

Upper Delaware Council
OPERATIONS COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES
March 22, 2022

Committee Members Present: Andy Boyar, Jeff Dexter, Larry Richardson, Fred Peckham (Zoom), Jim Greier, Harold Roeder, Al Henry, Ginny Dudko, Aaron Robinson.

Committee Members Absent:

Staff: Laurie Ramie, Kerry Engelhardt (partial attendance after Tusten Planning Board meeting), Ashley Hall-Bagdonas

NPS Partner: Cody Hendrix- Community & Land Use Planner (Zoom)

Guests: Bill Dudko- Town of Deepark Alternate

The UDC's Operations Committee held its monthly meeting at the UDC office in Narrowsburg on Tuesday, March 22, 2022. Chairperson Boyar called the meeting to order at 7:50 p.m.

Approval of the February 22, 2022 Meeting Minutes (:07): A motion by Henry seconded by Robinson to approve the February 22, 2022 Meeting minutes carried.

Executive Director's Report and Monthly Calendar (:20): Ramie offered a summary of her written report.

Financial Status:

FY 2022 Federal Funding: Ramie withdrew \$23,087.49 from ASAP on 3/21 to cover the March abstract of bills, leaving a balance of \$21,010.09 from the 2nd Quarter allocation. NPS Upper Delaware Administrative Officer Michelle Blockberger notified the UDC on 3/21 that a federal budget has been approved and they expect to have funding "passed down to the park within the next few weeks". She advised getting an application package ready to request \$150,000 for the 3rd and 4th quarters, but not to submit it through Grant Solutions until after 4/5 due to a transition to a new online version of the SF-424 form. Ramie will work with bookkeeper Mike Poska to prepare the federal funding package which must include a Fiscal Year 2022 UDC-NPS Cooperative Agreement Amendment/Modification request, a new budget in an Excel file and updated work plan/budget narratives for 4/1-9/30/22, and SF-424 and 424A forms with attachments.

State Funding: Six letters were approved on 3/3 and mailed with attachments to Congressional and State representatives, NY and PA governors, and Secretary of the Interior Deb Haaland on the subject of "Administration of River Management Plan threatened by financial crisis". NYS Senator Mike Martucci sent a letter to NYS officials on 3/7 supporting the appropriation of \$100,000 for the UDC (handout provided.) Chairperson Boyar visited NYS Assemblywoman Aileen Gunther on 3/11 to seek support. Ramie will prepare a "blue skies" budget and UDC accomplishments list to assist with funding advocacy efforts by legislators, the National Parks Conservation Association, and others.

FY 2021 Federal Funding: Ramie received the final Fiscal Year 2021 Financial Review report (10 hard copies), IRS 990 and NYS Charities Bureau Form 500 filings from Eckersley & Davis on 3/21 and requested electronic copies. Signatures will be obtained and she will send returns by the required deadlines (990 submission by 8/15/22 based on the CPAs' application for an extension of time approved on 3/7) and with the \$75 filing fee for NYS (also due by 8/15).

Administration:

Administrative Tasks: Ramie renewed the UDC's System for Award Management registration to receive federal funds on 3/1 for another year. She researched and compiled a Redistricting Impacts Report for Congressional and NY-PA Legislative Representatives on 3/3. She continued to consider revenue-generating and cost-savings measures for the UDC as an outgrowth of the Fiscal Plan report and subsequent discussions, including a 3/3 Executive Committee meeting and a 3/8 request for four regional newsletter producers to share information on their costs and procedures. She will further analyze the Fiscal Report recommendations and 2/5 UDC workshop ideas.

Personnel Subcommittee members were tasked on 2/23 with completing a Staff Performance Appraisal for the executive director and returning their rankings to Henry to compile by 3/3. Ramie's last review was done on 11/24/2020. Henry reminded anyone that had not handed that in to please send it to him.

Public Relations:

"The Upper Delaware": Ramie did an outline of contents on 2/28 for the Spring 2022 issue. She assigned three articles to Engelhardt. Ramie logged 47 hours on the newsletter from 2/28-3/21, including formatting, design, photo manipulation, research, interviews, and editing. Expected delivery is on 4/4. It will be posted online and distributed. Ramie will continue exploring alternative distribution options.

