

Upper Delaware Council
OPERATIONS COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES
October 22, 2024

Committee Members Present: Aaron Robinson, Al Henry, Fred Peckham (Zoom), Larry Richardson, Christine Martin (Zoom), Ginny Dudko, Harold Roeder (Zoom)

Committee Members Absent: Jeff Dexter

Staff: Laurie Ramie, Kerry Engelhardt, Stephanie Driscoll

NPS Partner: Carly Marshall

Guests: Bill Dudko

The UDC's Operations Committee held its monthly meeting on Tuesday, October 22, 2024. Chairperson Dudko called the meeting to order at 7:04 pm.

Approval of the September 24, 2024 Meeting Minutes: A motion by Henry seconded by Richardson to approve the 9/24 meeting minutes carried.

Executive Director's Monthly Report: Ramie reported that the wire-transfer deposit of the UDC's \$75,000 allocation for the Fiscal Year 2025 1st quarter into the ASAP account was done on 10/1. The UDC withdrew \$18,429.23 on 10/21 to cover the October abstract of bill, leaving a \$56,570.77 balance through 12/31. Next, we will await instructions by NPS UPDE on the next period of performance for which the UDC will need to prepare and submit a SF-424 Application for Federal Assistance package to extend funding beyond the current 1st quarter 12/31 expiration. UDC staff will schedule the Fiscal Year 2024 (10/1/23-9/30/24) Independent Public Accountants' Financial Review in-office audit research dates by Eckersley & Davis, LLP consultants and their presentation of the draft report to the Operations Committee. Ramie said this year Eckersley will be doing a financial review vs. a full audit. Typically, he comes to the November Operations Committee meeting to give an overview. In the past, we have flipped the Operations and Project Review meetings so that Operations can go first for Eckersley to give his report. We will know more once we schedule the date. The UDC will then review a new draft NPS-UDC Cooperative Agreement that will cover 1/1/25-4/30-29 when received from NPS UPDE, expected by mid-November. Ramie asked our accountant Mike Poska to complete the FFR portion. She will complete the PPR portion, which takes a while to compile. She will stay conscious of the deadline.

MVP Health Care recertified the UDC's one-person group policy on 10/1 at \$1,292.42 per month effective 12/1/24, which is a 6.45% premium increase with a \$850 annual deductible and \$50 non-primary physician co-pay fee.

Ramie said the UDC's mini-fridge had stopped working around 9/30. She thanked Driscoll for attempting to fix the refrigerator. Ultimately, the unit was not able to be repaired. A new 3.3 c.f. mini-fridge was ordered from Walmart on sale from its original \$148 price at \$98 plus tax (\$104.76), with free delivery on 10/3.

Ramie presented to 10 adult learners from the 2024 Sullivan County Chamber of Commerce Foundation's Leadership Sullivan class on 9/25 during their Tourism and Culture session held at the Delaware Valley Arts Alliance office in Narrowsburg. It included a verbal orientation, information folders to take away, and a Q&A session. Ramie said it went over well. They asked how many of the 10 students had been to Narrowsburg? Only about half the people raised their hands. She discussed our history and operations, the UDC's funding issues, and answered questions on Camp FIMFO and other topics. Hopefully they left with a better understanding of the UDC. Five UDC representatives (Ramie, Engelhardt, Driscoll, and the Dudko's) attended the 1st Annual Upper Delaware River Rendezvous coordinated by Friends of the Upper Delaware River (FUDR) at the Villa Roma Resort in Callicoon on 10/16 (full day) and 10/17 (half-day), which included a UDC exhibit and a verbal presentation by Ramie on the first day. The presentation was about 15 minutes long. There was a mixed audience of people, with

some not knowing about the UDC. She also spoke about the UDC's funding issue there. B. Dudko commented that Ramie did a great job presenting. Her presentation was interesting and engaging.

The UDC's first monthly e-newsletter update was prepared and circulated by Driscoll on 10/7. Ramie wrote and issued four news releases to our media list: "Sign Up for Upper Delaware Council E-Newsletter" on 10/8; "Towns Complete River & Shoreline Clean-up Projects" on 10/8; "UDC Awards Technical Assistance Grants for Tusten, Deepark, and Berlin Projects" on 10/9; and "UDC to Host Nov. 7 Talk on Proposed Lackawaxen River National Designation", 10/18. She replied to questions from reporters on various topics. She scheduled nearly daily advanced social media posts for UDC announcements, releases, community activities, natural, cultural and historical topics, grant applications, conferences, NPS UPDE shares, etc. on Facebook. UDC staff also posts on Instagram and X.

