

**Upper Delaware Council**  
**OPERATIONS COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES**  
**June 22, 2021**

Committee Members Present: Jeff Dexter, Fred Peckham, Larry Richardson, David Dean (Zoom), Aaron Robinson, Al Henry, Jim Greier.

Committee Members Absent:

Staff: Laurie Ramie, Shannon Cilento, Ashley Hall-Bagdonas

NPS Partner: Cody Hendrix- Community & Land Use Planner

Guests: None

The UDC's Operations Committee held its monthly meeting at the Council office in Narrowsburg, NY. on Tuesday, June 22, 2021. Chairperson Dexter called the meeting to order at 7:53 p.m.

**Approval of May 25<sup>th</sup> Meeting Minutes:** A motion by Henry seconded Peckham to approve the May 25, 2021 Meeting Minutes was carried.

**Executive Director's Report and Monthly Calendar:**

***Financial Status:***

**FY 2021 Federal Funding:** Ramie applied through ASAP on 6/22 after contacting the Help Desk due to temporary access block into UDC's account on 6/21 to withdraw \$24,224 to cover the June abstract of bills, leaving a balance of \$110,610.47 for Fiscal Year 2021. Budget status worksheet is attached. She will continue monthly expense drawdowns and prepare an annual Federal Financial Report and Performance Progress Report for online submission within 30 days of the fiscal year's 9/30/21 end.

**State Funding:** Ramie received a call from Senator Mike Martucci's aide Jane Kunzweiler on 6/10 regarding our request for a meeting to discuss NYS funding issues in response to our 5/12 correspondence. She will make arrangements for the Sen. Martucci meeting when potential dates are offered.

***Administration:***

**Internet Issues:** Ramie investigated the increased costs for Frontier ISP billing and discovered that a service agreement with discounts had ended without notification. She renewed it on 6/7 and requested a technology platform upgrade from ADSL to a bonded VDSL line to increase the unsatisfactory Internet speed, for a net increase of around \$10/month. An exterior modem capacity update occurred on 6/9. Aaron Robinson consulted with Jeff Chorba over a plan to increase Internet speed in the conference room where the booster has been only marginally effective. Since Chorba is unable to perform wiring services in NYS on his PA license, Robinson and his son-in-law came in on 6/11 to string 150 feet of copper CAT 6 cable through the attic from the front modem to the back router so the unit could operate on its own hard-wired transmitter. Chorba came in on 6/14 for the next step of hooking up and testing equipment in the conference room, reporting that we were now getting full speed. However, the Internet continued to randomly disconnect. A Frontier technician returned on 6/16, swapped out the modem which may not have been capable of handling the higher speeds, installed a splitter, separated out the fax line, did a firmware update, tested the speed, and monitored interruptions remotely. Since the intermittent disconnects have persisted, Robinson returned early on 6/22 to bypass the Netgear unit in place and hook into the default WIFI on the modem as a test of our equipment.

**Health Insurance:** MVP Health Care has filed a request with the NYS Department of Financial Services to request a premium rate change of 6.4% for 2022. The notice dated 5/25/21 states there may be changes to the plan deductible, co-pays, co-insurance, or out-of-pocket maximum benefits as well. Final rate information will be released at least 60 days before the 2022 renewal date (12/1 for the UDC plan).

***Public Relations:***

**“The Upper Delaware”**: Ramie began covering events including the 6/5 Knotweed demonstration at Skinners Falls, 6/12 Zane Grey Plein Air in Callicoon, 6/13 Suspension bridge historic marker in Barryville; and interviewed Evan Padua for the profile on 6/22. She did a list of contents on 6/16. She will conduct additional interviews, search for photos and needed information, complete design and composition by 7/28 and send file to Courier Printing. Ramie will review blueline proof. Hall-Bagdonas will update the mail program database by 8/2. Staff will await delivery on 8/9 to distribute and publicize.

**7/25 Riverfest**: Ramie submitted an application on 5/27 to the Delaware Valley Arts Alliance to request an information booth at the 7/25 Narrowsburg Riverfest resuming in-person this year, with Hall-Bagdonas and Cilento to alternatively staff it between 10-4.

**UDC 8/1 Raft Trip**: Ramie proofed the registration flyer on 5/27 for the 33<sup>rd</sup> Annual Family Raft Trip with Kittatinny Canoes: park at KC Matamoras Base between 9-10 a.m., shuttle up to Staircase Access. \$29 ages 13 and up, \$19 ages 4-12. Reservations required by 7/23. Staff will post the event flyer, send invitation to past guests, publicize the reservations, and start the guest list. Hall-Bagdonas will oversee logistics.

