

# SUNA Annual Meeting Minutes

Southeast Urbana Neighborhood Association [www.sunaurbana.org](http://www.sunaurbana.org)  
Wednesday May 24, 2023 | 7-9pm | St. Matthew Lutheran Church, Philo Road

---

Attendance: 64 Neighbors (recorded on sign-in sheets)

## **7:06pm SUNA business meeting started by Kathy Wallig**

Welcoming remarks and defining SUNA as a service organization, outlining boundaries of neighborhood.

Updates:

- 2 Colorado Avenue Cleanups since last Annual Meeting in 2019
- Monitor landlords and buildings
- Sent letters of support on behalf of the City of Urbana applying for federal grants for road improvements.
- Supporting the Little Free Food Pantry which is sponsored by Sola Gratia Farm (a mission of St. Matthew Lutheran Church), Cornerstone Fellowship (where the pantry is located), and the Housing Authority of Champaign County. Recognized Sola Gratia Farm for the farm contributions to the pantry. The pantry depends on people and neighbors to fill it. It is stocked every Thursday morning and people are often waiting at the time of delivery. Hunger is very prevalent in SUNA.
- Introduction of Giovanna Dibenedetto as Executive Director of Silver Hearts (formerly Silverwood neighborhood).
  - Giovanna's report included a 'thank you to SUNA' for support. The boundaries of the Silver Hearts neighborhood includes Philo Road to Silver to Cottage Grove to Harding Drive. Giovanna indicated it has taken a lot of hard work to achieve community unification. The focus of the Silver Hearts organization moved from social activities to food provision during Covid lockdown and recovery. Food baskets were delivered to neighbors on a weekly basis.
  - There continues to be a great need for food. Silver Hearts has partnered with St. Matthew, the food bank, and the Housing Authority to provide services and resources to residents.
  - Upcoming Silver Hearts Events:
    - June 27th - first food bank event opens
    - July 29th - first block party since covid

## **7:18pm Financial Report**

Kathy Wallig presented paper copy of report, no questions or requests for clarification on the report.

## **7:19pm Presentation of Slate of Volunteers for Coordinators and Steering Committee**

Kathy Wallig explains the volunteer structure of SUNA. Recognized Pauline Mak for her service as both Secretary and Treasurer as she 'retires' from those volunteer roles while maintaining membership on the SUNA steering committee.

# SUNA Annual Meeting Minutes

Southeast Urbana Neighborhood Association [www.sunaurbana.org](http://www.sunaurbana.org)  
Wednesday May 24, 2023 | 7-9pm | St. Matthew Lutheran Church, Philo Road

---

- Candidates for the Steering Committee presented. No additional nominations from the floor. All candidates approved by voice vote.
- Introduced City of Urbana staff from Imagine Urbana and encouraged people to visit their information station at the back of the room.

## **7:22pm Reports from Mayor and Guest Panelists**

Theresa Michelson encourages people to participate in the Steering Committee, speaks to the talent in Urbana, and explains the format of speakers representing city services and providing updates.

## **7:25pm Report from Mayor Diane Marlin**

Cofounder of SUNA with Theresa Michelson, and former Representative of Ward 7 on City Council. In second term of Mayor of Urbana.

- Welcomed new people to Urbana and SUNA.
- Restored financial health by eliminating \$2.5 million structural deficit.
- Working on planning and collection of data to work on infrastructure issues.
  - Biggest challenge is limited resources. We have built a good foundation and are working on repairing facilities and street lights.
  - Comprehensive Plan is under way. The last plan was done in 2005. There is a very inclusive approach to the comprehensive plan. The next phase includes community input on how to spend money.
- ARPA funds (American Rescue Plan Funds - State and local financial recovery funds due to impact of Covid-19).
  - Very thoughtful process. Urbana got a total of \$13 million in ARPA covid relief funds. About \$10 million of that was allocated to local organizations through a grant process; city council funded a total of 25 community projects focused on housing, food security, violence reduction, health and wellness. One of the projects funded was \$2.5 million toward the construction of the Urbana Park District Health and Wellness Center. (The County kicked in another \$500,000 toward the cost.) State grants and private donations covered the rest.
  - The ARPA funds allocated to community organizations must be spent by December 2026, according to Treasury Department rules.
  - The remaining \$3 million in ARPA funds received by the city was used to replace lost revenue, contract with the Regional Planning Commission to administer all the grants, and provide COVID bonus pay to city employees. We also set aside a few hundred thousand dollars to help pay for a partial special census.
  - There will be a new website in the Fall.
  - Review of Public Safety in Urbana to determine what response model is best.
- Census During Covid
  - We lost population when University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign students were sent home at the beginning of the pandemic. Revenue was lost due to this population shift.
  - Will be conducting a partial recovery census to help recover/restore funds. We have one estimate for the cost of the Partial Special Census: \$420,000 for Census Bureau costs

