You belong here.

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, JUNE 23, 2026
6:00 PM
UPD PLANNING & OPERATIONS FACILITY
1011 E. KERR AVENUE
URBANA, IL 61801

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 Meeting Minutes**
A. May 26, 2026 UPDAC Meeting

IV. **New Business**
A. Strategic Plan Update
B. Skate Park

V. **Reports**
A. UPDAC Chair
B. Board Representative
C. Director's Report
D. Capital Projects Report

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

VII. **Adjourn**

Upcoming meetings:

July – No meeting
August 25, 2026
September 22, 2026
October 27, 2026
November 24, 2026

***** This month's secretary is Sylena Harper *****

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, MAY 26, 2026
6:00 PM
PLANNING & OPERATIONS FACILITY
1011 E. KERR AVENUE
URBANA, IL 61802

The meeting of the Urbana Park District Advisory Committee (UPDAC) was held Tuesday, May 26, 2026 at the Planning & Operations Facility, 1011 E. Kerr Ave, Urbana, at 6:00 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	
Sara Curtis	X	
Carmen Franks	X	
Matthew Fletcher	X	
Sylena Harper		X
Lauren Karplus	X	
Lucia Maldonado		X
Martha McSims		X
Sara Rand	X	
Rachel Spencer	X	
Ashley Sims	X	
Gretchen Madsen Webb	X	

Others in Attendance:
Rachel Lenz, Executive Director;
Kelsey Beccue, Development Manager;
Corky Emberson, Superintendent of Recreation;
Laura Hastings, Commissioner;
Ashley Withers, Commissioner;
Katie Bickers, Community Outreach Coordinator

Robert White, Manager of the Champaign County African American Heritage Trail.

VIII. **Call to Order**

UPDAC Chair Hannah Sheets called the meeting to order at 6:03 PM.

IX. **Public Comment**

There were no comments from members of the public.

X. **Approval of the Minutes of the March 24, 2026 Meeting & April 28, 2026 Meeting**
RACHEL SPENCER MADE A MOTION WITH A SECOND BY GRETCHEN WEBB TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF BOTH THE MARCH 24, 2026 AND APRIL 28, 2026 UPDAC MEETINGS. A VOTE WAS TAKEN, MOTION CARRIED.

XI. **New Business**

C. King Park and the African American Heritage Trail.

Robert White, Heritage Trail Manager at Experience Champaign-Urbana, joined the group virtually to provide an informative presentation on the Champaign County African American Heritage Trail. During the discussion, Robert emphasized the importance of representation, storytelling, and preserving local African American history through public art and community engagement.

Robert shared details about the 25 heritage trail sites and 5 murals located throughout Champaign, Urbana, and Savoy. He explained that these sites provide meaningful experiences for visitors and community members alike by serving as public art installations, educational resources, memory anchors, and spaces for community interaction and events. He described the trail system as a powerful form of storytelling that connects residents and visitors to the region's African American history and culture.

As Heritage Trail Manager, Robert oversees four planned quarterly tours each year. In addition, he is available to provide tours upon request. He noted that tours can be adapted for audiences of all ages to ensure participants are fully engaged in the history, culture, and artistic significance of the sites.

Robert also discussed how the knowledge and historical information connected to the Heritage Trail project is helping guide the Urbana Park District in the planning and development of King Park. The goal is to create a space where visitors can deepen their understanding of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.'s legacy, while appreciating the beauty and impact of the surrounding art and history.

Additionally, Robert highlighted the mobile app, CC African American Heritage, which allows users to access maps of mural and trail locations and participate in self-

guided audio tours while visiting the sites.

Overall, the presentation demonstrated the significant role the African American Heritage Trail plays in education, cultural preservation, tourism, and community connection throughout the Champaign-Urbana area.

XII. **Reports**

E. UPDAC Chair

Hannah reported that she will be unable to attend next month's meeting, as she will be in Chicago attending a conference for her job. This will mark her final UPDAC meeting.

The members of UPDAC expressed their sincere appreciation for Hannah's dedication and service as Chair over the past two years. The committee extends its gratitude for her leadership, contributions, and commitment, and wishes her continued success in all future endeavors.

F. Board Representative

Laura Hasting announced that the outdoor pool is now open and passes are available for purchase!

Ashley Withers spoke about an event with the Champaign Park District and CUSR in which ground was broken to start construction on the circle drive, which will take approximately 10 weeks to accomplish. In addition, there will also be an addition of a playground, where work should begin on in the near future. She also mentioned to keep a look out for the events coming up this summer, such as Neighborhood Nights, Juneteenth, and the Crystal Lake Park Art Fair.

G. Director's Report

Rachel Lenz stated she was amazed by the great programs that are offered at the HAWC and was proud to say that there was a YOGA class offered in full Spanish instruction. Rachel also shared that the park district is currently exploring new registration software systems aimed at improving efficiency across park district facilities and operations. She explained that several options have been reviewed and narrowed down as staff evaluate the best fit for organizational needs. Discussions are also underway regarding implementation planning and the transition process once the current software contract expires in December. The goal of the new system will be to enhance operational effectiveness and improve overall user and staff experience throughout the park district.

Corky Emberson informed the group that the sandbox feature at the outdoor pool has officially been removed. In its place, the Crystal Lake Park Family Aquatic Center now features a new picnic area where visitors and pool patrons can enjoy meals and relaxation in a comfortable shaded setting. The updated space is intended to provide

an improved experience for guests and create a more welcoming gathering area within the Aquatic Center.

H. Capital Projects Report

Rachel Lenz provided additional information regarding the CUSR project and emphasized the importance of ensuring that all communities are properly represented and included in ongoing initiatives. She highlighted the significance of community engagement and the positive impact these efforts continue to have throughout the area. J. B. Pritzker was also present recently to promote the CUSR projects and witnessed firsthand the strength, activity, and involvement of the community, reinforcing why continued support and investment in these initiatives are critical.

Kelsey Beccue announced that this would be her final UPDAC meeting, as she has accepted a new position with the Champaign County Forest Preserve and will soon transition into her new role. The members of UPDAC expressed their sincere appreciation for Kelsey's hard work, dedication, and service to the park district. Her contributions and commitment have made a lasting impact, and while the organization is losing an incredibly valuable team member, CCFPD will undoubtedly gain a talented and hardworking individual. UPDAC extends its gratitude and best wishes to Kelsey in her future endeavors. Rachel Lenz added that Katie Bickers, UPD Community Outreach Coordinator, will now oversee UPDAC.

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

Lauren brought awareness to concerns regarding the Sharkey Soccer program and shared that she felt ill-prepared for the season. She explained that she was assigned a team size that was too large to effectively manage as a coach. Lauren wanted to ensure the Park District was aware of the challenges she experienced throughout the season, emphasizing that situations like these can contribute to volunteer stress and burnout. Her comments highlighted the importance of providing adequate support, preparation, and manageable team sizes for volunteer coaches to help ensure a positive experience for both volunteers and participants.

XIV. **Adjourn**

Hannah Sheets adjourned the meeting at 7:08 PM.