



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, APRIL 22, 2025
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 March 25, 2025 Meeting

IV. New Business

- A. King Park

Reports

- A. UPDAC Chair
B. Board Representative
C. Director's Report
D. Capital Projects Report

V. UPDAC Member Comments and Open Discussion

VI. Adjourn

Upcoming meetings:

***May 27, 2025
June 24, 2025
July – NO MEETING
August 26, 2025
September 23, 2025
October 28, 2025***

****This month's Secretary is Michael Stevenson****

Note: The Meeting Agenda and Supporting Materials are on the UPD website at <https://www.urbanaparks.org/urbana-park-district-advisory-committee-updac>.

**MEETING MINUTES
 URBANA PARK DISTRICT ADVISORY COMMITTEE (UPDAC)
 TUESDAY, MARCH 25, 2025
 7:00 PM
 PLANNING & OPERATIONS FACILITY
 1011 E. KERR AVENUE
 URBANA, IL 61802**

The meeting of the Urbana Park District Advisory Committee (UPDAC) was held Tuesday, March 25, 2025 at the Urbana Park District (UPD) Planning & Operations Facility 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
Hannah Sheets, Chair		x
Eusebio Briseño	x	
Lauren Chambers	x	
Lori Choquette	x	
Kanittha Fay	x	
Sylena Harper	x	
Lauren Karplus	x	
Lucia Maldonado		x
Martha McSims	x	
Rachel Spencer	x	
Ashley Sims		x
Michael Stevenson	x	
Myra Stevens	x	
Brittany Tammen	x	
Gretchen Madsen Webb	x	
Darius White		x

Others Present:

Cedric Stratton, Commissioner;
 Corky Emberson, Superintendent of Recreation;
 Derek Liebert, Superintendent of Planning and Operations;
 Leslie Radice, Aquatics Manager;
 Janet Soesbe, Community Program Manager;
 Jameel Jones, Outreach and Wellness Manager;
 Kelsey Beccue, Development Manager

I. Call to Order

Filling in for Hannah as UPDAC Chair in her absence, Michael Stevenson called the meeting to order at 7:02 PM.

II. Public Comment

There was no public comment.

III. Approval of the Minutes of the February 25, 2025 Meeting

The minutes of the February 25, 2025 meeting were presented for approval.

Eusebio Briseno made a motion with a second from Kanittha Fay to approve the minutes of the February 25, 2025 UPDAC Meeting. A vote was taken and the motion passed.

IV. New Business

A. Urbana Park District Matrix Teams

Kelsey explains that the Urbana Park District has a lot of internal and cross functional teams from different departments who came to the meeting to share updates on their work. She states that the teams include Green Team, Arts and Culture Team, Aquatics Team, You Belong Here Team, Safety Team, and Technology Team.

Corky discusses the history of the matrix teams. He states that they started between 16-17 years ago with the Aquatics Team being formed in order to get everyone's input on operations and initiatives from all levels of the park district. Some of these initiatives included park design and standard operating procedure development. He states the members of each team are not present, but the chairs for several of the teams are present. He states that the group will improvise discussing updates for the teams without their regular chair member present.

Michael asks how members of the matrix teams are chosen.

Corky states that they try to select members from various specialties who are interested in joining. Some of the specialties he lists are maintenance, administration, program coordinators, managers, and superintendents. He states that having these different perspectives helps create the best scenarios possible.

Corky also mentions that the You Belong Here Team started out as a customer service team that later changed its title in about 2018.

The Aquatics Manager, Leslie, who has been working with the park district for 18 years, says that the biggest difference the matrix team has made is improving cleanliness. She states that other things they've done have been painting the walls, getting a new slide, getting a tiger mini slide for kids, and update people on what is and isn't working — such as maintaining temperatures. They were also able to

successfully build a pool and they keep in touch with maintenance. This spring, they want the water slides to be painted and for new programs to be developed.

Corky asks if there's any questions about the Aquatics team. There are no questions. Corky moves onto the Safety Team.

Derek speaks for the Safety Team. He says their biggest project this year was the new facility — referring to the new Health & Wellness Center (HAWC). They got safety data sheets for every chemical in the building in case of chemical spills, developed an emergency action plan, created evacuation maps, ensured all of the automated external defibrillators (AEDs) were new, and supplied the building with first aid kits.

Leslie mentions that they are in the process of updating all of the AEDs for the district because the past AEDs were Cardiac Science, which are now obsolete. She briefly explains how the AEDs work.

Derek mentions that they also offer forklift training, fire extinguisher training, and de-escalation training for staff enforcing park rules. They have also worked on replacing weather radios and playground signage. There are also routine things such as going through claims, facility inspections, and addressing seasonal issues (ticks, heatstroke).

Corky says that the safety team meets quarterly and they review all accidents and claims – which have decreased since the formation of the team.

Lauren Karplus asks if any of the facilities have Narcan. Corky says all of the facilities do.

Brittany asks about AED disposal and Leslie says they either send them back to the companies for proper disposal or they give them to the nursing homes because they often don't have AEDs.

Kelsey mentions that the Safety Team also does fire extinguisher training and has regular fire extinguisher inspections.

Kelsey gives an overview of the Green Team. She states that they look at sustainability and their main achievement has been the CARES Plan – the park district's Climate Action Plan – they've been working on for the past 5 years. She states that the CARES Plan review has been stalled, but they are trying to get back on track after an integral member, Kara, left the team. The Green Team is scheduled to report to the board in May. Kelsey mentions that one of the goals of the Green Team is to simplify the plans for staff so that they don't have to go between the currently separate documents of the CARES Plan and the strategic plan.

