

UCAP Advisory Committee Minutes
King School
August 15, 2013

In Attendance:

Melvin Peeples	Jelani Sandiq (on behalf of Carol Ammons), Urbana City Council
Samuel Johnson	Corky Emberson, Urbana Park District
Frankie Johnson	Libby Tyler, Urbana Community Development
Dorothy Carter	Mayor Laurel Prussing, City of Urbana
Barbara Thomas	Lt. Richard Surles, Urbana Police Department
JoAnn Carter	
Lashaunda Cunningham	
Scott Rhodes	

The meeting was called to order by Lt. Surles at 5:34 p.m.

Jelani Sandiq spoke on behalf of Carol Ammons, handing out flyers and inviting everyone to attend the Ice Cream Social on Friday, August 16, 2013. This is a meet and greet, hosted by State Representative Naomi Jakobsson and Alderwoman Carol Ammons at King Park. A brief discussion followed.

Corky Emberson of the Urbana Park District reported that the Neighborhood Night held at King Park had 176 attendees. He said they would like to get more people involved in the Neighborhood Nights held at various parks in Urbana. He then commented that Jettie Rhodes' Day was very well organized, giving kudos to the planning committee. Corky advised the sculpture is in fabrication and the installation time is around the second week of December. Corky said that if you were looking for samples of Preston Jackson's work, there is a mural or something similar on the back of the Douglas Center and somewhere on UI's campus. Libby advised she thought it was on Gregory at the Life Science building; a mural of horses prancing on the outside of the building. The Mayor advised that it is located at the end of Goodwin. Libby Tyler passed out photos of Mr. Jackson's work and studio as well as a sketch. Discussion followed. Corky continued by announcing that Crystal Lake Pool opened on July 4th, with almost 20,000 visits the first two weeks when the weather was hot. He reported it is a successful multi-generational community facility. There will be adult lap swim in the morning from 6:00 – 8:00, noon lap swim, and a tot lap swim from 10:30 to noon, starting Monday. The pool will also be open after school from 4:00 – 8:00, with the fee being \$4 instead of \$6. Discussion followed. A committee member asked about the green stuff in the lake and if it was anything to be alarmed about. Corky advised it is a plant that is growing from goose droppings. It is not unsafe nor will get caught up in the boats. They are currently looking at trying to reduce some sediment in the lake. Corky fielded questions and comments from committee members.

Libby Tyler of Urbana Community Development introduced herself to the members as she has not attended a meeting in quite a while. Community Development is going to become involved in the neighborhood meetings, such as this one, and send a representative as a liaison. Next meeting will probably be another staff member. She gave a brief summary of items Community Development has been involved in, to include Block Grants that help with some improvements in the neighborhood and the Tax Increment Finance District (the redevelopment

district) that helps fund all the road construction occurring this summer. The redevelopment funds expire at the end of the year, and that is why they wanted to make sure they could put as much as they could into the sculpture, as it came from those funds as well as to get the road projects complete. Community Development is also involved in some of the new homes that were built or being built, especially lots where older homes are torn down. They have been working quite a bit with Habitat for Humanity, where the City might purchase the lot or come to the City through liens and they are able to provide those lots to Habitat and some other organizations that are able to build new homes. She reported Habitat for Humanity has been very active and building a lot of homes to include the following from this last year: 1409 Beech (dedication on August 29th at 6:00 p.m.), 1411 Beech, 1204 Beech, and 1304 Dublin. There are also future ones that City Council has just deeded the lots over to Habitat: 1208 ½ Dublin and 1205 Beslin. Libby also reported there is a different organization called Eco-Lab that make super high energy efficiency homes, and they have completed one at 1302 Dublin. A third organization called Homestead has a house going up at 1107 N. Gregory, a transitional housing unit. Community Development is also involved in the bi-annual neighborhood cleanups, one located in the parking lot across the street from King School. Libby advised that this program has been harder to fund each year because HUD funds have been cut every year, causing them to have to dip into other funds. She assured members that CD will continue the program as long as the funding is available. Libby reported there are a lot of boards and commissions that the City works with and there are some vacancies. More volunteers would be welcome. The specific boards/commissions that work with CD include the Plan Commission (looks at new developments), the Community Development Commission (looks at the target areas for the HUD funds and social services), and the Zoning Board. The Mayor was also able to confirm that the Public Arts Commission, Civilian Police Review Board, Human Relations Commission and others are in need of members. If you are interested in belonging to one, contact the Mayor, who will send you a list (which is also on the website). Libby then fielded questions and concerns from the committee members.

Mayor Prussing asked how everyone liked the street lighting, which was met with positive responses. She encouraged members to let her know of any concerns so they can be addressed. The mayor then advised that Urbana is a great place to live because the citizens are very active and participate in the government, and she thinks the government really responds if there is a problem. The mayor as well as Libby fielded questions and concerns from committee members. The mayor continued by talking about changes in neighborhoods that had bad property management. Buildings were condemned, and the ones on Lierman are going to be burned down as training for firefighters. Then there will be a new development there, and the neighborhood will participate in what kind of format they prefer. The City has to deal with bad properties that drag down whole neighborhoods, and there is a lot of that going on in Southeast Urbana that the City is trying to deal with. Unfortunately, it cannot be done instantly because of landlords' legal rights, but the City is working on it steadily. The mayor encouraged members to contact the City about properties they are concerned about, so they can be dealt with. Discussion followed. Mayor Prussing then reported of the financial problem for the City in that the hospitals now have gotten themselves exempt from paying property taxes, which has to be resolved. The Mayor then fielded questions and concerns from committee members, most of which were directed to Community Development and/or Public Works, so Libby responded.

Lt. Surlis reported there is a general downward trend in almost every crime category in the UCAP area. There was a spike in May of the shots heard calls, but it does not necessarily mean shots were fired, sometimes it could be a car backfiring or fireworks. He is very pleased with the UCAP area, especially the new apartment complex at Lincoln and Fairview. He asked members if they have heard of any issues in that area, which was met with negative responses. Lt. Surlis followed up on concerns reported at the previous meeting. He then fielded questions and concerns from the committee members.

Meeting adjourned at 6:47 p.m.

Respectfully submitted:
Cassie Heldman