

UCAP Advisory Committee Minutes
King School
November 20, 2014

In Attendance:

Frankie Johnson	Derek Liebert, Park District
Lashaunda Cunningham	Bill Gray, Public Works
Ivy Williams, Civilian Police Review Board	Libby Tyler, Community Development
Carol Ammons, City Council	Lt. Joel Sanders
Mayor Prussing	

The meeting was called to order by Lt. Sanders at 5:35 p.m.

Lt. Sanders began by introducing himself, giving a brief summary of his career as a police officer.

Derek Liebert of the Urbana Park District provided a follow-up report on Crystal Lake. They will be conducting an engineering study for the lake. They want to look at the overall water quality of the lake and to begin to address some of the nutrients that are coming into that system. They also have some pollution concerns that they want to address as part of that project. The park district is really excited about Crystal Lake as a whole and looking at it as a place where they want to focus their efforts for the next few years. He also advised they have completed the pool project and will be applying for a Department of Natural Resources grant for doing a new "Family Fun Zone" near the nature center, to include a new day camp pavilion adjacent to the nature center as well as a nature-based playground. This type of playground is more of an exploratory playground that incorporates natural elements like logs and stones for kids to climb and explore and intentionally get dirty. If successful in receiving grant funds, the work would begin in 2016. Derek then advised the 47th Annual Turkey Trot on Thanksgiving starts at 8:00 a.m. Pass sales for the outdoor aquatic center begin Friday, November 21, 2014, at the most discounted rate of the year at 20% off. He then advised that Corky wanted to share that the youth basketball enrollment is down, encouraging people to sign up for this program. There is an Orange Crush supported scholarship available to all students that are eligible for free and reduced lunch. Currently at King School there are no youth signed up for the basketball program. Derek then fielded questions.

Bill Gray, Director of Urbana Public Works, reported that snow season is already upon us. He then reported on a couple of projects coming up in the spring and summer to include concrete pavement patching as well as pavement striping, and milling and resurfacing work on Lincoln Avenue. He then spoke about some of the recently completed projects. Bill also reported there is a ribbon cutting on Friday, November 21st at 11:00 a.m. for the Boneyard Creek beautification project at Race and Griggs. He then fielded questions and concerns.

Libby Tyler of Urbana Community Development reported on the Campus Circle project on University Avenue. She then advised the City Council approved removal of the Hanford Inn on North Cunningham. A developer was found to demolish it, and he is already getting started. This will position that property to be redeveloped. She also advised the City Council will be considering a new economic development program called Enterprise Zone. The City will be applying for a stronger enterprise zone that will cover more area and involve other taxing bodies including the park district, school district, Parkland College, MTD, Township, City, County- a whole bunch working together to offer very short term tax abatements. The whole goal of this is to jump start the tax base. Libby then reported that the long-range transportation plan has been adopted, which was prepared by the Regional Planning Commission. She also reported that Urbana is the top bicycle-friendly community in Illinois, which is Gold status. Libby then fielded questions.

Mayor Prussing began by discussing public safety and reporting that Erik Jakobsson looked up crime statistics and noted a really dramatic drop in violent crime in Urbana since 2009. Chief Connolly attributes that to things like neighborhood watch groups, where people are paying attention and will call the police when they see something that's a problem. Mayor Prussing then said she thought the Urbana police are doing a really good job, but we do community policing so it depends on the people in the neighborhood being involved by paying attention and calling the police. She then reported that the City's biggest problem right now is the finances because our biggest tax payer, Carle Hospital, quit paying taxes, which lowered our assessed value by 11%. Residents probably noticed their property taxes went up by 11%, but the City did not raise its property taxes. Taxes will be voted on for the first time on Monday, November 24th, and the philosophy that the mayor is promoting is that the City is going to hold the line on City property taxes; not going to raise the rates. She then discussed the Carle Hospital lawsuit. The Mayor then fielded questions and discussion followed.

Carol Ammons wanted to thank everyone for their support, reporting that she will officially leave the Council on December 15th. She asked that if anyone knew of someone who was interested in being on the Council, tell her or the Mayor. Carol reported she did meet with a representative from the hospital association this week and advised them that we need to come up with some plausible solutions for the City of Urbana. They were interested in talking with us, so Carol and the Mayor will discuss it at their meeting Friday. She also met with some telecommunication opponents around the 911 funding issue that we have in the City and Champaign. They are also interested in coming up with a solution, and Carol told them she has a plan to introduce immediately on that issue. So, they are aware that we're coming. Carol said that she will continue to work with Bill Gray about the sidewalk improvement needs in this area. She then advised that her State office will stay on University Avenue. Carol also reported that she and Naomi Jakobsson will hold a transition meeting/public form at the Champaign Library on December 11th at 6:00 p.m. She then fielded questions. Discussion followed.

Ivy Williams of the Civilian Police Review Board introduced herself and passed out some information flyers about the CPRB, pointing out that Grace Mitchell is no longer on the CPRB and Ricardo Diaz has been added.

Lt. Sanders provided an update for the police department then fielded questions/concerns from the attendees. Discussion followed.

Meeting adjourned at 6:27 p.m.

Respectfully submitted:
Cassie Heldman