

**Upper Delaware Council
OPERATIONS COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES
August 24, 2021**

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

Committee Members Absent: Jim Greier, Al Henry

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

NPS Partner: Superintendent Joe Salvatore, Cody Hendrix- Community & Land Use Planner

Guests: Roger Saumure- Shohola Township Alternate

The UDC's Operations Committee held its monthly meeting at the Council office in Narrowsburg, NY. on Tuesday, August 24, 2021. Chairperson Dexter called the meeting to order at 7:26 p.m.

Approval of July 27th Meeting Minutes: A motion by Robinson seconded by Richardson to approve the July 27, 2021 Meeting Minutes was carried with an abstention by Dexter.

Executive Director's Report and Monthly Calendar:

Financial Status:

FY 2021 Federal Funding: Ramie applied through ASAP on 8/23 to withdraw \$28,090.65 to cover the August abstract of bills, leaving a balance of \$52,371.66 for Fiscal Year 2021. She was advised by Michelle Blockberger of the pending ASAP shutdown from 9/25-9/30 with a recommendation to withdraw September/FY 21 balance funds by 9/22. She will analyze the UDC FY 21 budget status by mid-September to make final spending recommendations to zero out the balance. Ramie will prepare an annual Federal Financial Report and Performance Progress Report for online submission through Grant Solutions within 30 days of the fiscal year's 9/30/21 end.

State Funding: Ramie participated in 7/27 and 8/19 Zoom calls by the Alliance for the Upper Delaware River Watershed to discuss strategies for pursuing the \$1 million NYS Environmental Protection Fund budget line item request for the Upper Delaware River, as well as the 8/5 Day on the Delaware event to promote NYS funding investment. She attended the Pike/Wayne Conservation Partnership's PA Legislative Breakfast on 7/29 in Hawley. Under New Business, the committee will review a letter on UDC operational funding to NYS Gov. Kathy Hochul to forward to the full Council on 9/2. Staff will continue to follow up with PA Governor Wolf's Northeast Region Director Tom Caffrey on his interest in coming to a UDC meeting.

Administration:

Insurance: Ramie received a renewal notice for VSP vision plan on 8/4, with a premium increase from \$6.14 to \$6.33/month per person (annual cost to UDC increasing from \$221.04 to \$227.88) for the period of 12/1/21-11/30/23.

Trash Contract: UDC received a notice on 8/3 by contractor Tom Coacci of a rate increase for monthly trash and recyclables pick-up from \$40 to \$45 due to increased dumping fees and the price of gas.

Brochure Request: The Sullivan Catskills Visitors Association on 8/16 has requested a box of UDC Visitor Information Map and Guides to be delivered to their 15 Sullivan Ave., Liberty office during weekday work hours. Ramie asked if any committee members were going by Liberty so they may drop off the brochures. She said she would reach out to Johnny Pizzolato who is on the SCVA board to see if he could drop them off otherwise after the next Upper Delaware Scenic Byway meeting on Monday.

Public Relations:

UDC 9/12 Awards Ceremony: Ramie collected and reviewed the nominations received by the 7/23 deadline and beyond. She prepared a recommendations document for the Awards Subcommittee (Dexter, Richardson, and Dudko) on 8/3, and received their approvals that day. She updated the invitation & reservation form and prepared the directory of 2021 honorees on 8/4. She notified the winners by email on 8/5 with attachments. Compiled a

database of contact information for the 13 award categories. Ramie prepared formal award letters on 8/16 and sent invitations to the 2020 honorees to attend the 9/12 banquet to collect their plaques from last year's canceled event if possible. She issued a news release announcing the honorees on 8/17. She reviewed the database of past guests for Hall-Bagdonas' direct mail invitation distribution. Ramie divided up award profiles with her and Cilento to research and write for the booklet. She arranged for a keynote speaker gift and started the guest list. Ramie requested photos, quotes, information, and interview times as needed. A news release will be issued focusing on Senator Martucci as keynote speaker and the 9/3 reservation deadline. Research, interviews, and photo requests will continue to compose the souvenir booklet for submission to the printer on 8/30. Ramie will write inscriptions for plaques and certificates. Hall-Bagdonas is accepting reservations through 9/3 and will provide the guest count by 9/7. Staff will set up at Central House Family Resort at 2 p.m. for the banquet that starts with a 3 p.m. reception. Ramie said while we are focused on this year it would be good to think about next year. Should we keep the old schedule of having the Awards Ceremony in April since we now have the Upper Delaware Litter Sweep during Earth Day week? This is something to consider. Since only seven months will have passed since the 2021 awards. We may want to push back the date.

