

**Upper Delaware Council
OPERATIONS COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES
February 25, 2020**

Committee Members Present: Larry Richardson, Aaron Robinson, Al Henry, Fred Peckham, Jeff Dexter, Jim Greier, David Dean, Dan Paparella
Committee Members Absent: Harold Roeder Jr.
Staff: Laurie Ramie, Ashley Hall-Bagdonas
NPS Partner: Acting Superintendent Jessica Weinman, Jennifer Claster
Guests: Roger Saumure (Shohola alternate), Cheryl Korotky

The UDC's Operations Committee held its monthly meeting on Tuesday, February 25, 2020 at the Council office in Narrowsburg, NY. Chairperson Richardson called the meeting to order at 7:43 p.m. There was no public comment on the agenda.

Approval of January 28th Meeting Minutes: A motion by Peckham seconded Henry to approve the January 28th, 2020 Meeting Minutes was carried. There was no public comment on the agenda.

Executive Director's Report and Monthly Calendar:

Financial Status:

FY 2020 Federal Funding: Ramie said Modification 14 was executed today; in 24-48 hours we should expect to see the funds. Ramie said we were in the situation where the amount that we were owed is almost equal to the amount we have left in our bank account. On 2/24 Acting Superintendent Weinman forwarded Modification 14 for the UDC's signature from Northeast Region Contracting Officer Patrick Reidy which will release the balance of \$262,500 through 9/30/20 based on the UDC's application package submitted on 1/7. The UDC is owed \$73,339.20 in federal reimbursement, representing a \$1,666.78 deficit for November, \$23,760.78 for December, \$33,740.19 for January, and \$14,171.45 for February expenses. The UDC's Fiscal Year 1st Quarter Financial and Progress Report was submitted to NPS on 1/31. Three revisions were required to the SF-425 financial form. Upon full execution of Mod 14 and electronic deposit of the funds, Ramie will withdraw the amount owed from the ASAP account. Ramie will renew the UDC's System for Award Management (SAM) annual registration by 3/25.

Bank Balance: The UDC had \$77,524.50 in its Jeff Bank accounts as of 2/24.

FY 2019 Federal Funding: Following the "liquidated" status that appeared when the performance period expired for the \$6,700 in the UDC's FY 19 encumbered funds account, the execution of the Modification 14 will also extend the end date to 2/28 for the \$1,700 balance of the Phase 2 Records Management Contract and 5/1 for the Shohola TAG 2019-02 finalization. Ramie will draw down the \$1,700 immediately and the \$5,000 when the zoning ordinance's substantial conformance review is complete.

NY Watershed Funding: Ramie attended a 2/20 meeting of the Alliance for the Upper Delaware River Watershed with Senator Jen Metzger at her Liberty district office. Since Governor Cuomo did not act on the 11/19/19 request to add \$500,000 for long-term watershed protection and restoration efforts to the \$350 million Environmental Protection Fund through his 2020 Executive Budget, Sen. Metzger introduced it on 2/19 as a line-item budget request through the Senate Environmental Committee. These State funds could also be used as 1:1 match source for the Federally-funded Delaware River Conservation Fund grants program. Ramie passed around a photo from the meeting. Among those in attendance were representatives of Friends of the Upper Delaware River (FUDR), the Coalition for the Delaware River Watershed, Catskill Mountainkeeper, the New York League of Conservation Voters, the Upper Delaware Water Tailwaters Coalition, Orange County Land Trust, and Orange County Pathways.

Administration:

Job Search: The Personnel Subcommittee met on 1/28 to review applications. Three interviews were arranged for 2/6, with one candidate withdrawing prior to that. Ramie prepared summaries, application materials handouts, recommendations, interview questions, updates, and an outline of the benefits package. A second candidate withdrew due to salary considerations. Ramie received a list of references on 2/13 from a preferred candidate, she placed calls on 2/14 and 2/18 to three individuals and provided a report to Personnel. Training options and salaries were discussed. An offer was attempted on 2/20, but the candidate emailed on 2/21 about accepting a different job. After extending the application deadline to 3/16, Ramie placed another round of advertisements in four local newspapers, sent the announcement to various contacts, and posted the listing on the UDC website, NY Workforce Development, and PA Career Link sites, and NY and PA chapters of the American Planning Association.