News Releases: Ramie issued three news releases: "UDC Accepts Litter Sweep T-shirt Sponsors by March 18", 3/2 (deadline reminder); "UDC Oaths of Office Sworn" and "2022 UDC Membership", photos and captions, 3/7; and "UDC Seeks Municipal Proposals for River & Shoreline Clean-ups", 3/21. She was interviewed by *Delaware Currents* publisher Meg McGuire on 3/7 (phone) and 3/11 (in person). She circulated *River Reporter* 3/10 and *Delaware Currents* 3/15 articles on UDC fiscal situation to the membership. Ongoing publicity occurs through Facebook, Instagram, LinkedIn, YouTube and Vimeo outlets. UDC also posts all NPS UPDE news releases at upperdelawarecouncil.org.

34th Annual Family Raft Trip: Hall-Bagdonas made arrangements with Lander's River Trips for the 8/7 raft trip from Skinners Falls to Narrowsburg, with 9-10 a.m. parking and check-in at the Narrowsburg Campground and a morning shuttle. Cost: \$29 adults, \$19 children 5-12. Reservations are due by 7/29.

34th Annual Awards Ceremony: Ramie booked Central House Family Resort as the venue for 9/18 on 2/23. She developed a project timeline of activities. Next, she will invite Congressman Matt Cartwright (PA-8) as keynote speaker.

Non-UDC meetings or events as well as the latest documents are listed on the Executive Director's Report that is included in the meeting packet, along with the monthly calendar.

Ramie said as one follow-up from last month, Henry asked if UDC had our funds in an interest-bearing account. UDC has both a checking account and a money market account. The interest in the latter is currently 0.05%.

New Business

Grant Support Letter: Upgrades to Hancock Junction Pool Access (14:40): This application to the Delaware River Watershed Fund managed by the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation is by Hancock Partners, Inc., a nonprofit organization, for upgrades to the Hancock Junction Pool Access. Ramie said the deadline for this grant program is 3/31 so there isn't time to bring this before the full Council. Both this project and the Delaware River Civilian Climate Corps are programs UDC has been involved with in the past. A Motion by Richardson seconded by Greier to support Upgrades to Hancock Junction Pool Access carried. Hendrix said if UDC does do any work please let NPS know because they may have to log it into Planning Environmental Public Comment (PEPC) to go through the proper process. Ramie noted that the UDC is supporting this activity but not responsible for any of the work.

Grant Support Letter: Establish a Delaware River Civilian Climate Corps (18:15): Ramie noted that she and Shannon Cilento had a virtual meeting with two staff members from The Corps Network when they were first discussing this concept back on 6/24/2021. We suggested that they reach out to Friends of the Upper Delaware River (FUDR), Catskill Mountainkeeper, Delaware Valley Job Corps, and Delaware Highlands Conservancy as having more capacity to serve as administrators for this work program. FUDR is now submitting a grant request to establish a Delaware River Civilian Climate Corps. Ramie has a fact sheet on this issue if anyone is interested. Greier mentioned his concern for writing letters of support that involve the whole river basin and not just the Upper Delaware. Discussion continued. A Motion by Richardson seconded by Dexter to approve the letter did not pass. Ramie will notify Friends of the Upper Delaware River of the committee's majority vote against providing a support letter so that they're not expecting it to send with their application package.

Draft Town/Township Resolutions and Responses to 3/3 UDC Funding Letters (26:15): Ramie provided two draft sample resolutions, one for NY Towns and one for PA Townships, to support the establishment of a permanent

budget line for the Upper Delaware Council. Boyar worked on the language for the draft resolutions with Ramie. A Motion by Henry seconded by Robinson for Ramie to circulate draft resolutions of support to the 13 UDC member municipalities carried. She will prepare a cover memo and send personalized copies of the draft resolutions in hard and electronic copy, and enclose a copy of the 3/15 *Delaware Currents* article on the subject of UDC funding. Representatives are encouraged to present these resolutions at their next town board/supervisors meetings. Once gathered, the approved resolutions will be sent to each governor by certified mail.

2022 River & Shoreline Clean-up Grants – Proposals due by 4/22 (40:30): This is the time of the year that the UDC solicits proposals for our River and Shoreline Clean-up Grants Program. UDC has budgeted for \$5,000 for FY 2022. Last year UDC gave out a little over \$5,000. Boyar said he was the Supervisor for the Town of Highland in 1989 when these grants were first being offered by the National Park Service and there were also grants for law enforcement for the Town and Townships. That money for those grants has atrophied down to \$5,000. Ramie said that former Superintendent Kris Heister produced a report that explained when those programs stopped being funded by NPS. UDC picked up the River & Shoreline Clean-up Grants in 2014 specifically because the NPS had discontinued those trash contracts. UDC takes an allocation out of our federal funds for this purpose.