As a follow-up to the 36th Annual River Valley Awards Ceremony on 9/22, UDC staff set up daily social media posts highlighting each of the 11 awards with photos and links. Ramie sent the relevant script introductory text and Scott Rando photos to each award recipient on 9/30, and updated the directory of honorees from 1988-2024 on 10/1.

New Business

FY 2025 Newsletter Services Quote: Ramie said the first step of requesting a quote from Courier Printing is for her to look at the calendar to decide what the UDC deadlines need to be vs. the printer's end. The quote is included in tonight's packet and include those dates. She commented that Courier Printing has done a great job for us and in their quote have only increased the price \$20 per each issue, which is very reasonable. She would prepare a resolution for the full council meeting on 11/7, if this committee agrees to move forward. The price not only includes the printing services, but also the binding, folding, and mailing classification process. A motion by Richardson, seconded by Martin to send the approved quote to the full council meeting on Nov. 7 for approval, carried.

Summary of Pending Bills 10/22/24: Ramie said the abstract is included in tonight's packet. A motion by Henry to pay the bills in the normal fashion, seconded by Robinson, carried.

Financial Statement 10/31/24: Included in the packet for review.

Other: None.

Old Business

Facilitated Five-Year Strategic Plan Workshop on 11/8: This was previously discussed at the October full council meeting. A Request for Proposals seeking a facilitator for this workshop (included in tonight's packet) and a scheduling poll was sent out (BCC'd) on 10/11 to 12 individuals, including the five County Planning Directors. We went with the majority vote for the date of November 8th from 8:30am-12:30pm. Ramie said she doesn't think we will be able to address the River Management Plan (RMP) refresher that we had originally thought about doing during this window of time; we should make sure to focus on the 5-Year Plan. We can rely heavily on the current 5-Year Plan, since it was so well done after paying a consulting team to lead us with a steering committee, follow ups, and drafts in FY 2021. We are in a good position now to look at that plan and see what has changed. We have accomplished some items; for example: the Telecommunications Subcommittee. For this plan, we are primarily looking for someone to guide the session. We plan to have one advance meeting with the facilitator to make sure that by the end of the 4-hour meeting on 11/8, there is something for Ramie to take back and draft in house. We asked for proposals to be sent back by noon on 10/25. She will send those out to the Operations Committee to make that decision by 10/28. We will provide a continental breakfast on 11/8. Ramie asked the committee if they think mileage and fees should be covered? G. Dudko and Richardson said yes. The committee agreed that the RMP refresher should be done on its own so it isn't rushed.

G. Dudko asked who has responded with a proposal? Ramie said she sent it to 12 people, but five of those people were to County Planning Directors asking them to send the request to people they thought would be a good fit. One person answered stating they have a medical procedure the day before and won't be able to make it. The process continues through Friday and we will have options. Richardson said the challenge the facilitator faces with this

group is to keep the conversation moving in the right direction. We have a tendency to get absorbed by one topic. Ramie asked the Operations Committee to keep an eye on their emails Friday for the e-vote.

Upper Delaware River Rendezvous 10/16-17 Report: Ramie said we are covering this in the Fall/Winter issue of The Upper Delaware, so this is just a brief report tonight. G. Dudko said on 10/16, both she and B. Dudko enjoyed hearing the update from Jennifer Garigliano about the NYC aqueduct repairs. Garigliano cautioned everyone on the drought that is currently happening and how it will affect refill rates. Richardson said he hasn't been by any of the reservoirs in some time; did they do the draw down? Engelhardt said yes, Garigliano had said that the Neversink Reservoir "looks like the Grand Canyon right now." Robinson said there was a drought in the 1980's in which all the old bridges and towns resurfaced. Richardson said that's what happens when you roll the dice; it's either too wet or too dry. G. Dudko also attended Dr. Peter Kolesar's session on 10/16 where she saw Don Hamilton and Andy Boyar. Kolesar said that 2025 is the expiration of the FFMP. G. Dudko commented that NBT Bank presented on Diversity, Equity and Inclusion on 10/17 following breakfast. Then various speakers gave a presentation on funding and applying for grants that was more focused toward municipalities. B. Dudko said he enjoyed the session on storm drainage and replacements. Engelhardt said she enjoyed that session as well.