Conflict of Interest Statements: All 2020 forms have been received except for: George Conklin (Fremont); David Peters (Delaware); Sean Nearing (Cochecton); Evan Padua (Tusten); Joseph Canfield and Daniel Rutledge (Damascus); Judy Kuhn Conklin (Lackawaxen); Michael Flaherty (NYS); and Steve Tambini (DRBC) as of 2/24. Richardson requested to have the form emailed to him so he could give Nearing another copy.

Political Representatives: Assemblyman Clifford W. Crouch (R-122nd District) announced in a 1/16 press release that he will not be seeking re-election in 2020, ending a 25-year career in the NYS Assembly and a 34-year career of public service. Crouch represents the Delaware County portion of the UDC territory.

Public Relations:

5/2 Awards Banquet: Ramie discovered on 1/30 that our preferred venue was not available on our traditional 4th Sunday of April. After consulting with the Operations Committee, the Central House Family Resort was booked for 5/3. Buffet menu was selected, Ramie noted room set-up arrangements and the itinerary in a 2/12 letter. She invited PA Representative Johnathan Fritz as the keynote speaker in a 2/3 letter, which he accepted on 2/10. Ramie did a 2/11 news release about soliciting award nominations being due by 3/16. She provided a timeline of Awards Banquet activities in the packet. The keynote speaker identity will be formally announced in a news release next month since the focus now is on gathering award nominations.

Publicity: Three news releases were issued: “Upper Delaware Council Elects 2020 Officers”, with swearing-in photo, 2/6; “Upper Delaware Council Seeks Nominations for 32nd Annual Awards by March 16”, 2/11; and “Help Plan Upper Delaware Clean-up Mar. 4”, 2/20. Hall-Bagdonas uploaded Ramie’s photos from the 2/6 swearing-in ceremony to the UDC website photo gallery. Potential topics for publicity are: Awards Banquet Speaker and Honorees; Litter Sweep; PA Grant Funding; 2020 UDC Officers and Board Membership (when PA vacancy filled); Project Review Workbook; UDC Annual Report; Watershed Signage Campaign; and Railroad Emergency Response Guide Update. Ramie provided a copy of the press release of the 3/4 3 p.m. and 6 p.m. planning sessions for the Upper Delaware Clean-up to be held at UDC in the meeting packet.

“The Upper Delaware”: Ramie began a conceptual outline of topics and is setting up interviews. Next, she will finalize the contents’ list, do research, gather information, take or select photos, do the layout and compose. The Spring 2020 issue is due to Courier Printing on 3/25. Hall-Bagdonas will send the updated mail list by 4/1. Delivery is due on 4/6.

NPS Site Bulletin Update: Upper Delaware Scenic and Recreational River is updating its map brochure. Weinman said it should be ready by summer. Ramie reviewed and provided suggested edits on 1/29. The new brochure will refer visitors to the UDC website for additional river valley information. Henry asked if they changed the acreage and Ramie said she doesn’t know if it mentions that specifically. She said it does stress private property. Henry recommends that NPS change Narrowsburg, PA to Darbytown, PA since the Fish and Boat Commission is going to put a sign up saying Darbytown, PA. Weinman said she thinks he is looking at an outdated version of the map but she will look into that.

Grants/Fundraising:

2019 Technical Assistance Grants: After Shohola’s zoning ordinance is approved for substantial conformance, its approval will go before the Project Review and Operations Committees, Ramie will then publicize its completion and release the \$5,000 encumbered as a FY 2019 expenditure in the ASAP account.

2020 Technical Assistance Grants: Ramie sent reminders on 2/12 about the 2/28 due date for Mid-term Progress Reports, all of which were received on time. Next we await the project completions by 8/28 for Delaware, \$1,127; Hancock, \$5,000; Tusten-1, \$10,000; and Tusten-2, \$7,250. They will be put on the Project Review and Operations agendas for approvals as each grant project is fulfilled and publicize accomplishments.

