

Upper Delaware Council
OPERATIONS COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES
July 23, 2024

Committee Members Present: Aaron Robinson, Harold Roeder, Al Henry, Fred Peckham (Zoom),
Larry Richardson, Jeff Dexter, Christine Martin
Committee Members Absent: Ginny Dudko
Staff: Laurie Ramie, Kerry Engelhardt, Stephanie Driscoll
NPS Partner: Carly Marshall
Guests: None

The UDC's Operations Committee held its monthly meeting on Tuesday, July 23, 2024. Vice-chairperson Robinson called the meeting to order at 7:23 pm.

Approval of the June 25, 2024 Meeting Minutes: A motion by Richardson seconded by Henry to approve the 6/25 meeting minutes carried.

Executive Director's Monthly Report: Ramie reported the summer newsletter is currently at Courier Printer to be printed and sent. This issue with its 12-pages includes 35 photos. Engelhardt had suggested that we make a color version to post on the UDC website. The color copy was passed around the room. This issue took 57.5 hours to complete including interviews, meetings and activities specifically for the newsletter, planning, researching, designing, writing, and proofreading. Driscoll will be posting the newsletter on our website and sending the mailing database to Courier Printing tomorrow (7/24) with delivery scheduled on or before August 5th. This newsletter is the last issue for Fiscal Year 2024. The fall/winter newsletter will be the start of FY25 for which we will need to get a new quote and contract for printing.

She and Dexter will be attending the Pike/Wayne Conservation Partners Legislative Breakfast on Friday 7/26 at 9am at Lake Wallenpaupack Environmental Learning Center. A poster was designed with the UDC funding issues and the Skinners Falls-Milanville Bridge to display. They are also putting together folders with information for participants as well as those that were invited and couldn't attend. Dexter will bring his wooden American Flag featuring Skinners Falls-Milanville Bridge to show our advocacy for historic rehabilitation of the bridge. This Sunday is the 34th Annual Narrowsburg Riverfest from 10am-4pm at which the UDC will have a table, staffed by Engelhardt and Driscoll. Our raft trip is coming up on Sunday, August 4th. Publicity is done for the raft trip and we are waiting for reservations that are due by 7/26.

Three news releases were issued within this month on topics of the UDC meeting presentations and reservations due for the 8/4 raft trip. WJFF Radio did a live interview with Superintendent Kurnath on 7/8 to preview the staffing presentation she gave at the July full council meeting. A freelance writer with the *River Reporter* interviewed Ramie to get an ecological view of the Narrowsburg Riverfest. UDC staff continues to post fresh content on social media.

Pennsylvania Director of Outdoor Recreation Nathan Reigner will be the UDC's keynote speaker at the 36th Annual River Valley Awards Banquet on September 22nd. Ramie will begin soliciting for nominations for the awards this week with a deadline of August 23rd. The timeline of tasks to be done for the banquet is included in her report.

Ramie reconciled the final bank statements for this year's Litter Sweep. We will discuss the transfer of Litter Sweep funds to the UDC Vanguard account later in the agenda.

We are down to twelve of the Big Eddy Narrows map that Lisa Glover had donated fifty of to the UDC as a fundraiser. With our last deposit the UDC has earned \$631.61 from sales of the maps. They are available for \$20.00 per map or \$23.00 mailed. Staff will keep an eye on the number of posters left; at around six posters left we will re-order through the same printer Glover used. Henry asked if Glover donated the maps already printed? Ramie said

yes. Henry said we should find out how much it cost her to get them printed; maybe \$20 won't suffice. Ramie said we had asked Glover how much it cost to have them printed and factored that into the \$20.

We had decided to let past years' Litter Sweep t-shirts go for a donation of \$5 per shirt. At the Zane Grey Festival we made \$65 from Litter Sweep t-shirts plus \$15 for one UDC t-shirt.

New Business

Fiscal Year 2024 Budget Surplus Recommendations: Ramie said the next three agenda items will affect the amount of surplus left for the FY24 budget, so to keep that in mind. At the end of June when UDC bookkeeper Poska had prepared the projection of the surplus it was around \$9,300, but at the end of July the surplus, with a recent salary adjustment, is down to around \$6,889. The Personnel Subcommittee Committee asked her to find out what percentage of the budget goes to personnel (salaries and benefits), which is 65.4% of the total budget for the three full-time employees. If this committee is favorable of the next two requests of the GIS course for \$3,051 and conference registrations and sponsorships, the surplus amount will be spent down quite a bit. Henry asked if money is factored into the budget, other than the surplus, for the GIS course? Ramie said one course had been but we've never paid for two GIS courses in the same Fiscal Year.

