

Upper Delaware Council
OPERATIONS COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES
June 25, 2024

Committee Members Present: Ginny Dudko, Aaron Robinson, Harold Roeder, Al Henry, Fred Peckham (Zoom), Larry Richardson, Jeff Dexter
Committee Members Absent: Christine Martin
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, June 25, 2024. Chairperson G. Dudko called the meeting to order at 7:23 pm.

Approval of the May 28, 2024 Meeting Minutes: A motion by Henry seconded by Richardson to approve the 5/28 meeting minutes carried.

Executive Director's Monthly Report: Ramie reported that we received a notice through Grant Solutions that the UDC's Federal Financial Report and Performance Progress Report for 10/1/22-9/30/23 were accepted by NPS on 6/14. The reports were originally filed on 11/8/23 (FFR) and 1/26/24 (PPR) but had to be redone on 4/10 after they were deleted from the system due to a change in the Cooperative Agreement Period of Performance end date. Modification #8 to the UDC-NPS Cooperative Agreement which approved \$75,000 for Fiscal Year 2025 1st Quarter was awarded on 6/18. She withdrew \$18,968.71 on 6/24 to cover the June abstract of bills, leaving \$108,823.73 in the Fiscal Year 2024 ASAP account.

The Town of Delaware appointed Rebekah Creshkoff as its alternate representative on 6/12 to fill that vacancy. Creshkoff attended the 6/18 WU/RM Committee meeting and received her orientation folder at that time. Driscoll's one-year work anniversary as Administrative Support is coming up on 7/10 for which a meeting with the Personnel Subcommittee needs to be arranged. She proposed meeting at 6:30pm ahead of the full council meeting on 7/11. The Personnel Subcommittee agreed. Ramie will prepare a written job performance appraisal to provide to Driscoll and the Personnel Subcommittee. Notices of insurance premium updates were received for the UDC's liability policy through Travelers Casualty Insurance Co. of \$717 effective with the 8/24 renewal and MVP Health Care has filed with the NYS Department of Financial Services to seek a 10.2% premium increase in 2025. They do this every year and the amount is often adjusted downward ultimately. The UDC Bylaws were updated on 6/6 with a new section on Mandatory Training Policies added based on a 30-day+ advance review and unanimous approval of a resolution at the 6/6 UDC meeting. Copies were filed in the UDC official records and sent to the UDC's attorney Jason Ohliger.

Four news releases were issued in the month of June on subjects of the NY-PA Joint Interstate Bridge Commission annual meeting highlights, UDC Technical Assistance Grants, Upper Delaware Scenic Byway placemats and brochures, and the UDC Family Raft Trip. Ramie wrote and delivered remarks at the Delaware River Basin Commission's 6/5 business meeting at the Tusten Theatre. Quotes were given and interviews were done or arranged for WJFF Radio Catskill, Sullivan County Democrat, and The Epoch Times for broadcast programs or articles on the Upper Delaware bridges, the water audit presentation, Big Eddy Narrows map, and river safety. Ramie provided potential ideas for WJFF's interest in long-form coverage of the Upper Delaware River. Staff has been keeping up to date with posting on social media.

The UDC will be sponsoring a table at the upcoming Upper Delaware BioBlitz during public hours on Saturday 6/29. Engelhardt will be volunteering during the set up and event from 6/27-6/29. The UDC will also have tables at the 18th Annual Zane Grey Festival on 7/28 and the 34th Annual Narrowsburg Riverfest on 7/28. These events are open to the public from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m.

The summer issue of *The Upper Delaware* is due to Courier Printing on 7/22 and will be released by 8/5.

Reservations for the UDC's 36th Annual Family Raft Trip on Sunday 8/4 are due by 7/26. People can pay by PayPal or cash/check for a discount of \$1 per person. Driscoll had looked into using Venmo in addition to PayPal, but found that PayPal owns Venmo and charges the same fees. The trip is through Lander's River Trips and will start at Ten Mile River and end at Lander's Minisink base. Guests are asked to park at Lander's Minisink base, where they will register with UDC staff between 9am-10am and then be bused to Ten Mile River to begin their trip. UDC will continue to publicize the event and plans to partner with Sullivan CatskillsVisitors Association for a Facebook event to boost publicity.

A confirmation from PA Director of Outdoor Recreation Nathan Reigner is due by 7/15 on whether or not he is available to be the UDC's keynote speaker at the 9/22 River Valley Awards.