Consulting Projects:

Project Review Workbook Update: Ramie received a revised quote from Dorene Warner of W Design on 1/28 to produce the online and print versions of the Version 2.0 workbook, with variable printing costs. The estimated cost for the graphic design is \$4,310 depending on the final page count, the number of meetings needed, and the extent of the edits. There was an offer by the National Parks Conservation Association (NPCA) to cover the production costs and assist with the orientation sessions. The next steps are to review the design and provide comments, set up a new email address to accept land use projects to be reviewed electronically, and discuss project roll-out and training sessions with Town/ships when the guide is complete.

Interim Project Review Services: The “Upper Delaware Council Consulting Services Agreement for Project Review and Substantial Conformance Tasks” with Tom Shepstone of Shepstone Management Co. was signed on 1/24/2020 at \$150/hour, exclusive of travel time. Shepstone submitted two review projects to date: Highland River Access and Damascus mobile home permit. Shepstone’s report from the two reviews were sent out on 2/18, for action by the Project Review Committee on 2/25. No billing has been submitted as of yet. This agreement will be funded through the lapsed salary of the Resource Specialist.

Upper Delaware Sweep Coordinator: The “Upper Delaware Council, Inc. Scope of Services: Upper Delaware Sweep (working title) Coordinator” agreement with Dan Paparella of the Upper Delaware Recreation Project was signed on 1/28. It allows a maximum budget of \$3,000, payable at a rate of \$15/hour for up to 200 hours, inclusive of any required travel and individual expenses. Compensation will be payable upon submission of an itemized invoice. This agreement is being funded through the UDC’s PA DCED grant proceeds. Planning sessions will be held on 3/4 at 3 and 6 p.m. at the UDC office.

Upper Delaware Council Fiscal Sustainability Plan: Ramie said the UDC will retain a consultant to commission a long-term business plan to guide the organization’s fiscal operations and explore how to diversify funding sources. This study will be funded through the UDC’s PA DCED grant proceeds, with \$10,678.47 allocated.

UDC Strategic Planning Retreat: Ramie said we will plan the logistics for a guided strategic planning process of developing the UDC’s next Five-Year Operating Plan for Fiscal Years 2021-2025, which is due to the NPS by 7/1/2020 along with FY 2021 annual budget and work plan package.

Records Management: UDC received the Needs Assessment Report and Draft Policy and Procedures Manual from consultant K Sickler-Murphy. Ramie and Hall-Bagdonas will review these documents and seek UDC approval through a resolution. Hall-Bagdonas will train staff in the use of the Excel database and future archiving of files.

Calendar: A copy of the March Calendar was provided in the packet. Ramie noted that March and April are UDC’s busiest times of the year mainly because of the Spring Newsletter and the Awards Banquet. Ramie said she’s not sure about our ability to fund River Clean-up Grants as there is a minimal amount in the budget that can be dedicated to that. She said after we receive our current reimbursement that is something we should look at because she starts soliciting those proposals in March.

Old Business

Personnel Subcommittee Report: Henry said they interviewed two candidates after one planned interviewee withdrew. There was a salary disparity with one candidate. One prospect was willing to work within the UDC’s range but he subsequently took another position. Ramie said he would have also had to relocate from Connecticut and reconsidered after some thought. Ramie re-advertised the job on Monday. Henry said with the few project reviews here he doesn’t know if that’s enough to sustain a person with a Planning degree. He feels UDC could train someone. Henry said if anybody knows of anyone qualified, to put please put the word out. Robinson said he’s been

