically with a map, program information and gardening tips
- Increase the Mailchimp eNewsletter to monthly distribution during the garden season
- Update signage at Victory Park
- Look into the possibility of using ePact for gardeners in 2021 to correspond via text



# Garden Plots

## Completed:

- Provided soil testing and garden amendments (manure and compost) to restore organic material in the soil
  - Informed gardeners about plot conditions (Scoop on Soil program)
- Replaced all raised beds at Victory Park
- Coordinated a volunteer day for gardeners to utilize to help prepare their garden **(Cancelled)**

## Ongoing:

- Evaluate garden plots
  - Take some out of commission or look for other ways to utilize the plots
- Drainage
  - Providing Landscape Recycling Center compost so gardeners can build up the soil profile in their gardens that will improve drainage.
  - Park district will continue to evaluate what more we can do to assist.



# Weeds, Wildlife & Pest Control

## Completed:

- Updated the weed policy to be more manageable, clear and concise

## Ongoing:

- Work with the U of I in wildlife management in the area
- Provide relevant outreach to gardeners about persistent weeds
  - Managing Mugwort; video, signage, and a program **(Cancelled)**

## Stop the Spread!



### The Urbana Park District Needs Your Help Removing Invasive Mugwort

#### Mugwort (*Artemisia vulgaris*)

##### Identification:

- Grows to 2-6 feet tall
- Alternate leaves with a dark green top and silvery underside
- Leaves have pointed lobes and toothed edges
- Purple stem with grooves

For non-chemical control, hand pulling throughout the growing season or covering the infested area with black plastic is recommended.

It spreads by an underground rhizome or stem that must be starved of energy to remove without chemical.

Scan the QR code to watch a video with more information or call 217 344-9583.



Urbana Park District

# Tools & Storage

## Ongoing:

- Provide storage for tools onsite
  - Options: A storage chest; racks on existing bins
  - Work with The Urbana Free Library to make a “little library” for tools

# Staff Oversight

## Completed:

- Conveyed staff roles and expectations in the manual

## Ongoing:

- Provide the Garden Supervisor with an “uniform” to stand out (i.e. shirt, hat)



# Tilling

## Ongoing:

- Provide resources in Kiosk for tilling services
- Begin tilling in the spring as well as the fall, if weather permits

# Supporting New Gardeners

## Completed:

- Updated garden meeting content
- Provided programs; Scoop on Soil, Managing Mugwort **(Cancelled)**

## Ongoing:

- Link returning gardener “mentors” with new gardeners who need extra support

# Accessibility

## Ongoing:

- Assess both parks regarding accessibility
- The park district will discuss the status of Grossbach Dr. with the city and communicate it is useful for service access by both staff and gardeners.



# EMPLOYEE RIGHTS

## PAID SICK LEAVE AND EXPANDED FAMILY AND MEDICAL LEAVE UNDER THE FAMILIES FIRST CORONAVIRUS RESPONSE ACT

The **Families First Coronavirus Response Act (FFCRA or Act)** requires certain employers to provide their employees with paid sick leave and expanded family and medical leave for specified reasons related to COVID-19. These provisions will apply from April 1, 2020 through December 31, 2020.

### ► PAID LEAVE ENTITLEMENTS

**Generally, employers covered under the Act must provide employees:**

Up to two weeks (80 hours, or a part-time employee's two-week equivalent) of paid sick leave based on the higher of their regular rate of pay, or the applicable state or Federal minimum wage, paid at:

- 100% for qualifying reasons #1-3 below, up to \$511 daily and \$5,110 total;
- $\frac{2}{3}$  for qualifying reasons #4 and 6 below, up to \$200 daily and \$2,000 total; and
- Up to 12 weeks of paid sick leave and expanded family and medical leave paid at  $\frac{2}{3}$  for qualifying reason #5 below for up to \$200 daily and \$12,000 total.

A part-time employee is eligible for leave for the number of hours that the employee is normally scheduled to work over that period.

### ► ELIGIBLE EMPLOYEES

In general, employees of private sector employers with fewer than 500 employees, and certain public sector employers, are eligible for up to two weeks of fully or partially paid sick leave for COVID-19 related reasons (see below). *Employees who have been employed for at least 30 days prior to their leave request may be eligible for up to an additional 10 weeks of partially paid expanded family and medical leave for reason #5 below.*

### ► QUALIFYING REASONS FOR LEAVE RELATED TO COVID-19

An employee is entitled to take leave related to COVID-19 if the employee is unable to work, including unable to **telework**, because the employee:

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. is subject to a Federal, State, or local quarantine or isolation order related to COVID-19;</li><li>2. has been advised by a health care provider to self-quarantine related to COVID-19;</li><li>3. is experiencing COVID-19 symptoms and is seeking a medical diagnosis;</li><li>4. is caring for an individual subject to an order described in (1) or self-quarantine as described in (2);</li></ol> | <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>5. is caring for his or her child whose school or place of care is closed (or child care provider is unavailable) due to COVID-19 related reasons; or</li><li>6. is experiencing any other substantially-similar condition specified by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.</li></ol> |
|---|---|

### ► ENFORCEMENT

The U.S. Department of Labor's Wage and Hour Division (WHD) has the authority to investigate and enforce compliance with the FFCRA. Employers may not discharge, discipline, or otherwise discriminate against any employee who lawfully takes paid sick leave or expanded family and medical leave under the FFCRA, files a complaint, or institutes a proceeding under or related to this Act. Employers in violation of the provisions of the FFCRA will be subject to penalties and enforcement by WHD.



**WAGE AND HOUR DIVISION**  
UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF LABOR

For additional information  
or to file a complaint:  
**1-866-487-9243**  
TTY: 1-877-889-5627  
[dol.gov/agencies/whd](https://dol.gov/agencies/whd)



WH1422 REV 03/20