Ramie attended the Zane Grey Plein Air Community Art event at Skinners Falls-Milanville Bridge on 6/15. Some 35 artists working in various mediums set up all over the Milton Skinner historic property to capture different views of the bridge and landscape. The homeowners of the Milton Skinner House in Milanville graciously welcomed everyone onto their property and even provided lunch.

Ramie attended the Deep Water Literary Festival's presentation of a "Lenapehoking Anthology" program on 6/21. This book from the Lenape Cultural Center features essays and artwork related to the preservation of Lenape history, language, and culture. She plans to do a newsletter article from the information she gathered.

New Business

Collecting Email Addresses at Events for E-blasts and Newsletter: Engelhardt is proposing UDC staff starts collecting email addresses, along with physical addresses, at the festivals and events we attend. She said in previous years people were surprised we weren't collecting email addresses. She doesn't want to spam people's inboxes, but maybe we could send them a monthly or bi-monthly informational email with important news and events. There are services available through Mailchimp and Constant Contact that offer emailing and templates with different tiers of subscriptions. It wouldn't replace the paper version of the newsletter, but maybe we could offer that in digital form too. A motion by Robinson to approve collecting email addresses at events and looking into an email service under \$20 a month, seconded by Dexter, carried. Marshall said it's nice to use a service; it gives people the option to easily unsubscribe if they wish. Staff will create a form to collect physical addresses as well as email addresses.

Summary of Pending Bills 6/25/2024: Motion by Henry seconded by Robinson to approve the bills and pay them in the normal fashion carried.

Financial Statement 6/30/2024: The statement was included for review in the packet. Robinson commented that we are getting over \$100 a month in interest in the Vanguard account.

Other: Henry met with Rick Lander where he asked him to see if the UDC can do anything about the eye-sore signage at the entrance to the Skinners Falls-Milanville Bridge. There is already enough signage up to the bridge, with a barricade across the entrance. They don't need the amount of signage at the bridge itself. Ramie said we could reach out to PennDOT again; they are in charge of maintenance for this bridge.

Old Business

State and Federal Funding Updates: Ramie had received a notice from US Senator Kirsten Gillibrand's office for a virtual workshop on 7/27 called "Government Funding for Arts, Culture, and Historic Preservation" which reminded her immediately of the Skinners Falls-Milanville Bridge's need for funding. She reached out to Hudson Valley Regional Director Jacinta Chen from Gillibrand's office to confirm her attendance and Chen offered to set up a 7/2 virtual meeting with Ramie to find out more about the bridge issue. Ramie said she will also raise the topic of UDC federal and New York State funding. She forwarded the workshop invitation to local arts groups and to PennDOT consultants AECOM as well, since they are in charge of searching for funding to restore the Skinners Falls-Milanville Bridge. They planned to have a staff person participate.

The UDC will be attending the PA Legislative Breakfast on 7/26 at the Lake Wallenpaupack Environmental Learning Center. The poster UDC staff put together needs to be submitted by 7/8 for printing. Ramie was authorized to cover the topics of UDC funding and the Skinners Falls-Milanville Bridge. She will share the poster when it's here.

2024 Upper Delaware Litter Sweep Financial Final Accounting: All of the grants the UDC received for the Litter Sweep have been deposited into the dedicated bank account. The Pocono Mountains Visitors Bureau gave \$1,000 that was received on 5/28 and deposited the next day. The \$3,000 from Sullivan County Legislators came in on 6/17. Before we received the \$1,000 from the PMVB, the account was briefly insufficient due to the reconciliation of expenses. We started this year with \$2,315.60 from 2023 and raised \$5,655.51. We spent \$4047.67 for this year's Litter Sweep and are heading into 2025 with \$3,923.44. B. Dudko asked if that money could go into the Vanguard account to accrue interest? Ramie said we typically like to keep those accounts separate to avoid any comingling of UDC and special project funding, but she can look into it with the bank to determine what the minimum balance is to keep the account open to channel donations and expenses through it next April. Henry said we had talked about expanding grant applications that the UDC applies to for River Cleanups since we are using our own funds for those grants now. Robinson said he saw an advertisement on TV from the National Plastics Association. Maybe we can reach out to companies like that for donations? Engelhardt agreed to explore that. Richardson said if we're talking about funding more River Cleanups, then we could apply for grants in Pennsylvania too.

Other: None.

There was no Public Comment.

Adjournment: A motion by Roeder seconded by Henry to adjourn the meeting at 8:09 p.m. carried.