**UDC 9/12 Awards Ceremony**: Ramie received confirmation from NYS Senator Mike Martucci on 6/16 accepting our invitation to serve as keynote speaker at the 33<sup>rd</sup> Annual River Valley Awards Ceremony at Central House Family Resort. She will start the solicitation of award nominations on 6/25, due by 7/23, and select and publicize 2021 recipients. Banquet reservations will be due by 9/3.

**News Releases**: Four news releases were issued: “NY-PA Joint Interstate Bridge Commission Approves Construction & Maintenance Plans”, 5/27; “UDC 2021 Membership & Chairperson Oath”, 6/7; “UDC Technical Assistance Grant Applications Due by Aug. 20”, 6/7; and “UDC Announces Availability of Litter Clean-up Kits”, 6/8. Ongoing publicity occurs through Facebook, Instagram, LinkedIn, YouTube and Vimeo outlets. UDC also posts all NPS UPDE news releases at upperdelawarecouncil.org. Ramie provided contacts and photos to Isabel Braverman for *Sullivan County Democrat* article on Knotweed demonstration site on 6/11. She provided the *River Reporter* with photos and awards booklet text for their Ed Wesely tribute, and a letter of appreciation that was printed as a Letter to the Editor.

**FY 2019 and 2020 Annual Reports**: Ramie will compose the UDC’s Fiscal Year 2019 and 2020 Annual Report for on-line posting and availability of hard copies upon request.

#### **Grants/Fundraising:**

**UDC Benefit T-shirts**: Hall-Bagdonas ordered 57 shirts in a variety of sizes from Platform Industries on 6/21 at a cost of \$392.75 to restock the UDC’s supply for the summer season. Sales continue through UDC website and public request by PayPal, cash and checks.

#### **Consulting Projects:**

**Ten Mile River Access Boat Ramp Feasibility Study**: Ramie sent a letter to JHA Companies on 6/21 seeking a modification of the contract as per the Water Use/Resource Management Committee discussions. She will look into applying for a NYS grant to help subsidize the engineering phase, with applications due by 7/30.

**Upper Delaware Council Fiscal Sustainability Plan**: Ramie wrote copy for a legal advertisement for the Request for Proposals that was placed in five newspapers on 5/26, emailed directly to a list of 14 contractors, sent to five county planning offices for referrals, and posted on American Planning Association PA and NY chapter websites. She answered inquiries from potential bidders. The PA DCED grant allocates \$10,678.47 to this project. She will accept sealed bids through 6/28. Selection of a contractor will happen at the 7/1 at the UDC meeting. Project completion is due by 12/1/21.

Non-UDC meetings or events as well as documents produced are listed on the Executive Director’s Report included in the meeting packet, along with July’s monthly calendar.

#### **Old Business**

**Request for Proposals: Long-term Fiscal Sustainability Plan and Economic Analysis Due by 6/28**: Members had seen the draft form of the Request for Proposals (RFP). She tried to keep it relatively simple knowing that if any

bidders were interested, they would contact UDC for more information. Since this went out on 5/26, we've received about ½ dozen inquiries. One in particular was a first draft. The question they generally had was since this is a grant funded project is UDC at liberty to tell them what our budget is? Ramie said she would rather let them know so the request isn't so out of bounds it isn't viable. She said in retrospect she probably should have included it on the RFP. The other question was about divvying up the two projects. Ramie said we are interested in the Economic Analysis but the main priority is the Long-term Fiscal Sustainability Plan. We've requested sealed bids to keep the integrity of the process. The deadline is 6/28 and Ramie will provide a summary for the 7/1 UDC meeting.

**PA Grant and Litter Sweep Account Updates:** Ramie provided a balance sheet in the meeting packets. Our end balance is \$47,926.50 because we are still waiting for the two Township projects to come in at \$15,000 each. Ramie reached out to those Townships today and Cathy Hunt from Berlin Township thinks she'll have the projects to UDC by the end of the month. Steve Adams from Damascus Township told Ramie the issue they have is with their Food Pantry project. They put it out for bid and the low bid was \$94,635 which was \$64,000 over budget for what they planned to spend. They rejected the bids as being out of the park. Now they are waiting on guidance on using funding through the American Rescue Act to help pay for some of that project. Adams did say the outhouses at Damascus Trail are going to be complete before the end of summer. In terms of the Litter Sweep Account, as a reminder we have two special dedicated accounts in addition to the UDC's general funds. One is for the PA DCED Grant and the other is for the Litter Sweep and litter related supplies. After we finished the Litter Sweep and spent down all donations received, we put the \$500 from Sullivan Renaissance into that and are now at the process where the entire \$500 has been spent and accounted for. We only await our credit card bill to show a final statement from Home Depot. Then the Litter Sweep fund will be down to zero.