# SUNA Annual Meeting Minutes

Southeast Urbana Neighborhood Association [www.sunaurbana.org](http://www.sunaurbana.org)  
Wednesday May 24, 2023 | 7-9pm | St. Matthew Lutheran Church, Philo Road

---

- plus local city costs for office, equipment, and outreach. We have requested an alternate estimate from the Census bureau covering some different blocks; once we get that estimate, we'll make final decision about conducting the partial special census. If we do it, it most likely will be next spring (sometime during the Feb-April time period.)
- We estimate that the loss of revenue to the city due to the lower 2020 census population is at least \$600,000 per year, because so much of the federal and state funding we receive is distributed on a per capita basis.
  - Explained that property taxes collect \$0.13 of every dollar which goes to city government, the Urbana Free Library, police pension, and the general fund. Infrastructure does not come from property tax.
  - Throughout this time, we navigated the pandemic and maintained city services.
  - Champaign County has the second-lowest death rate in the state, indicating we 'survived and thrived' during this time.
  - Search process for Police Chief
    - At the time of the meeting, a conditional offer had been extended to a selected candidate.
    - Police Chief Appointment of Larry Boone Announced June 2023: <https://urbanaininois.us/upd-appt>
  - Recognized presence of Ward 6 Representative Grace Wilkin.

## **7:35pm Report from Ward 7 Representative James Quisenberry**

- Also recognized presence of Ward 6 Representative Grace Wilkin.
- Each Ward on City Council represents about six thousand people.
- Council works on figuring out goals and priorities, helped guide spending of ARPA funds, awarding 25 out of 50 ARPA applications.
- The police chief appointment will come to City Council as well.
- Examine Urbana ([www.examine.urbana.il.us](http://www.examine.urbana.il.us)) is an interactive document summarizing the Comprehensive Plan. Encouraged people to visit that site. It will prepare you to participate in the next steps of the Comprehensive Plan.

## **7:42pm Report from Public Works Director Tim Cowan**

- Provided [handout](#) on CIP - Capital Improvement Plan - a five year outlay of infrastructure improvements. This is an asset management plan with spending targets of a 10-20 year outlook and a 5-year capital outlay.
- Traffic signal asset management plan just ended, street lights are up next.
- Defined acceptable level of service to public. This leads to risk-based decisions. Eventually we will have more issues than money, so we'll have to make risk-based decisions.
- Pavement is the biggest infrastructure expense.
- In total, \$1.5 billion is estimated for asset valuation.
- Philo Road is slated to be under construction next year, and Colorado Avenue the year after that.
- \$5.5 million firehouse improvement project.

# SUNA Annual Meeting Minutes

Southeast Urbana Neighborhood Association [www.sunaurbana.org](http://www.sunaurbana.org)  
Wednesday May 24, 2023 | 7-9pm | St. Matthew Lutheran Church, Philo Road

---

- Preventative maintenance seal coat treatments \$350,000.
- See [handout](#) for various highlighted projects. QR Code on the handout to provide information on projects (or search Urbana CIP online).

## **7:49pm Report from Fire Chief Demond Dade**

- Promoted to Chief last year.
- Engine 252 (Philo Rd) is busiest fire truck in the City.
  - 1,100 calls just in 2023
  - Vine Street calls overflow into Station 252
- Looking at new station at the SE corner of Philo and Mumford. Current firehouses are not designed for the growth we have seen in this area. New station will have pull-through structure and cancer risk-reducing features. Risk evaluation will also be done for both man-made and natural risks.
- Mentioned that the SUNA neighborhood has the highest concentration of both elderly and children in the city.

