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UPLANDER

THE UPLANDS RESIDENTIAL ASSOCIATION, EST. 1902



FEBRUARY 2017

VOLUME 117, ISSUE 2

UPLANDS RESIDENTIAL ASSOCIATION MEETING AGENDA FEBRUARY 9, 2017—7:00 P.M.

- I. Call Meeting to Order
- II. Regular Business
 - A. Approve Minutes of Prior Meeting
 - B. Treasurer's Report
- III. Reports
 - A. West Bluff Council
 - B. Western Avenue Greenway
 - C. Other Committees
- IV. Unfinished Business
- V. New Business
- VI. Adjournment

PRESIDENT'S COMMENTS

Hello neighbors!

According to the National Weather Service, the record high for February in Peoria was 74 degrees on February 10, 1932. Wow! You could have a picnic in weather like that. The record low was -26 on February 13, 1905. That's exactly 100 degrees lower than the record high. I'm just as glad we're not setting any records so far in our nice, mild winter this year.

We will be having our monthly association meeting on Thursday, February 9, at 7 p.m. Hope you all can make it! Among other things, we'll be discussing the proposed goals and programs of the West Bluff Council. For those of you who don't know, the West Bluff Council is a not-for-profit organization that represents and promotes West Bluff neighborhoods, businesses, and institutions. It's a great opportunity to work together to improve the quality of life in our part of the City of Peoria. We also have a social time starting at 6:30. Come on out and meet some of your neighbors!

Knowing your neighbors and watching out for them is one of the many things that makes our neighborhood a great place to live—and a safe place to live. If you see any suspicious activity or vehicles in the neighborhood, the Peoria Police request that report it to them using the non-emergency number: (309) 673-4521. You can also report it to your neighbors using the Nextdoor site/app (uplandspeoria.nextdoor.com) or the Uplands Yahoo Group (groups.yahoo.com/uplands). Many of you already do this—thank you!

On February 23, Bradley University is hosting a public lecture featuring Patrisse Cullors, social activist and co-creator of the Black Lives Matter movement. The lecture is free and open to the public, so feel free to attend. We may also see some increased traffic/parking in our neighborhood, as they're expecting a large turnout.

Finally, remember there's a primary election for several local offices on February 28. There are candidates for mayor, a couple of at-large council seats, and township supervisor. For information on how and where to vote, check out peoriaelections.com.

Sincerely,

C. J. Summers

Uplands Residential Association Meeting Minutes Thursday, January 12, 2017

Attendance: Quorum of 8 with special guest Tim Cassidy, President of the Peoria Park District Board.

Convened 7pm

Business was temporarily deferred to allow us to converse with Tim Cassidy.

Mr. Cassidy has been on the board for well over 20 years. In his youth he was a resident of the Uplands. Mr. Cassidy serves as the single at large member on the Board of Trustees. There are six other trustees, three of which represent the park district board central district. This more or less overlaps the City's 2nd and 3rd districts.

The Park District is its own taxing entity, which is distinct from the City of Peoria. The district's operational budget is solely funded by property tax revenues and fees charged for activities. There is no outside support from the State or County. The operating budget runs around \$46 million a year with a staff of around 160 people. Tax rates are capped by the state legislature. Since 2008 revenue levels have been static due to flat property valuations. There is no opportunity to raise more revenues. While revenues have been flat, costs have not, so the district currently is running on a \$3 million deficit. Cuts have been made through staff attrition and facility closures, with more will likely to be needed. In downsizing, the Park District has experienced a sharp loss in institutional experience. The board has found that there is a shortage of talented younger staff with experience and that the district really lacks a long term plan. The board is in the process of developing a long term strategic plan.

The need for a younger vision is needed at the board level as well. To that end, Mr. Cassidy let us know that there will be a board seat open soon. Ms. Kelly Cummings, who represents central district (us), will be resigning her position soon due to her family relocating. The board will be looking to appoint someone to fill out the remainder of her term which ends in 2019. This would be an appointed position with no special election required. If anyone would be interested they should contact Mr. Cassidy or another board member. Mr. Cassidy is hoping to attract younger folks to serve as most of the board members have been there a long time and are getting up in years. The board needs fresh ideas.

Questions:

Q: Has the Illinois budget impasse impacted the Park District at all? A: Not really. The Park District gets no operational funding from the State. They do get some capital grants which have been held up. The renovation of the former YWCA building at Lakeview is one of the projects held up.

Q: What about a bathroom for upper Bradley Park? We have formally asked before. A: At present there is no plan to build one. There is the small building over by the shuffle board courts but it is unclear whether that is usable or convertible. Mr. Cassidy said he would have staff look at it again. He will also consider putting a temporary toilet in the upper Bradley Park area. It was noted that there may be significant grant money for a 'green' bathroom.

Q: Plans for Bradley Park in 2017? A: There are plans to remove the shuffleboard courts this year and possibly that small building by them. The area would be grassed over. There is a small building down by the dog park that is planned for demolition too.

Q: What about curb renovations and crosswalks? A: Mr. Cassidy was unfamiliar with the layout as it currently exists and would look at it. The Uplands would like to see the sidewalks and curbs aligned with crosswalks if possible. As far as putting a running sidewalk curb on the park side of Parkside, that is probably not doable due to current tree placement. Any reduction in the size of the roadway is the City's responsibility and not the Park District's.

