

Upper Delaware Council
PROJECT REVIEW COMMITTEE SPECIAL MEETING MINUTES
September 8, 2020

Committee Members Present: Larry Richardson, Fred Peckham (via phone), Al Henry, Aaron Robinson (via phone), Jeff Dexter (via phone at 7:20 p.m.), Susan Sullivan.

Committee Members Absent: David Dean and Jim Greier.

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

NPS Partner: None.

Guests: Jane Luchsinger- Tusten Deputy Supervisor, Tess McBeath- Delaware Town Clerk, Molly Oliver- Friends of the Upper Delaware River, Shelly Johnson-Bennett- Delaware County Planning.

The UDC's Project Review Committee held a special meeting on Tuesday, September 8, 2020 at the Council office in Narrowsburg, NY. The purpose of the special meeting was to interview applicants for the Fiscal Year 2021 Technical Assistance Grants Program, rank projects and recommend funding levels. Ramie said there is only so much we can do in terms of formalities due to the lack of a quorum. Due to Committee Chairperson Dean's absence, Richardson told UDC guests we would take the information back to the Project Review Committee. Richardson called the meeting to order at 6:44p.m. At that time Robinson and Dexter had not called in. There was no public comment on the agenda.

TAG Applicant Interviews

The committee received 3 grant applications totaling \$43,750. Each applicant presented their grant project description and answered questions. The applicants included:

-Town of Tusten- Cilento said in FY2020 Town of Tusten completed Part I of the Comprehensive Plan update working with their consultant Peter Manning. That TAG was recently completed and UDC voted for reimbursement at the last full board meeting. That project is closed out. Now the Town is looking to complete Part II of that project that involve the next couple of sections of the Comprehensive Plan and its adoption. Jane Luchsinger, Councilwoman, thanked the UDC for allowing them to proceed with Part I. Their last update of the Comprehensive Plan was in 2007. Luchsinger said working with Manning has been great and he has readily adapted to Zoom meetings. Part II would complete the whole Comprehensive Plan. The sections that need to be complete are housing and residential areas, transportation, land use, and community services. They will have to go through the adoption process, which is the SEQR, the UDC review, public hearings, and Town board public hearings. They feel the project can be completed in 6-8 months.

Richardson told the applicants that UDC has \$20,000 available for FY21 TAG funds. He said the three TAG applicants tonight are requesting over \$43,000; he said it's a difficult situation we're dealing with. He said it's unfortunate we don't have the luxury to reallocate unexpended funds from Tusten's FY2020 TAG for the Zoning ordinance update. Luchsinger said they spent less mostly because they saved on Manning's transportation bill. They also started the project late. Ramie said she was in error when she spoke at the full Council meeting on 9/3 because she had it in her head it was a \$5,000 TAG and it was really \$7,250 and the Town only expended about \$900. Ramie said that puts us in a real bind at the end of the Fiscal Year. She does wish there had been some communication that money would not be expended because now we are scrambling for how to spend this over \$6,000 deficit. Luchsinger said once they get the Comprehensive Plan in place, they will build up the zoning. She apologized for putting the UDC in an awkward position. Richardson asked if the project would go forward even if the UDC would partially fund it. Luchsinger confirmed, saying the Town would draw from their reserve funds. Luchsinger said it's really important to have a Comprehensive Plan and it really sets the tone for future, includes the input from the community, and helps to obtain future grants. It is a very necessary document. Henry asked how much it costs for Part I and Part II for the Comp. Plan? She said they were both estimated to be \$18,000. Henry said \$36,000 for both? She said no because they started late and they scrambled and he didn't have the commute time so it came in

less. Cilento said Part I was about \$12,000 altogether. Cilento asked if it was going to be the same Committee working that worked on Part I working on Part II? Luchsinger confirmed yes.