dwelling on the issue of what we need of this person; in one respect we need a highly qualified land planner as a similar caliber to Claster. He said working with Claster it became obvious when you have someone that comes in with a background and training it facilitates the process much more efficiently. He said the UDC is the first wave of review and he is concerned that if we hire a trainee, they won't have the skills and background to represent the municipality's responsibilities of property rights and property use. He said the Shohola Planning Commission went through this process with Claster. They had to be very cognizant of what they were doing because they are the accountable party to the constituency. He understands some people may want to train the right person but he feels we need someone that has that knowledge because they are doing reviews for each municipality. Robinson said we are reliant on them to help us navigate through as a council and present projects to the NPS in such a way that it meets their standards. He said it may be 20% of what that person does, but it's a critical 20%. Saumure asked Robinson what the obstacles are to getting the right person in place? He said he doesn't think we are going to attract an experienced individual at this salary. Dean proposed approaching an engineering firm to see what it would cost per project. Ramie said we need a third staff person in the office to help meet our workload. Saumure asked if that was viable to continue in that manner? Greier said he's anxious to see the Shepstone bill and if we can afford to do that for the time being until we find the right person. He said compared to paying salary and benefits, using him when needed it may not be that bad. Peckham said he wants his name withdrawn from the Personnel Subcommittee. Henry said we need to make sure that early on in the process this time salary range is discussed. Discussion continued. Claster said something to throw out there is if a full zoning revision was to come before the committee and was reviewed by a consultant she thinks the cost would be considerably more than a project review. It's time-consuming and takes multiple meetings.

Discuss UDC Five-Year Plan Development and Visioning Retreat: Ramie said we have a 7/1 deadline to get this together. There was a discussion of going off-site and coming up with a vision of where we want to be in five years from now with the organization. Ramie reached out to FUDR who had a contact they recommend as a facilitator. Ramie would like to set a month and date no later than May. Weinman said Steamtown National Historic Site, where she was previously working went through a 5-year Strategic Plan in 2018. She said it was great to have an outside facilitator come in and guide you through that process so time wasn't wasted. She said she would like to work closely with the UDC and Ramie to help find facilitators and figure out what we want from the 5-year plan. She asked if UDC would want any non-members or partners to be part of this retreat? Weinman said her 5-year planning retreat took 2 days and their cost was higher. Steamtown National Historic Site relies heavily on volunteers to operate and they were a big part of that Planning Committee and they also have partners. A Motion by Henry seconded by Robinson for staff to look into pricing at Narrowsburg Union on a Saturday carried. Ramie will pick a few potential dates and circulate them around to members.

PA DCED Grant Update: Ramie said on 2/14 she and Richardson received an email asking them to electronically sign a contract for a Pennsylvania DCED grant. Ramie reached out to our DCED contact and asked if approved, what are the protocols for announcements about it. We also have a legislative sponsor involved who would need to be recognized in this. They said don't do anything until the contract is fully executed and that happened today. Ramie is now in the process of reviewing the payment process which requires setting up a separate bank account. Ramie said the full \$100,000 was approved for the exact projects submitted in the application. We will submit one invoice for \$100,000 and they will put the money into the bank account we set up and UDC can disburse this funding for the individual projects, as she understands it before reading the 30-page contract. Ramie said Eckersley & Ostrowski, LLP has agreed to be our auditor because that is a requirement. Ramie said the good news is we get these projects subsidized including the Upper Delaware Sweep, the business plan, the technology upgrades, and the approximately \$75,000 that is being used by the Townships for their various projects.

Other: Henry said he feels now is the time to contact both Congressman Matt Cartwright and Congressman Antonio Delgado again. We reached out to them last year when speaking with our representatives. We should request that they or one of their representatives come out to one of our meetings to figure out how we can enhance our federal budget.

New Business

2020 UDC Awards Banquet Timeline: This handout was provided so members can see what is coming up on the schedule and are encouraged to submit nominations.

Summary of Pending Bills 2-27-2020: A Motion by Henry, seconded by Peckham to approve the bills was carried.
Financial Statement 2-29-2020: Richardson said the financial statement is offered for individual review.

Other: None.

Public Comment: None.

Adjournment: A Motion by Peckham seconded by Greier to adjourn the meeting at 8:40 p.m. was carried.

Minutes prepared by Ashley Hall-Bagdonas, 2/27/2020