

**Upper Delaware Council  
OPERATIONS COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES  
June 23, 2020**

Committee Members Present: Larry Richardson, Harold Roder Jr., Aaron Robinson, Al Henry, Fred Peckham, Jeff Dexter, Jim Greier, David Dean, Dan Paparella  
Committee Members Absent: None  
Staff : Laurie Ramie, Ashley Hall-Bagdonas  
NPS Partner: Acting Superintendent Darren Boch, Jennifer Claster, Brenna King  
Guests:

The UDC's Operations Committee held its monthly meeting on Tuesday, June 23<sup>th</sup>, 2020 via teleconference. Chairperson Richardson called the meeting to order at 7:53 p.m. There was no public comment on the agenda.

**Approval of May 26<sup>th</sup> Meeting Minutes:** A motion by Robinson seconded Greier to approve the May 26<sup>th</sup>, 2020 Meeting Minutes was carried. There was no public comment on the agenda.

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

Ramie asked Acting Superintendent Boch if he pronounces his last name with a hard "c"? He confirmed that it's pronounced like Johann Sebastian Bach.

Ramie said she's sad to report that David Hulse, who was a longtime reporter for *The River Reporter*, passed away Friday night. She doesn't know any of the arrangements as of now but asked Debra Conway to inform her so she can share it with the UDC as well as the D&H Transportation Heritage Council. Hulse was involved in that group; he was the site manager for the Summitville D&H Canal Linear Park that is owned by Sullivan County. He was very much into history and a great fan of the Roebling Bridge. There used to be a group called The Friends of the Roebling Bridge and he was part of that. Hulse covered UDC meetings for decades. Henry added that Hulse worked for the NPS as a seasonal park ranger. He resided in Barryville.

***Financial Status:***

**FY 2020 Federal Funding:** On 6/22, Ramie applied to withdraw \$16,609.11 from the ASAP account to cover June's bills. The Federal funding balance is \$124,495.05 through 9/30. The UDC's Fiscal Year 2020 3<sup>rd</sup> Quarter Financial and Progress SF-425 Report for April-June will be due to NPS by 7/31.

**FY 2021 Documents Due:** Ramie prepared a budget, narrative report, work plan and SF-424 Application for Federal Assistance package for the FY 21 1<sup>st</sup> Quarter requesting \$75,000 to be obligated in NPS FY 20 funds to avoid any gap in available revenue for the UDC from 10/1-12/31/20, when the federal government will be transitioning to a new financial management software system. Following approval at the 6/4 UDC meeting, submitted the documents to NPS UPDE Administrative Officer Michelle Blockberger on 6/4 PM, with revisions made as requested on 6/5. UDC will await execution of a Cooperative Agreement modification by NPS Region 1 Contracting Officer Patrick Reidy to authorize the release of funds to the UDC. The Fiscal Year 2021-2025 UDC-NPS Cooperative Agreement renewal was submitted to the Department of the Interior on 1/15/20.

**FY 2019 Federal Funding:** NPS verbally approved the extension of the 5/1 Period of Performance end date for this encumbered account to 9/30. Ramie will draw down the \$5,000 balance to close out this account when the Shohola TAG 2019-02 Zoning Ordinance's substantial conformance review is complete.

***Administration:***

**UDC Board Changes:** On 6/10 the Town of Delaware appointed Thomas H. Dent to succeed Harold G. Roeder, Jr. as UDC representative. Roeder will become the alternate, replacing David Peters. Incoming and outgoing welcome and appreciation letters were written, and an orientation folder prepared. Ramie also noted that Roeder is our Distinguished Service Award recipient at this year's UDC Banquet when we will have the opportunity to pay proper

tribute to him for his 23 years on the board. Ramie reached out to the State of New York and Commonwealth of Pennsylvania on 6/17 about the status of their vacant UDC alternate positions. Bill Rudge and Tim Dugan, respectively, each said they are working on it and hope to announce new individuals shortly. A meeting is scheduled for 6/23 with Ramie, Dent, Town Supervisor Steve Lundgren, and Roeder for a UDC orientation.