Final GIS Course Tuition Request: Engelhardt said this is the fourth and final program in the GIS course. This is an elective course, for which she chose cartography and visualization. The first three courses were learning the basics and database development. After completing this final course, she will be able to create a map. This course will start on August 14th and runs to October 23rd, totaling \$3,051. A motion by Richardson, seconded by Henry, to pay the \$3,051 tuition for Engelhardt to enroll in the fourth GIS course through Penn State World Campus carried.

Delaware River Watershed Forum and Upper Delaware River Rendezvous Registrations: Ramie said Engelhardt has represented the UDC at the Delaware River Watershed Forum in previous years. This year it is scheduled from September 26th – 27th in Bethlehem, PA. Engelhardt has calculated the cost for her mileage, lodging, and registration (based off of last years fee) of a minimum of \$650 and a maximum of \$750, depending on the fee for this year and where she stays. A motion by Martin to register Engelhardt to attend the Delaware River Watershed Forum for a maximum expenditure of \$800, seconded by Henry, carried.

Ramie said Friends of the Upper Delaware River (FUDR) had been looking to make the Water, Water Everywhere conference a larger, statewide affair and have decided to move the conference to the Villa Roma Resort in Callicoon and rename it the Upper Delaware River Rendezvous. The dates are October 16th – 17th with an early bird discounted registration due by August 30th of \$100 per person for both days (\$150 regular registration fee). The ticket includes two-day general admission, light refreshments, coffee break, lunch, dinner on day one, and breakfast on day two. The itinerary promises engaging and robust sessions, learning from experts on important issues facing the Upper Delaware River Watershed, keynote speakers, valuable insights from influential figures of water advocacy, and networking with Upper Delaware River conservation advocates. There will be field trips as well, such as a walk on the O&W Rail/Trail, a guided fishing trip at Callicoon Creek, and a visit to project sites in the Livingston Manor area. In the past the UDC has offered to pay for any staff and board members to attend. We have also previously approved becoming a sponsor for this conference. Categories are: "River Warrior" for \$200 that includes your logo and name on materials available to participants and recognition on social media platforms; "Upper Delaware River Defender" for \$500 adds an exhibit table and one complimentary ticket; "Stream Advocate" for \$700, an increase to two complimentary tickets; "Clean River Steward" for \$1,000 where FUDR will coordinate a volunteer cleanup; and a \$2,500 sponsorship would add a tree planting event. She recommended taking the \$500 sponsorship for the complimentary ticket and exhibit table.

Robinson asked if there would be a limit to the number of registrations the UDC would pay for? Ramie said that would be up to the committee. Henry asked if UDC members need to pay to attend this conference? Ramie said she is proposing that the UDC pay for UDC member and staff registrations as we have always done. Henry said if FUDR is putting on the conference, he would think they would extend an invitation to the UDC to attend for no charge. Ramie said that FUDR has expenses to put on the conference. It will actually cost them \$140 per person as this isn't a for-profit event. A motion by Henry to sponsor the conference at \$500 and to pay registration fees for up to three UDC members or staff beyond the comped ticket to attend, seconded by Martin, carried.

Summary of Pending Bills 7/23/24: Motion by Henry seconded by Roeder to approve the bills and pay them in the normal fashion carried.

Financial Statement 7/31/24: The statement is included in tonight's packet for review.

Other: None.

Old Business

State and Federal Funding Updates: As previously mentioned, Ramie and Dexter will attend the Pike/Wayne Conservation Partners Legislative Breakfast this Friday. Robinson had recommended reaching out to PA Representative Jeff Olsommer with the UDC's PA funding issue facts. Ramie said she had done that back in May when he was sworn in after the special election for the 139th District and she had sent him a welcome letter. He was probably overwhelmed with emails when he first took office, so she was happy to send the funding report, fact sheet, and a copy of the PA Code where it states that the Commonwealth will support the River Management Plan (RMP). Olsommer is on the list of attendees for the Pike/Wayne Legislative Breakfast. Robinson said he had run into Olsommer at a Shohola get together where he brought up UDC funding. Olsommer told him it is a bipartisan issue. Now that Olsommer has received the information on the UDC, he plans to call him to talk further. Richardson said he saw NY Senator Oberacker at Fort Delaware recently; Oberacker thanked the council for all the work the UDC does. Henry asked if any Federal Representatives are going to the Pike/Wayne Legislative Breakfast? Ramie said the list of confirmed attendees are: State Representative Jeff Olsommer and his staff members, State Senator Rosemary Brown, Dr. April Niver from Congressman Cartwright's office, Mark Grochocki from State Senator Lisa Baker's office, Cody Forgach from US Senator John Fetterman's office, Patti Monahan from US Senator Bob Casey's office, Linda O'Hara from Representative Jonathan Frtiz's office, and all three Pike and Wayne County Commissioners. Henry asked if the UDC gets any microphone time? Ramie said it's an open house format where they come around and speak to you individually. Henry recommended making a sign that says "fund the UDC" to bring to the breakfast. Martin said we should go around and visit each representative about the UDC's funding issues. Robinson and Roeder said we have done that regularly. Ramie said we have an established Government Officials Liaison Subcommittee. Robinson said we even had our attorney Jason Ohliger write a letter to the states to which he never got a response.