UDC 8/1 Raft Trip: The 33rd Annual Family Raft Trip was successful, with 77 guests for the Staircase Access to Matamoras float. Staff did on-site registration at Kittatinny Canoes Matamoras Base on 8/1, followed by sending an 8/5 memo regarding the invoice to affirm UDC billing, updating the event directory, and issuing a news release after requesting identifications for photo captions.

"The Upper Delaware": Ramie received and returned the blueline proof that Courier Printing sent on 7/27 based on our submission of the newsletter file on 7/26. Hall-Bagdonas updated the mail program database on 8/2. Courier delivered newsletters to the Callicoon Post Office for the bulk mail and to the UDC office on 8/6, ahead of the 8/9 deadline. Ramie handled distribution, updated the newsletter articles index, and did publicity on 8/16. A quote from Courier Printing for Fiscal Year 2022 printing and mailing services was solicited on 8/19 and received on 8/20. The committee will review the FY 22 quote under New Business and she will prepare a resolution for 9/2 UDC meeting action. "The Upper Delaware" Fall/Winter issue will be finalized by 11/24 for release on 12/6.

News Releases: Six news releases were issued: "UDC Participates in Pike/Wayne Conservation Event", 8/2; "UDC Grant Assists Town of Tusten to Update Its Comprehensive Plan", 8/2; "UDC Hosts 77 at 33rd Annual Raft Trip", 8/5; "UDC Announces Honorees for 33rd Annual River Valley Awards", 8/17; "UDC Presents 'Global Warming: The Cold, Hard Facts' Sept. 2", 8/17; and "The Upper Delaware Summer 2021 Newsletter Available On-line and by Mail", 8/18. Ongoing publicity occurs through Facebook, Instagram, LinkedIn, YouTube and Vimeo outlets. UDC also posts all NPS UPDE news releases at upperdelawarecouncil.org.

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 September's monthly calendar.

Old Business

Long-Term Fiscal Sustainability Plan Progress: Ramie said Michael Crane participated on two days of the Delaware River Sojourn. He opted to travel here on his own expense. UDC appreciates he was willing to do that. He met with Superintendent Salvatore and NPS Administrative Officer Michelle Blockberger on 8/11. That same day he met with board members of UDC to get the Town/ship perspective. Robinson said they had a good discussion and Crane asked good questions. He believes Crane has a good picture of UDC's financial structure and sees the challenges UDC faces. Ramie said he met with her and Cilento individually via Zoom. Salvatore said the meeting went really well with Crane but he felt that he kept blurring the line between UDC and the NPS. He felt Crane was confused by that, with Salvatore admitting that he is confused as well at times even when he reads the River Management Plan (RMP).

Index of UDC Digitized Records: Hall-Bagdonas provided a list of Technical Assistance Grants (TAG) by type for committee members. The main categories are planning, education/outreach and websites. She also provided an Index of Scanned UDC documents and said this is a living document that will be updated. Staff will be able to go through files and add to the list. She said there are important files like the Resolutions binder that can easily be scanned in for digital reference. Richardson said it would be useful for people to be able to have a scanned reference

of a TAG (brochure, Comprehensive Plan, etc.) and the application. Hall-Bagdonas and Cilento will work on scanning in examples so Town/ships and applicants can have those as a guide when filling out grant applications.

Saumure asked Hendrix if NPS has data by visitors by sections or region? Hendrix said they did an economic study when they did the Environmental Impact Study in 1950. Saumure was hoping for more recent data than that. Hendrix said he would look into it.