## **7:52pm Report from Director of Community Development Services Kimberly Smith**

- Has been in the position for a month and a half. Has over 30 years experience in planning. Grew up in Urbana and excited to be back.
- Community Development Services builds, enhances and plans for the city.
- Responsibilities/Services include:
  - Rental registrations and inspections
  - Property maintenance and enforcement
  - Arts and Culture, Farmer's Market
  - Grant Management (a portfolio of \$10 million)
    - a signage grant to Philo Rd businesses is available
    - grants for sidewalks, lighting, fire stations
  - Expanded roof program for replacement and repair
  - Blight reduction
  - Development of affordable housing
  - Emergency repair
  - Eligibility is for low to moderate family income range
  - Planning for all things related to land-use
  - Lots of special projects and data collection

## **7:58pm Report from Interim Police Chief Rich Surles**

- Introduced self and command staff present at the meeting:
  - Interim Deputy Chief Matt Bain, 23 years on the force
  - Patrol Lieutenant Corey Koker, 23 years with UPD
  - Mike Cervantes, Active duty military and with UPD since 2006

# SUNA Annual Meeting Minutes

Southeast Urbana Neighborhood Association [www.sunaurbana.org](http://www.sunaurbana.org)  
Wednesday May 24, 2023 | 7-9pm | St. Matthew Lutheran Church, Philo Road

---

- Interim Chief Rich Surles, 26 years with UPD, grew up in Urbana
- Shootings going down
  - 2021 (huge surge) 115 confirmed shootings
  - 2022 44 confirmed shootings
  - 2023 (so far) 13 confirmed shootings (45% reduction); 2 homicides, one gunfire, one stabbing.
- Police Staffing
  - Authorized to have 59 officers
  - 4 current vacancies, including Chief
  - 7 in training
  - 3 on duty-injury status
  - Very lean on staff but still doing well. In the process of hiring and currently have 3 conditional offers out as of Monday May 22, 2023.
  - It takes approximately 12 months to go from application to solo police patrol officer.
  - Expecting a number of retirements over the next 3-5 years.

## **8:06pm Report from Executive Director of Urbana Parks Tim Bartlett**

- Health and Wellness Center \$15.8 million facility. \$13.8 million is currently in place. Currently fundraising for the remaining amount. 18 months of construction.
- New master plan for Prairie and Weaver parks.
- Building out the trail head.
- Blair Park improvements.
- Celebrating the 25th anniversary of the Meadowbrook Park Sculpture Garden.
- Prairie Plan at Meadowbrook has a \$1 million grant to replace the play structure.
- Made a comment to recognize and celebrate public engagement with the Park system.

**8:12pm - 9pm** Questions and mingling.

**End of Meeting**

---

## **Attachments**

- Urbana Public Works Department Staff Report

## **Links and Resources Mentioned within Reports:**

- Capital Improvement Plan  
<https://urbanaininois.us/departments/public-works/about-public-works/engineering/capital-improvement-plan>
- Capital Improvement Plan Map  
<https://urbana.ccgisc.org/portalurbana/apps/webappviewer/index.html?id=b4b48ecfae094b62b439911db8efda43>

# SUNA Annual Meeting Minutes

Southeast Urbana Neighborhood Association [www.sunaurbana.org](http://www.sunaurbana.org)  
Wednesday May 24, 2023 | 7-9pm | St. Matthew Lutheran Church, Philo Road

---

- Examine Urbana Website (Comprehensive Plan information)
  - [Examine.Urbanallinois.us](http://Examine.Urbanallinois.us)
  - <https://www.urbanallinois.us/examine>

## Supplemental Information and Resources Shared at Meeting:

- The Summer New to CU Mixer
  - Monday July 10, 2023, 5:00 - 7:00pm
  - Riggs Beer Company, 1901 S. High Cross Road, Urbana
  - Free to attend; RSVP by July 6th <https://www.experiencecu.org/events/new-to-cu-mixer>
  - Hosted by Visit Champaign County Economic Development Corporation.
  - Sponsored by Think Urbana
- Housing Rehabilitation Programs
  - Grants Management Division
  - Apply online at: <https://portal.neighborlysoftware.com/URBANAIL/Participant>
- Volunteer for UPDAC - Urbana Park District Advisory Committee
  - <https://www.urbanaparks.org/get-involved/urbana-park-district-advisory-committee-updac/>
- Silver Hearts
  - 1118 Austin Dr., Urbana, IL 61802
  - [silverhearts451@gmail.com](mailto:silverhearts451@gmail.com)
  - PayPal Link: [paypal.me/silverhearts2015](https://paypal.me/silverhearts2015)

## SUNA Steering Committee:

NW quadrant: Kanittha Fay

SW quadrant: Graeme Gilmore, Eileen Kohen, Pauline Mak, Nancy Uchtmann

NE quadrant: Mary Kay Pleck, Nikki O'Brien

SE quadrant: Jill Peckham

Coordinators: Theresa Michelson, Kathy Wallig

[www.sunaurbana.org](http://www.sunaurbana.org)

Respectfully Submitted,

Nikki O'Brien

Secretary, SUNA Steering Committee

Sunday July 9, 2023