Corky states that some of the big initiatives of the Green Team are installing solar on the Planning & Operations Facility as well as the HAWC.

Kelsey says that if staff, for example, order catering, they ensure the vendors are using recycled materials and avoid Styrofoam. They also spread awareness about the impact of idling vehicles, using electric tools, and salting the roads.

Kanitha asks about native plants and Derek says that they have been trying to plant more native plants. He states that annuals require more water and fertilizer so they are more commonly planted in high profile areas.

Jameel, the Outreach and Wellness manager, speaks about the You Belong Here Team. He talks about creating a designated space on the internal website for training materials and resources for staff. He also discusses providing the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) with feedback, increasing minority and women-owned business enterprises (MWBE) contract holders, and creating a list of community champions and partnerships. Some of the other things You Belong Here has done includes providing district documents in other languages.

Derek mentions that staff also work with contractors to improve diversity. There has also been a Black authors display at Phillips, the DEN homeschool program, events for the lunar new year, teen hangouts during Black History Month, and read across America programs. Their Playdays in the Park event was successful with 883 attendees, their first skate park at Dr. Preston Williams Elementary had 125 attendees from ages 5-60. There's also been the baby steps program at the HAWC, the Latina walking program, the nurture and nature program, and programs to help people with disabilities. They have also been working with Carle Clinic for people to receive physicals at the HAWC.

Sylena asks if people need to have insurance to get a physical at the HAWC. Jameel says no.

Corky segues into the Technology Team. He states that they've been upgrading the computers and have budgeted \$20,000 annually for district technology. He states that all of the computers are within 5 years of age and are cloud based in case the computers are damaged. He discusses that they are also in the first phase of their security cameras.

Derek states that they have updated some of the existing cameras and plan to install more.

Corky discusses that the website is new and they have just finished an ADA audit. It is also more accessible on cell phones. They have also implemented a clock-in-clock-

out system, have kept up with hardware and software upgrades, and renewed licenses for software applications. They are currently looking into developing a system where people can text the park district questions. They also help with cybersecurity training.

Kelsey asks if tech team is talking about Artificial Intelligence (AI).

Corky talks about how they learned about Placer AI training. There were some issues in the accuracy of the program when counting attendees during the Turkey Trot. He also states that the Placer AI is between \$14,000-\$15,000 so they want to make sure that it will be worth the investment before using it.

Brittany asks about selecting multiple summer programs on the site without having to start over for every program.

Corky and Leslie explain that there's different packages that can be purchased for this.

Lauren Karplus suggests that summer program registration should be later because December is too early to know what summer plans will look like for families and that registration times should be publicized because the slots fill in so quickly.

Corky discusses the Arts and Culture Team and their contributions. They have expanded the 4th annual Crystal Lake Art Faire to be 2 days instead of 1, resulting in 1800 visitors. They have also done a Peace Post Painting event while partnering with 40 North. Kelsey has secured \$5,000 from the Illinois Arts Council operating grant which are going towards senior creative connections, the Lake House, Juneteenth neighborhood night, the Art Fair at Crystal Lake Park, art installation research, and the summer theater program at the Urbana High School – this year will be Anastasia. They have also helped with the Boneyard Arts Festival – April 4th - April 6th. Larry Young will be there and there will be a youth art section. There will also be an art show at Phillips during the Arts Festival. They'd like to partner with 40 North to develop a local sculpture exhibition.

- B. Robin Hall Fund for Public Art at the Urbana Parks Foundation
Kelsey suggested tabling this discussion item for a future meeting due to time constraints at 8:28 p.m. UPDAC members agreed.

Reports

- A. UPDAC Chair
 - 1. UPDAC Recruitment

Kelsey speaks about recruiting new UPDAC members. She states that they reach out to people at the city council and at different community events for recruitment.

Michael suggests having an ad for UPDAC member recruitment at the HAWC.

Derek suggested reaching out to the King Park Steering Community for recruitment.

There was discussion amongst several members about making “ask me about UPDAC” buttons.

B. Board Representative

Commissioner Stratton reminded UPDAC about the consolidated election happening on April 1st. It is mentioned that former UPDAC member, Sarah Roper, and former UPDAC Chair, Ashley Withers are on the ballots.

C. Director’s Report

Tim was not present, but shared updates with Kelsey. Kelsey informed us of these updates. She started with stating that the district continues to engage with legislators on the next phases of development at the HAWC and securing funding for these upcoming changes. She states that funding looks unlikely from Nikki Budzinski’s office. They will still be making a submission and sharing project plans with them. They have also been focusing on state legislators and gave Carol Ammons a tour of the HAWC. Ammons mentions that they might be able to help with the \$10.2 million preliminary budget. The district also met with senator Paul Faraci. He was more reserved on being able to contribute.

Kelsey states that the district was invited to submit a proposal to Ammons. She also states that she wants to get together with the county and city representatives as well as the new mayor for discussion.

D. Capital Projects Report

Derek states that the South Ridge Trail Project is going well and the contractor is being conscientious about protecting the park. He also states that King Park planning is underway and they will be getting the kids’ reactions to some of the concepts formed by the steering committee. They have also identified an additional \$100,000 for the project. He states that one of the pool slides is going to get a new coat of paint thanks to the Replacement and Renewal fund set aside annually.

V. UPDAC Member Comments and Open Discussion

Lauren K. brings awareness to the competitiveness of signing up for summer camps.

Kanittha and Kelsey talk about the direct and indirect benefits of having parks. Kelsey mentions that the Illinois Association of Park Districts collects a lot of data about the value of parks.

VI. Adjourn

Michael Stevenson adjourned the meeting at 8:56 PM.

Respectfully submitted by Sylena Harper