Social Media Analytics: Cilento reported updates from Instagram (last 30 days): 132 posts, 1,117 followers (+10) 2,500 accounts reached, 6,323 impressions (post views), 143 profile visits, 9 website clicks in profile, 441 content interactions, 404 likes, 9 comments, 3 saves, 22 shares. For Facebook (last 30 days) we have: 643 followers, (+112) 522 likes, over 4.6k people reached with posts. 2.8k in June, 18k in July. There have been 462 post engagements. Our UDC LinkedIn has 80 followers with 61 post impressions. The "Let's Talk Delaware River Safety" post got 100 likes on Instagram, 88 shares, 907 accounts reached (34% were non-followers). On Facebook the post got 336 likes, 204 shares and 15.1 people were reached. On LinkedIn it got four shares. Cilento said we will be doing individual posts on the UDC Awards Banquet winners on UDC social media.

PA Grant Account and Township Projects Update: Ramie said we are down to three projects to finalize which have to be done by the end of the calendar year. They are UDC's Fiscal Sustainability Plan, Damascus projects and the Berlin projects. UDC is ready to pay as soon as those two Townships are done with their projects and will pay the UDC contractor out of that same fund. Ramie will arrange for the required government audit of the whole program. UDC has already engaged Eckersley & Davis, LLP for that work. Ramie provided a handout indicating the accumulation of interest. UDC has to give that interest back.

Other: None.

New Business

NYS UDC Funding Letter to Gov. Hochul: Ramie said as you recall, when Camille O'Brien, Director of Legislative Affairs for Senator Mike Martucci, was here at the 8/5 meeting she said the time is right to put in a request for funding because the Executive Budget gets compiled at this time. This letter is being introduced today to be brought forward at the 9/2 meeting. Ramie will be including a one-page fact sheet and 15 page historic document. Sue Sullivan suggested we should get to the heart of the letter right at the beginning. Ramie's strategy was that Governor Hochul does not know who UDC is so she felt that introducing ourselves would be appropriate. Ramie said she will be adding a subject line at the top that says it's a consideration for the FY 2022 budget. The committee found the draft letter well-written. They suggested the bottom line being up front, getting quickly to the point and including an Executive Summary. Ramie will provide a draft letter for the 9/2 Full council meeting. A Motion by Robinson seconded by Richardson to approve the changes to the draft letter and to send it to Full council carried.

FY 2022 Newsletter Services Quote: A copy of the Courier Printing contract quote was provided in the meeting packet. Our dates for our three issues are listed for this coming fiscal year. UDC has worked with Courier Printing Corp since Fiscal Year 2003 and Ramie is happy with their services. A Motion by Robinson seconded by Richardson for Ramie to Draft a Resolution for the 9/2 full Council meeting carried.

Awards Program Printing Quotes: Ramie provided a handout in the meeting packet for UDC Awards Program Printing Bids. She recommended Curcio Printing of Vestal, NY at \$337.18/ \$446.52 (100/150 quantity) as the low bid. They need three days for printing and one day for shipping. The price includes shipping to the UDC office. Ramie sent an example of the 2020 awards booklet for reference. A Motion by Dean seconded by Robinson to award Curcio Printing the 2021 Awards Program printing job carried.

9th Annual Del-AWARE Watershed Forum \$75 Registration: A Motion to approve Cilento's virtual attendance and payment of costs for this Sept. 29-Oct. 1 conference was made by Robinson, seconded by Richardson and carried.

Payment for Town of Delaware TAG 2021-02: \$6,000: A Motion by Richardson seconded by Dean to approve the \$6,000 payment for Town of Delaware TAG 2021-02 carried.

Payment for Town of Hancock TAG 2021-03: \$10,000: Deferred.

Summary of Pending Bills 8/24/2021: A Motion by Robinson seconded by Dean to approve bills was carried.

Financial Statement 8/31/2021: Dexter said the financial statement is offered for individual review.

Other: None.

Public Comment: None.

Adjournment: A motion by Saumure seconded by Richardson to adjourn the meeting at 8:20 p.m. was carried.