-Town of Delaware- Cilento said as the Project Review Committee and staff are aware, the FY 2020 TAG was the Town of Hancock's Trail Recreational Access Study. Working with Tom Shepstone, the Town of Delaware would like to complete something similar which would go from Long Eddy in Fremont to the Southern boundary in the Town of Delaware. It's very similar to what Shepstone prepared for Hancock to study recreational access points and trails along the river. Molly Oliver of Friends of the Upper Delaware River (FUDR) said FUDR worked with Shepstone last year and found him to be great with this type of project and the Town was really happy with the result. Essentially, they stopped at Long Eddy because that was the end but a project like this could easily extend along the Upper Delaware beyond the Town of Delaware. She wanted to clarify because they answered "yes" to #6 that they could continue the project with partial funding but it's limited partial funding. Some funding is written in there for FUDR and they could continue the work that was unfunded but the Towns would not be able to pay Shepstone unless he got a minimum fee of \$8,000. Oliver said it's almost like it's all-or-nothing because the part they were saving was \$750 for administration.

Oliver said there are some other exciting projects in Callicoon right now. McBeath said the Trust for Public Land purchased the Upper Delaware Campground and would like to make a Riverside Park. It will feature trails along the rivers edge. The DEC has committed to a two-acre spot for a new river boat access. McBeath said Sullivan County has made it to the 60th most unhealthy county in the state. She said projects like these are a great idea and get people outside. She also wanted to thank UDC because her Guide to Permits from the Town of Delaware was completed and she's been before UDC a number of times during her 22-years as Town Clerk. She said she's looking forward to working with these folks and getting the project done. Richardson said he is speaking for himself; but he finds it difficult to fund the \$8,000 with the money UDC has. He asked if this project could be split into two parts? Oliver said she thinks that is possible. The application was submitted by the Town of Delaware but also on behalf of the Town of Fremont; she feels there is some flexibility. If UDC were to fund less the scope of the project would change and they could prioritize the Town of Delaware and continue the project in the future. Richardson said we don't typically offer these suggestions once applications are in but he would be willing to take it to the Project Review Committee for consideration. Richardson said he should have said something to Luchsinger while she was still at the meeting as well. Oliver said realistically if they got \$5,000 they could do another significant chunk. Richardson said whatever you do has to be a start and finish. Richardson asked McBeath and Oliver to review the application and get it back to the Project Review Committee before the 9/22 meeting. Henry said his recommendation to the Project Review Committee is going to be add the \$6,000 to the TAG fund. Ramie said those are 2020 funds and unfortunately cannot be carried over to 2021. Henry said if you obligate it for this year you may be able to and it's something to think about. McBeath asked if they should come back for the 9/22 meeting or submit something in writing to the UDC? Richardson said the meetings are open to the public but unless the application is substantially different than what was submitted, he doesn't know if it is necessary. Cilento said if they are unable to make it to the meeting, they may call ahead of time so she can present it to the Project Review Committee. McBeath said the TAGs have been a lot of help over the years and they matter a lot because many times the Town doesn't have the money to complete these projects.

-Town of Hancock - Cilento said Shelly Johnson-Bennett from Delaware County Planning is here on behalf of this project. The Town of Hancock has applied for funding to develop a joint Master Plan between the Town and the Village of Hancock which would allow them to be more unified on some of their policies. Johnson-Bennett introduced herself as the Director of Watershed Affairs for Delaware County. She's been working in Hancock for the past 21-years and one of the big issues they consistently run into is neither the Town or Village has an up-to-date Comprehensive Plan. The last plan that was adopted was in 1969. One was written in 1989 by Tom Shepstone but it was not adopted because some of the Town folks thought it would lead to Zoning. Johnson-Bennett said some of that mentality has wavered. Over the years they have done a lot of other work with the communities. They worked with Alan Sorensen to do a Downtown Community Revitalization Project in the Village. They worked with Shepstone to update the Town's Subdivision Laws. With a UDC TAG they were able to work with Shepstone to write site plan review regulations specifically to address Commercial Development in the River Corridor that they felt would impact the reason people come here for the river. They also developed with their partners in the Upper