Ramie said there were about 95 people in attendance, according to the attendance list. It was a nice turnout. There were a couple of full sessions where they constructed a long table the length of the whole room. Perhaps that could have been done better as a classroom style? It was probably hard to hear and see at the back of the room. She said we sat down in advance as staff to go over the agenda and assigned ourselves to different sessions so that we could cover almost all of them. We will each contribute paragraphs for what we attended. Engelhardt said she went to the session Garigliano gave on the aqueduct repairs, the session on "Snails and Algae in the National Park Service", and "Playing the Infrastructure Long Game" where they spoke about not only funding, but how to plan them as well. The public may get nervous about funding a huge project, but it can be easier to get funding for larger projects. In general, Engelhardt said she thought it was nice to get all the people who care about the Upper Delaware River in one room. It's inspiring and it was nice to talk about resources. Driscoll said she attended "What's a "Bioblitz and Why is it Important in the UDR?", "On the Trail of Snails in the Upper Delaware River", and "Trout and Toxics on the Upper Delaware Basin". She commented that it was nice to get a better understanding on a BioBlitz, and why they are important. The snail session was interesting; the DRBC has spoken about 6-PPDq at previous UDC meetings, so it is interesting to learn more.

State and Federal Funding Updates: Ramie said some UDC members and staff met with Mid-Atlantic Regional Director at American Rivers Adam Schellhammer on 9/30 while he was in Narrowsburg to film an interview for a CBS News documentary on the Delaware River. Schellhammer said he had put in a good word with that crew as well. Hopefully we hear from CBS that they are interested enough in the UDC for an interview or information. That documentary will likely air in spring 2025. She thanked Dexter, Henry, Robinson, Roeder, Martin, Marshall, and Engelhardt for being a part of the meeting with Schellhammer to give him an overview of the UDC. She commented that he listened genuinely about the UDC's history, operations, and funding. He said he would put us in contact with their National River Protection staff and the equivalent people for New York and Pennsylvania within American Rivers. Ramie said she hasn't heard anything back from Schellhammer yet. Chuck Hoffman, who had put us in touch with American Rivers as a former staff member, followed up since the 9/30 meeting. He plans to reach out to other staff members at American Rivers after he speaks to Schellhammer. The idea is that American Rivers would consider advocating for the UDC. We are here and ready to help facilitate anything they need. Ramie sent him a thank-you letter, which he acknowledged. The UDC staff had lunch with Schellhammer before he departed for his meeting with CBS News at Lander's River Trip's Narrowsburg base.

Besides recent presentations the UDC has given, that's all the news she has on the state and federal funding fronts. She made sure to update all visitation statistics and funding fact sheets. Henry asked where they went for the float with CBS? Marshall said they went down the mainstem of the Delaware River. Ramie said they also visited the Willowemoc. B. Dudko asked when it will air? Marshall said they are aiming for April 2025. Engelhardt said in terms of funding, Schellhammer did say nothing will happen until after the election.

Feedback on UDC Update E-Newsletter 10/7 Debut: Driscoll said the first ever UDC e-newsletter went out on the first Monday of the month, 10/7. Each month the information listed will change, but the format will stay the same. She took Marshall's advice on adding a "donate here" button. There is also a section where our UDC t-shirts and the

Big Eddy maps are listed for a donation. Driscoll said she thinks the e-newsletter is catchy. We have about 87 people signed up as of right now.

Martin asked what the subject line of the email was? She doesn't think she received it. Robinson said "Discover What's New in Our First Ever Monthly UDC Update!" B. Dudko and Henry think they haven't received it either. Driscoll said she can check the analytics, but didn't get any bounce backs. She will make sure there wasn't a glitch transferring over contacts from Outlook. Besides UDC members, all town supervisors, clerks, and secretaries were added to the email list. We also had some sign ups from events we tabled at this summer and from the press release Ramie had issued, a copy of which was in the packet.

Other: None.

There was no Public Comment.

Adjournment: A motion by Roeder seconded by Robinson to adjourn the meeting at 7:46 p.m. carried.