Q: With regards to the Park District's current budget woes over the last nine years, why was the Park District continuing to buy additional properties? A: It is to be noted that the Park District cannot sell land. It can buy all it wants but once they have it, they cannot sell it off. Mr. Cassidy pointed out that property acquisitions were ordinarily funded with capital grants. We pointed out that the expanded ownership still must be maintained and would add to the operational expense burden. Mr. Cassidy felt these additional expenses were minimal (but not zero). Mr. Cassidy noted the problem with not being able to sell off land. They can trade it for property of equal 'value'. The Park District owns a significant amount of acreage that could be described as orphaned. Some of that orphaned acreage isn't even within the Park District boundaries. How that came to be was before his time serving on the board.

Q: Could Mr. Cassidy comment on why it seems the Park District runs fewer programs today, like youth leagues, than in the past? We noted the various private organizations running substantial swimming, little league, and soccer programs. Don't we lose something in the community by privatizing these activities? A: In

large part Mr. Cassidy felt there has been a long-term shift in interest. For better or worse children are doing fewer activities. This is especially true in the poorer parts of Peoria. He said they have looked at this before. They still try and run programs in these areas but it is hard to get people to sign up. This presents a sort of chicken egg dilemma. You need resources for people to do activities but if no one signs up those resources are wasted.

To pivot back to lack of interest and strategic planning. With Donovan, there had been some modest interest in converting the former clubhouse into a park café. An RFP was issued but the Park District received no proposals. Mr. Cassidy felt there was miscommunication and mixed messages about what the Park District is doing and trying to do. Hopefully their strategic planning process will yield some clarity of direction. This would include how to manage activities.

Q: There used to be a large bronze statue of the Greek goddess Hebe in the little circle garden at the corner of Farmington road, Parkside, and Main. The pedestal base is still there. It was removed in the mid 1950s? Any idea where it is? A: No idea. It would be great to restore it, if it could be found.

Minutes: Read and approved. Tamara Black-Waite is the new Uplander editor.

Treasurers Report: Treasurer absent. Report submitted to Pete Magsig by email.

West Bluff Council: No meeting in December. Note: There is a forum regarding the Bradley Convergence center. The date January 19th at 7pm. It was noted that District 150 was hosting the Parent University on the same night. 'Family Fun' was the theme.

Western Greenway: No report.

Unfinished Business:

On the topic of mailbox relocations, there was nothing to report. The City was to have a meeting planned to sit down with the local Post Master to discuss the matter. With regards to the request for help with the boulevard gardens, we got a couple volunteers to help at Institute and Columbia Terrace. We still need several more.

New Business:

It has been reported that there have been complaints made about visitors to the Upper Bradley Park, being heckled and intimidated by residents of the Uplands. The problem has been a recurring one. What is to be done about it? It was agreed upon by those in attendance that short of some activity endangering others, yelling and intimidating visitors is probably not the best approach. It conveys a negative image for our neighborhood and risks escalation. Sometimes it is best to call the police and let them handle the problem. The park is there for all the public to enjoy and is not for the exclusive use of the Uplands. If the problem renews itself this Spring, it is advised to just call the police. Residents yelling at parents with kids in tow just for being there is unacceptable.

Muffins!!!! We would like to thank Mrs. Summers for the amazing fresh baked muffins and the gloriously good cherry-cake things.

As submitted by J.R. Hinchee, 1st VP filling in for Pete Magsig as secretary.

Uplands Residential Association Officers:

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Celebrating our "41st" year as a Family Owned Business

DON'T FORGET TO VOTE!

The primary election for several local offices is Tuesday, February 28.

Candidates for Mayor

Jim Ardis
G. Marie Kennell
Couri Thomas

Candidates for At-Large City Council to serve an unexpired 2-year term

(Vote for two)
Sid Ruckriegel
Robert J. Hanauer
Zachary M. Oyler
John L. Kelly
Scott Kelsey
Amr Elsamny

Candidates for Peoria

Township Supervisor
(Democrat ticket)
Francis (Frank) Abdnour
Samuel S. Joseph
Evonne K. Fleming
Harvey Burnett
Clyde Gulley, Jr.
(Republican Ticket)
Daniel Sullivan
Michael A. Aiello

For more information on how and where to vote, go to peoriaelections.com.



Drew and Jodi Foreman
1217 N Elmwood Avenue

Ethan and Janet Ham
1506 W Parkside Drive

Uplands Residential Association Dues

The URA dues are \$20.00 per year. Please make checks payable to "The Uplands Residential Association." If you are interested in donating extra money to our beautification fund, please indicate this on the registration form. You may include the additional amount on the same check as your dues.

Your URA dues can now be paid online! We have set up a Paypal account for your convenience. To do so, please visit Paypal.com, click Send, enter the URA email address (TheUplandsPeoria@gmail.com) and the amount, click "Continue," and follow additional prompts. Your dues will be deposited directly into the URA's Checking Account.

The Uplands Residential Association is on Facebook and Yahoo Groups! You can also email us at TheUplandsPeoria@gmail.com. If you have information for The Uplander, please contact Tamara Black-Waite at tblackwaite@gmail.com. If you are new to the Uplands or know someone who is, contact Kirk Sheckler at 369-1372.

URA Membership Registration Form

Name _____

Address _____

Home Phone _____ Work Phone _____

Email _____

YES! I/WE will pay our \$20 association dues, and contribute an additional \$ _____ for beautification.

Send completed form with payment to URA Treasurer
Dustin Draggist, P.O. Box 6532, Peoria, IL 61601-6532.