**NPS Personnel Changes:** There was a UDC introductory meeting on 6/12 including Ramie, Hall-Bagdonas and Claster with Acting Superintendent Darren Boch, superintendent at Paterson Great Falls National Historical Park in NJ, whose detail at Upper Delaware is 6/8-10/2/20. Ramie was informed on 6/18 by Community and Land Use Planner Jennifer Claster that she has accepted a new position with the NPS Regional Office in Philadelphia as a project manager in the Line Item Construction Division. Having started at UPDE on 4/29/2018, she expects her last day of work in the Upper Delaware will be 7/31/20. Claster said she is going to miss this Valley dearly and the beautiful Upper Delaware River we work to protect. She said it's been great to be here the last couple years and it's a really fascinating process that is used here to encourage proper land use control. Boch said he's been here under two weeks and found she's a consummate professional. He's been very happy to get to see her work on these complex issues at this Unit. Robinson said he appreciates Claster working with Shohola Township on their Zoning and he feels it came out better. Boundaries beyond the Corridor needed tuning up and they appreciate that. Ramie said UDC wishes Claster well and will miss her. Ramie asked Boch if NPS plans to advertise for a new Community and Land Use Planner, given the importance of this position's direct interface with the UDC and its members. He said the position will certainly be advertised.

**Health Insurance:** MVP Health Care, which provides UDC employees' medical insurance, has filed a request with the New York State Department of Financial Services to approve a 5.61% premium increase for 2021. DFS may approve, modify, or disapprove of the requested rate change.

***Public Relations:***

**Narrowsburg Riverfest:** While the Delaware Valley Arts Alliance has cancelled the street festival aspect of this annual event on 7/26, it will reimagine it as an "online, month long celebration in July" that will feature an online market place, live streaming events, the poster auction, and special "River Eats" at local restaurants. A 6/20 message from DVAA Executive Director Ariel Shanberg states: "Earlier this year as we were planning for a 'traditional' Riverfest, we had discussed expanding the festival's dialogue around ecology (and how it intersects with the arts) and launch a new series of presentations dedicated to celebrating life on and the traditions of our River Valley. As one of our region's committed voices focused on the environment, we wanted to see if you'd be interested in having a conversation about how you might be able to participate. Some ideas include demos via Zoom/Facebook Live; panel discussions; guided field walks/tours that spotlight wildlife, ecology, foraging, etc. Let me know what you think. We are constructing a schedule now and would love to involve you." Ramie said given our limited staffing generally we have a booth that we staff at Riverfest each year to distribute literature but I Ramie said she's not sure what else we could contribute with that format. She feels this is something that would be more up the NPS's alley of programming. She knows they're not doing any summer programming, but maybe something like this could be worked in. Ramie will forward the email to Chief of Interpretation Ingrid Peterec from the NPS. Ramie said it's unfortunate that Riverfest won't have the street fair that is very popular and one of the biggest events in the river valley.

**Publicity:** Four news release were issued and/or posted on 6/1, 6/9, 6/17, and 6/19. Ramie also requested article corrections of the *Tri-County Independent* on 6/16.

**UDC Raft Trip:** The 32<sup>nd</sup> Annual UDC Family Raft Trip is scheduled for 8/2 from Minisink Ford to Pond Eddy with Lander's River Trips. Reservations are due by 7/27 at \$29 for ages 13 and up, and \$19 for ages 5-12. Karen from Lander's told Hall-Bagdonas that Lander's is increasing its sanitizing of equipment, individual safety talks and more shuttles. She said they will be able to handle our group. They did say they will be asking people to wear a mask on the shuttle as of now. We will continue to be in contact with them as preparation for the event continues. Ramie said we will continue publicizing it.

**32<sup>nd</sup> Annual Awards:** Ramie needs to reach out to Central House Family Resort in Beach Lake based on public health requirements. There are no issues with capacity; Pennsylvania's Green Phase allows 250 people for gatherings and the Carriage House room is very sizable. We started with a buffet and will likely have to transition to

ordering entrees. Our Keynote Speaker, Representative Fritz, remains available. Reservations would be due by 8/21. Ramie is picking 7/8 to make the final decision because she will be working on the Summer Issue of the newsletter and would like to include information about the event in there.

**“The Upper Delaware”**: The Summer 2020 issue is due by 7/22 for publication on 8/3.

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

**River & Shoreline Clean-up Grants:** On 6/4 the UDC approved Resolution 2020-10 awarding \$3,285.71 to the Town of Deerpark and \$1,100 to the Town of Lumberland for clean-ups. Ramie sent notification letters with payment request instructions on 6/9. Projects must be complete by 9/18.

**Special Meetings:** Ramie attended the NY-PA Joint Interstate Bridge Commission annual meeting on 5/27. On 6/18 she participated in the DRBC’s Water Management Advisory Committee meeting. The Trust for Public Land held a steering committee meeting for the Callicoon Park Project on 6/19 at the Apple Barn in Callicoon. Last night was the Upper Delaware Scenic Byway meeting. The July calendar is provided in the meeting packet.