Summary of Pending Bills 3/21/2022 (43:25): A Motion by Henry seconded by Robinson to approve bills carried.

Financial Statement 3/31/2022 (43:43): Boyar said the financial statement is offered for individual review.

Other: None.

Old Business

2nd Annual Upper Delaware Litter Sweep Sponsors by 3/18 (44:00): Ramie said we had a deadline of 3/18 for Litter Sweep sponsorships and she's pleased to say we ended up with 32 sponsors. The total amount raised is \$5,300, both in outright donations and goods and services pledged, which is an excellent response. Ramie provided a list in the meeting packet of the 32 sponsors. It's a great combination of individuals, businesses, non-profits, church congregations, etc. UDC is very grateful for every donation.

Hall-Bagdonas said a Litter Leaders email went out last week and clean-up dates are firming up. Social Media posts with pictures will go out to encourage more volunteers. The Litter Sweep poster has been updated to input each Town/ships cleanup location and date.

Our cleanups are stretching outward and UDC has been asked to help in Livingston Manor with the Dette Flies cleanup. That will be on 4/23 and UDC will provide supplies. The Housefly Fishing cleanup is set for June and they are excited to work with the UDC again.

Hall-Bagdonas contacted Christina from Mike Preis Insurance to obtain a Certificate of Liability form. The NYS DOT Permit 33 is ready to send to Cathy at NYS DOT. Hall-Bagdonas talked to Ryan from Platform Industries and they are excited to do the t-shirts again. They take about two weeks to print and may need to mix safety colors due to distribution shortages.

Boyar talked about sharing about the Upper Delaware Litter Sweep in the various local papers. Committee members asked Hall-Bagdonas to utilize NY and PA DOTs for supplies.

Newsletter Distribution Research and Fiscal Plan Workshop Follow-ups (58:46): Ramie was asked to look into alternatives to our newsletter now. Ironically, because she was working on the Spring issue of the newsletter, she didn't have too much time but she started the process. She reached out to organizations that put out newsletters that we admire and asked about their distribution. As Michael Crane mentioned in his report, we have \$12,654 budgeted for FY22 for the newsletter which covers three issues. We did our Fall/Winter issue back on 12/6, our Spring issue will come out on 4/4 and we have one more issue under this contract with Courier Printing, the Summer issue due to come out on 8/1. The cost for printing, labeling services and mailing is \$2,621 per issue. The postage for the Winter issue ran around \$1,300 to send to the 9,000 subscribers. UDC pays an annual bulk mailing rate of \$265. UDC also pays the change service required fee to receive address updates from the U.S. Postal Service to keep the list current. Ramie reached out to the Delaware Highlands Conservancy (DHC), Basha Kill Area Association, Basket Historical

Society of the Upper Delaware, and Natures Journal. So far, Ramie has only heard back from Bethany Zarnowski at DHC who provided some great advice. Hall-Bagdonas also started to look into email distribution like Constant Contact and MailChimp, and Ramie will look further into that as well. The committee talked about utilizing UDC's social media pages to promote the newsletter.

UDC Social Media Update (66:20): Hall-Bagdonas said the microplastics study post has reached over 650 people on Instagram. The Tusten TREX soft plastic recycling program post has reached over 1,000 people on Facebook and Instagram. We will continue to have ongoing promotion for the April Litter Sweeps with posts providing information as it comes in. Our social media continues to be a great way to get information like the *Delaware Currents* article and our newsletter out to the public.

Other (67:44): Richardson asked Engelhardt for an update on the Tusten Planning Board meeting she had just returned from attending in progress across the street. Engelhardt said the application for Big Eddy Brewing was approved. She spoke with the attorney after the meeting and they said they did come back with solid parking numbers and the board was happy with that. She will reach out to the clerk for that information. She will also look into the sewage capacity as the committee had raised concerns.

Engelhardt added that the Project Review Committee will have to look at the Weiden application proposing to put a day care center in the Narrowsburg Union.

Public Comment: None.

Adjournment: A motion by Robinson seconded by Roeder to adjourn the meeting at 8:57 p.m. carried.