



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 ADVISORY COMMITTEE (UPDAC)  
TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 27, 2024  
7:00 PM  
PLANNING & OPERATIONS FACILITY  
1011 E. KERR AVENUE  
URBANA, IL 61802**

**I. Call to Order**

**II. Public Comment**

*Any member of the public may make a brief statement at this time within the public participation rules of the Board.*

**III. Approval of the Minutes of the November 21, 2023 Meeting**

**IV. New Business**

- A. Kickapoo Rail Trail updates – Mary Ellen Wuellner & Jeff Yockey
- B. Urbana Park District trails updates – Tim Bartlett

**V. Reports**

- A. UPDAC Chair
- B. Board Representative
- C. Director’s Report
  - S’mores Social & Stroll – 3/10/24 – 3-5pm; Crystal Lake Park
- D. Capital Projects Report

**VI. UPDAC Member Comments and Open Discussion**

**VII. Adjourn**

***Upcoming meetings:***

***March 26, 2024  
April 23, 2024  
May 28, 2024  
June 25, 2024***

Note: The Meeting Agenda and 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.

**NOTICE AND AGENDA OF MEETING  
 URBANA PARK DISTRICT ADVISORY COMMITTEE (UPDAC)  
 TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 21, 2023  
 7:00 PM  
 ANITA PURVES NATURE CENTER  
 1505 N. BROADWAY  
 URBANA, IL 61801**

The meeting of the Urbana Park District Advisory Committee (UPDAC) was held Tuesday, November 21, 2023 at the Urbana Park District Anita Purves Nature Center at 7:00 pm. 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 member of the committee 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.

UPDAC Members	PRESENT	ABSENT
Ashley Withers, Chair	x	
Lauren Chambers	x	
Lori Choquette	x	
Reba Daniels	x	
David Dorman	x	
Kanittha Fay	x	
Lucia Maldonado	x	
Hannah Sheets	x	
Ashley Sims	x	
Rachel Spencer		x
Gary Stensland	x	
Michael Stevenson	x	
Brittany Tammen		x
Gretchen Madsen Webb	x	
Karl Weingartner	x	
Darius White		x

**Others Present:**

Tim Bartlett  
 Corky Emberson  
 Allison Jones  
 Savannah Donovan  
 Derek Liebert  
 Nicole Hilberg

VIII. **Call to Order**

UPDAC Chair, Ashley Withers, called the meeting to order at **7:02 PM**.

IX. **Public Comment**

There were no comments from members of the public.

X. **Approval of the Minutes of the October 24, 2023 Meeting**

The minutes of the October 24, 2023 were presented for approval. **Reba made a motion with a second from Laurie to accept the minutes for approval.** A vote was taken, the motion carried.

XI. **New Business**

C. Interpretation and Exhibits

Environmental Program Manager, Savannah Donovan, spoke to UPDAC about interpretation – communication process designed to reveal the relationship to nature and cultural heritage through objects, artifacts, landscapes, and sites. APNC is home to both UPD’s environmental education and interpretation efforts. UPD wants people to connect with the environment right outside their doors and interpretation plans focus on that. The plans focus on “what are the most important stories we want to tell about this park/garden/area/center?” Interpretation includes signs, digital interactive interpretations, trail guides, and more. Many signs include QR codes that translate the information into Spanish.

Kanittha asked if that information was also available on the website? Not currently. The signs are only translated into Spanish and can only be navigated by the QR code. Savannah then asked the group if website pages for parks should also include sign information? The group thought this was a great idea and made it possible to study before visiting.

Ashley W. asked if the icons could be added to the master map that is being developed for the website.

Karl made a comment that it really seems like you need to keep in mind interpreting for all ages. Savannah replied that classes can help reach different age groups, and that there are standards for using simple language on signs and other interpretation.

Lucia asked how the park district lets people know that information is available in Spanish? Savannah said that it is a new standard to have QR codes on site.

Nicole Hilberg, Environmental Office Manager, then spoke about exhibits within APNC. Nicole first spoke about the process creating exhibits:

- What to make exhibits about? Things that are nature, interesting, and relevant  
Find those things from: frequentation asked questions, interesting donated items, staff strengths and interests
- How to create an exhibit?  
Location, Cost, Time Line, Staff Involvement, and Why should visitors care?
- How do we get feedback?

Overheard, openly shared, very used exhibits (how often we reset the field station).

Ashley W asked Nicole what her dream exhibit would be? Build a bigger field station with an indoor raptor station.

Kanittha asked if the center will be open on Black Friday? Do they sell gift cards? Maybe a black Friday campaign? Not open on Friday, but will be open on Saturday. UPD gift cards are available at APNC or Phillips Rec.

Dave asked how many seasonal exhibits does APNC have? No exact number, but a lot of the seasonal exhibits are posters, handouts, and other materials.

Lucia asked if APNC staff visit schools or have a newsletter to promote their activities? UPD does have an environmental programs newsletter and promotes a lot on Facebook.

How does APNC work with schools/who comes for tours? APNC has fall and spring tours/groups of all ages, including assisted living centers, disability organizations, homeschool groups, and pre-schools. APNC provides afterschool learning at schools and also Urvana goes out to neighborhood parks and events.

An important thing to note is the sponsorship program, "Connecting Classrooms with Nature." Can sponsor a classes trip to APNC.

Another popular event is birthday parties at APNC. Ashley S. attended a birthday party at APNC this year and it was "thumbs up."

#### D. Kickapoo Rail Trail Updates

Tim reported that through lobbying with our legislators, the Kickapoo Rail Trail project received a \$11.2 million government grant!! Trailheads need to be complete within 2 years. Friends of the KRT plan to host educational sessions that help community members learn, "What's in it for us?" with the KRT.

Dave asked how long the trail will be when finished?

24.5 miles of uninterrupted trail.

Karl asked who is responsible for the maintenance of the trail?

The entity that owns that portion of the trail.

Kanittha asked what does it mean that Weaver Park will be a trailhead facility?

The trailheads provide linkages to the whole trail system. People can get information about the trail, hop on the trail, and there will be amenities such as parking, restrooms, maybe a bike fix station, etc.

Kanittha also asked what is the park district doing to build excitement in the next 2 years? Will there be learn to ride programs in the parks?

Tim responded that the challenge with having those programs in the parks is finding a time without programs and rentals. He said that closing down roads to have "bike afternoons/nights" have been discussed, but the City of Urbana isn't there yet.

**XII. Reports**

**E. UPDAC Chair**

There will be no December meeting. The next UPDAC meeting will be held on January 23, 2024. Be on the lookout for emails from Allison, as Kelsey will be out on maternity leave.

**F. Board Representative**

No Board Representative present at meeting.

**G. Director's Report**

Invitation to Turkey Trot on Thursday morning! This year there will be two routes, both starting from the same point: 1.7 miles and 0.7 miles.

**H. Capital Projects Report**

The Health & Wellness Building continues to go up!  
Plan to replace pole lights in Crystal Lake Park.  
Getting ready to bid the Prairie Play project.

**XIII. UPDAC Member Comments and Open Discussion**

Lauren and Gretchen both attended the most recent S'mores 'n Stroll event and had a lovely time. Very popular event!

Kanittha urged everyone to donate to and attend the Giving Tuesday Food Drive organized by the Urbana Police Department, Champaign Police Department and University of Illinois Police Department. All the food goes back into our local communities.

**XIV. Adjourn**

Ashley Withers adjourned the meeting at **9:02 PM**.

Respectfully submitted by Hannah Sheets