#### **Old Business**

**Five-Year Strategic Plan Update- New Schedule, Venue, Advance Work:** Ramie said we originally had a 7/1 deadline, which seemed slightly arbitrary because she didn’t know what that corresponded with for NPS. One of Kris Heister’s final acts was to clarify for us, does UDC really need to have that done by then? The ruling was that we do not because our Cooperative Agreement is in, and the First Quarter documents are all there. This Five-Year Plan is considered more of a conceptual document. We do still need to have our retreat to work on this document, which we’re committed to do. Our current Five-Year plan expires 9/30. We’ve hired Buck Moorhead, who is a trained facilitator. Ramie spoke with Moorhead on 6/12 about scheduling and preplanning activities. They are looking at early fall and they have three phases to this plan. He would like to do a pre-workshop planning and establish a small steering committee to help him work out the agenda for the retreat. That is the second phase, which we’ve always talked about doing a full day Saturday and going off site for that. Then of course, we need to allow time for Moorhead and his team to draft and write this plan and submit it in draft form to the board as the third phase. Moorhead will be reaching out to Richardson to confer with him about the composition of a diverse steering committee that can help. We also would like to submit a questionnaire to everybody in advance to try to stimulate thinking. Ramie had drafted up questions such as what three issues do you consider to be of the highest priority for the UDC address over these next five years? Who else beyond our members should we invite to participate in the retreat? What type of format and exercises do you feel would be the most productive? How would you define a successful strategic plan workshop in terms of outcomes? Ramie said that we lost our venue; we had been offered use of the Damascus Manor Community Center via Linda Dexter, who is the president of that organization, and we were happy to host it there on 5/30. The facility has opted to not schedule any programs for all of 2020. Ramie said we do have funds to pay for a venue and she’s not concerned about that but would like the board to think about ideas of places we could have it, perhaps an outdoor pavilion. We need some place with electricity, tables and chairs, perhaps a fire hall.

**PA DCED Grant Update- Township Reimbursement Procedures:** Ramie created a voucher system for the DCED Grant based on what Richardson utilizes as treasurer for the Upper Delaware Scenic Byway. Ramie provided the payment form as well as the memo that was sent out to the five townships in the meeting packet. Ramie wanted to make sure that everybody had that information and that we can start accepting requests for reimbursement of projects that go back to the Pennsylvania Fiscal Year of July 2019. This program runs through December 2021. UDC has completed our computer upgrades. We upgraded to Windows 10 and bought laptops to have mobile usage for staff. On Monday, Hall-Bagdonas ordered the equipment that we approved purchasing through the DCED grant for audio visual needs. We’re getting a new projection screen that will come down from the ceiling, a multimedia projector cart, laser pointer, a conference phone, and laptop carrying cases. Today Ramie received a reimbursement request from Westfall Township for a paving project which is a little over \$12,000 also adding a space for the fact that the Eastern Pike Police Department has moved to the Township Municipal Building. Ramie wrote out the check for that. After each project, Ramie plans to publicize what the Township did with this funding. Richardson thanked Ramie saying she has done a great job securing the grant and administering it. It’s a lot of work.

**Other:** None.

### New Business

**Discuss Resuming In-Person Meetings with July 2<sup>nd</sup> UDC:** Richardson said he would open this for discussion. He's pretty nervous about it. It may be ok to have 25 people, but he's not sure how we would do social distancing? Ramie said we are currently requiring masks; it says that on each of our entry doors here. We also have our disinfecting products here with hand sanitizer and disinfecting wipes. We'll be sure to wipe down all the tables and surfaces and space people at least two chairs apart. That's our internal plan. Dean said he thinks it's time to come back. Boch said if you're following the appropriate state and local guidance, which is what the NPS is following in each of its units in all of its jurisdictions across the country, you have to make operational changes, which he thinks Ramie has already described and he feels are appropriate. He said he would personally support the in-person meeting. Peckham recommended having people sign up for the 25-person limit. Richardson requested a roll call vote for resuming In-Person meetings as of 7/2 UDC meeting. It carried with one abstention by Richardson. Paparella asked if we could still have a phone option for folks who either don't feel comfortable or it's just more convenient to call-in to a meeting. Ramie said one of the purchases through the DCED grant is a conference phone which has three microphones. We are hoping receive that from Kristt Company by the 7/2 meeting. The phones we have right now are not strong enough to allow that in the big conference room. Richardson said we will plan to have the next UDC meeting in-person. Greier asked if we could have it across the street at the Town Hall since it's bigger? Ramie said she will look into that. Henry asked if it's mandatory to wear a mask if you are six feet apart? Ramie said she will look into that. Henry asked if Ramie could send the information out with what is needed to be in compliance. That would be helpful. Peckham recommends that the UDC buy masks for those that may forget theirs.