Ramie had a meeting on July 2nd with Jacinta Chen, the Hudson Valley Regional Representative for US Senator Kirsten Gillibrand. The senator's office sponsored a webinar on June 27th called "Government Funding for Arts and Culture and Historic Preservation"; a workshop she participated in specifically for historic preservation and the Skinners Falls-Milanville Bridge. When she met with Chen via Zoom, she knew about the UDC's funding situation from speaking with NPS UPDE Superintendent Kurnath earlier that morning. Ramie said it was great that Kurnath told Chen about the UDC's funding issues and expressed the NPS support. Ramie told Chen about the flat federal funding and the lack of NYS funding. Chen asked her to send her various documents and said she would review and discuss them with her team and see if they can be helpful. She knows our funding is controlled at the Congressional level, but they do have contacts. Ramie made sure that the consultants for the Skinners Falls-Milanville Bridge, AECOM, attended the July 27th webinar since they are searching for funds along with PennDOT. The best program mentioned is administered by the NPS and called "Save America's Treasures", open to all units of state and local governments, non-profit organizations, tribes, education institutions, and federal agencies. The program is for preservation of historic structures that have to be listed on the National Register of Historic Places, which the Skinners Falls-Milanville Bridge is. The grant minimum is \$125,000 up to a federal share of \$175,000 with a one-to-one match. There were over 280 participants in attendance for the 6/27 workshop.

Reservations due by 7/26 for 8/4 UDC Raft Trip: Driscoll said there are approximately thirty registered for the raft trip this year. Richardson said most people wait until the last minute to see how the weather will be. Driscoll said we will bring all the information on it to Riverfest to advertise. Ramie said even though we asked for reservations by July 26th, we will still take reservations after that.

Vanguard Transfer for Funds Follow-up: Ramie said that Robinson called Vanguard and spoke to them numerous times on the UDC's behalf, to try to set up electronic transfer. Robinson said a non-profit is more complex in today's regulatory environment. He spoke to someone who said the treasury department put the rules in and whether you're a bank or brokerage you need to follow the same paper trails. They emailed him a form that needs to be filled out

and physically mailed before the Jeff Bank and Vanguard account can be linked for transfers. Ramie said they were supposed to send her the same form in 24-48 hours after she called, but she never received it. Robinson forwarded the form to Ramie. Ramie reviewed the application and we will need to submit a letter from the bank that must be printed on bank letterhead and signed by a bank officer, with full account registration, full account number, and the names of all authorized signers. It also said that if the signatories on the Vanguard account and the Jeff Bank account do not match, then every signatory must have a notarized signature sent in. For the Litter Sweep Jeff Bank account only Ramie is authorized, so it should be easier. If we are going to transfer the funds to Vanguard, she will go to the bank tomorrow morning to request the bank letter. Once the application and documents are sent in, it takes approximately one week after they receive it to be set up. After the bank accounts are linked, we can start making transfers electronically. She is still worried about withdrawing money, since it's been so difficult to set it up. We will only be investing about \$3,400 to earn 5.3% interest and when we start accruing Litter Sweep expenses, we will withdraw that same amount. Robinson said we can see if it works. It would be a similar process to open a money market at a local bank. Vanguard told him that if we needed money in a hurry, they would be able to wire money to an account the same day.

E-newsletter and UDC Emails Update: Driscoll said she and Engelhardt are looking into Constant Contact and Mailchimp to compare. They met earlier this afternoon about what exactly we want to send out in addition to an e-version of the newsletter. They got several email addresses at Zane Grey Festival and hope to get more at Riverfest. Robinson asked if we would be sending a PDF of the newsletter? Engelhardt said that may be too large to send. It may be a notice with a link to the UDC website. We will be looking into creating a monthly digest that people can sign up for as well. Robinson said it's good to take advantage of today's technology.

Other: None.

There was no Public Comment.

Adjournment: A motion by Roeder seconded by Henry to adjourn the meeting at 8:28 p.m. carried.