**Sullivan Renaissance Grant Final Report:** Cilento provided the Grant Report she submitted to Sullivan Renaissance along with other documentation to close out that grant. Staff showed members the litter cleanup kit. Buckets, helmets and trash grabbers are all inventoried with stickers for easy record keeping. Hall-Bagdonas shared the press release with the Keep Hawley Honesdale Beautiful group for their Lackawaxen River Cleanup and she will be taking the litter cleanup kits for the 6/26 event.

**Index of UDC Digitized Records:** Hall-Bagdonas said she feels like each UDC staff member has been working with their hands tied behind their back with these internet issues. She thanked Robinson for being so helpful in assisting with that issue. She is in the process of making an index of the digitized records. The scanning project from 2018 is focused on the meeting minutes, newsletters, and Technical Assistance Grants (TAGs). Hall-Bagdonas is cross-referencing the scanning project and looking at our website. It's a great journey to look at all our the TAG projects each Town/ship has done. She feels it will be a great reference for Town/ships to review and say "should we update this brochure?" "Do we need to update this plan?". Richardson suggested indexing TAGs by subject rather than year or municipality.

**UDC Social Media Analytics:** Cilento said Instagram continues to be our most popular platform. Updates include Instagram (last 30 days): 117 posts, 1,056 followers (+44) 2,670 accounts reached, 12,523 impressions (post views), 309 profile visits, 17 website clicks in profile, 1,043 content interactions, 896 likes, 23 comments, 19 saves, 100 shares. For Facebook (last 30 days) we have: 516 followers, (+83) 420 likes, 2,800 people reached with posts. There have been 290 post engagements (likes, comments, shares). Our UDC LinkedIn has 76 followers with 249 post impressions. Facebook and Instagram are most popular right now and we will focus on those most to grow engagement. It will be interesting to see how much engagement we get in the next six months.

**Other:** Henry said the Personnel Subcommittee met and decided on a recommendation on a personnel issue. A Motion by Henry seconded by Robinson to pass the recommendation to the full council meeting on 7/1 for an Executive Session carried with one abstention.

### **New Business**

**Five-Year Plan Tasks:** There is a 7/20 deadline for members to review the document of tasks and provide comments to Cilento.

**7/29 Pike/Wayne Conservation Partnership Legislative Breakfast Poster and Attendance Cost:** Ramie said UDC is also making efforts to address State funding in PA. Cilento has been participating in the Pike/Wayne Conservation Partnership and they put out a Call to Action. We added ours which is on the back of the flyer where

we describe our PA funding issue. These issues of concerns will be presented to Federal and State Legislators that attend. The event is on 7/29 at Delaware and Hudson Canal Park at Lock 31 on Rt. 6, Hawley, PA. Ramie attended the event in the past and this was one of the reasons Representative Fritz was so responsive to UDC and initiated the PA Grant for us. He technically represents the non-participating Townships in Wayne County but has still been a champion of the UDC. A Motion by Richardson seconded by Henry to approve Ramie, Cilento and Chairperson Dexter to attend the 7/29 event at the cost of \$85 carried. Staff will prepare the funding issues poster utilizing the provided template.

**Summary of Pending Bills 6/21/2021:** A Motion by Henry seconded by Robinson to approve bills was carried.

**Financial Statement 6/30/2021:** Dexter said the financial statement is offered for individual review.

**Other:** Henry said Juneteenth happened on 6/19 and UDC staff was shortened a federal holiday due to the late decision. NPS found out and went to Code Red Alert on Thursday 6/18. Henry told Hendrix to pass along that it would be helpful if NPS could relay that information to UDC. A Motion by Henry seconded by Richardson to allow staff a floating paid holiday in the next month carried.

Greier said in the future any issues that come forward regarding personnel should first be addressed with the Personnel Committee and not at a public meeting. Robinson asked if there is something in the newspaper, is that a personnel issue or is that public information? Greier said it affected personnel and should first be addressed in the subcommittee. Dexter asked if there was a UDC Executive Committee in the past? Ramie said it was talked about but never put into practice. Richardson said all topics would not qualify for an Executive Session but all topics would qualify for discussion with the Personnel Committee.

**Public Comment:** None.

**Adjournment:** A motion by Richardson seconded by Robinson to adjourn the meeting at 8:41 p.m. was carried.