**Ideas for FY 2020 Budget Surplus Allocations:** Provided in the meeting packet is a copy of the current projected expenses that our bookkeeper, Mike Poska, had put together. Currently accounting for expenses that we know of, we still are about \$42,000 to the good. We need to consider any pending bills that he doesn't have there. For example, Tom Shepstone will be charging us for the Holbert Quarry review. We also have zoning documents coming up from Shohola Township and two from Tusten Township. All of that will be billable hours under our consulting contract with him. The Project Review Workbook printing that Ramie mentioned earlier at \$1,271, UDC only had \$500 budgeted. Our two proposals for the videographer so far ranged from about \$2,000 to \$3,500. UDC's Five-Year Plan facilitator services that was approved at \$3,880. Now we need to pay for a venue for the retreat and we'll be buying food as well. When we get this ceiling projection screen, we need to hire somebody to install that for us and hopefully to also fix Ramie's ceiling fan in her office.

In terms of surplus funding, some ideas that she had is that we will be doing a business plan under our Pennsylvania grant for long term fiscal sustainability for the UDC, which is a fantastic project, but we had to backfill that expense with what was left of the \$100,000 after we offered the shares to the Townships and paid for our equipment. So that was a little under \$10,700 that we had allocated. We could use some of our money to supplement that to bolster what we can offer for a contract. We have the litter sweep that we were forced to reschedule from this spring that we're doing in 2021. We had included \$3,000 in the grant for a coordinator. Paparella as the coordinator hasn't received a dime despite all the hours and work. We could supplement that program as well with UDC funds. Hall-Bagdonas suggested since we've had such trouble attracting a Resource and Land Use Specialist, we use a portion of our funds as a sign-on bonus for an individual to perhaps provide a little more incentive since we have the funds. That is something that our Personnel Subcommittee can consider. When we do have a new person, we will want to do training and conferences; we do have \$500 budgeted for each of those. Ramie said one item that is constantly there for us as a possibility is doing Substantial Conformance reviews for all of our Town/ships. We have not had formal reviews of their entire zoning done since 1996. We would outsource that job because of our current staff situation. We could put out bids to request that. We had estimated that that could be about \$10,000 per township to do a thorough job of hiring a professional planner for that purpose.

We have small things we can think of like the River Safety message that we talked about when we were considering options for the Pennsylvania grant. Hall-Bagdonas had suggested that since the Life Jackets Save Lives signs were not universally accepted by people who felt they create clutter and accidental river litter, we could do stickers or window clings of that logo instead.

Robinson suggested we conduct a study on the source of the turbidity in the river. He's noticed at least in Barryville, the variables for the whole area increased over the years. He said most of the tributaries in this area are providing clear water. He said its source would be upstream. It would be a good thing to determine where the erosion is occurring and see if some of it could be remedied over time. Robinson grew up along the river and it was never that turbid after every storm. It would get turbid after high water, but not like it is now. Peckham said the source of the turbulent water is from a clay bank up past Pepacton Reservoir which opened up from the storms in 2004, 2005, and 2006. When you get a really heavy downpour up there it puts a lot of "chocolate milk" in the river. That's what he remembers being told at UDC 15 years ago. Robinson said he would think it would remedy itself. This is why he's suggesting this if the funds are available and if the NPS or NYC DEP considers it an appropriate project.

Henry suggests increasing the amount for the Technical Assistance Grants. Ask Tom Shepstone if he can write up the Supplement and also see if we can increase funding for river cleanups. Henry said he doesn't think the sign-on bonus will work. Ramie will have to check with NPS as it is Federal Funds. Ramie said the TAG and River Cleanups run through 9/30. Henry recommended contacting the Towns to inform them we have extra money in this fiscal year, so come up with some TAG projects. Ramie said as long as we obligate the funds by 9/30 it's possible to do.

**Personnel Subcommittee Report:** Ramie said we did a third round of advertising for the Resource and Land Use Specialist. Applications were to be submitted by Monday, 6/22. Out of this round, we received one application which the Personnel Subcommittee has. Henry recommends contacting the applicant as soon as possible. Get a few dates and times and contact the Personnel Subcommittee to schedule a date for an interview.

**Summary of Pending Bills 5-26-2020:** A motion by Henry, seconded by Robinson to approve the bills was carried.

**Financial Statement 5-31-2020:** Richardson said the financial statement is offered for individual review.

**Other:** Greier said as long as we're going back to an in-person meeting, he requests that we run a meeting in a business-like fashion so we can get in and out in a reasonable amount of time. It would be a health issue for us; that way we won't have to be together so long.

**Public Comment:** None.

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