Delaware Tailwaters Coalition a Stream Corridor Management Plan and are currently finishing up Phase II. A big part of the recommendations coming out of that is to adopt updated Land Use Policies in all of the communities that are more river-friendly. In order to do that in NYS, you are required to have your land use laws be relevant to a Comprehensive Plan. With the Town of Hancock and the Village of Hancock not having an up-to-date Comprehensive Plan it really makes their laws challengeable in the Courts under Article 78. Johnson-Bennett said it is really important to get the plan in place so they can do more robust laws and build off the work that's being done by the Upper Delaware River Tailwaters and also the Hancock Partners who just redid the whole Village Square in Hancock. They took a blighted old grocery store and turned it into a community green-space. She said there is a lot of effort going into the Main Street Corridor which is the Town's Downtown District and where all of their businesses are. Johnson-Bennett said the thought was by doing a joint Comprehensive Plan, the Town and Village is one community even though they are two separate governmental jurisdictions. They could look at shared services among them in a better way and do a better job at putting things in place at what promotes the community and river as a whole. She's spoken at length with Shepstone about this and he really wants to do this project. The funding requested is to pay Shepstone to do the public visioning, public outreach, and putting the text together. Johnson-Bennett's staff will do the data analysis, mapping and help with the drafting. The Town has offered to put up \$5,000. The Village budget does not allow for them to put up extra money. The Town is willing to budget an extra \$5,000 so they would have \$25,000 to pay Shepstone if they got this TAG. Richardson said he doesn't know how the Project Review Committee will chose to divvy up the TAG money. If it's an equal basis it would be about \$7,000. He said maybe there could be a portion that could get you started. Johnson-Bennett said absolutely and with the Town's contribution they would still have money to pay Shepstone. They could do the public outreach portion and pick it up from there in Phase II. She said any amount helps. Sullivan said it seems that getting started and doing the visioning may get more people in their area on board. Johnson-Bennett agreed, saying that's why they want to do this now because they have people's attention with the Delaware Tailwaters Coalition Stream Corridor Management Plan and a lot of the work that Friends of the Upper Delaware River (FUDR) has been doing in the community. She said the two municipalities are getting together for the first time in a long time. She said this is an opportunity that hasn't existed in 20 years. Sullivan said as Luchsinger said, other plans are contingent on Comprehensive Plans.

Henry asked if the Village of Hancock has any type of Comprehensive Plan? Johnson-Bennett said they have a series of White Papers that were developed in the late 1960's when they were putting their Zoning together. Other than that, the only thing they have is a Downtown Assessment done by Sorensen several years ago. Henry said any amount of money would help, correct? Johnson-Bennett said correct. Cilento said there had been apprehension about Zoning and the Comprehensive Plan before; she asked now is there synergy? Johnson-Bennett said in the Town itself there is some apprehension towards going through Zoning law but the fact that they will use them without the Site Plan Review Law for Commercial and Industrial Development; they have embraced it. She feels they are open to Land Use Polices that regulate certain types of development. There aren't too worried about a single-family home but are worried about an industrial business going in that obstructs a view, or could pollute part of the streams. Johnson-Bennett said the big issue for them is trying to include the streams. They create so much sediment into the river and shut it off at the source. In order to do that they need to control the land uses around that and the Town recognizes that.

Richardson asked Cilento to get in touch with Luchsinger because she left before the discussion about TAG funding and revising applications before the 9/22 Project Review meeting. Cilento said she thinks all the projects are solid and it's unfortunate we don't have endless funds. She wonders if she would be in the position to provide technical assistance through her position. Obviously, these projects can't be fully funded but she would be able to be engaged with these projects and provide technical assistance in lieu of full funding.

Ramie said with regards to the budget so far, the First Quarter was submitted to NPS trough 12/30. The overall budget is still somewhat tentative. There were two other discretionary areas in the 2020 budget: the River Cleanups are allocated at \$3,500 and Outside Consulting is \$5,000. Ramie said she hates to be so strict about that \$20,000. When she was at the Transitional Management Assistance Program (TMAP) interview and talking to them about how the NPS policies have changed about the types of grant projects they will allow, that team was very curious about that. They wanted to know how much money UDC gives out because it is Federal funding UDC is administering and Ramie told them it varies every year and is essentially what UDC has left. They were surprised to

find out that this money comes out of our operating funds rather than any supplement to it. Ramie also mentioned the Cultural Resource projects and UDC's disgruntlement over that. She is hoping that ends up in their TMAP Report for the next Superintendent. Ramie said she feels we should also consider that the Town of Hancock isn't currently in Substantial Conformance because they can't be without any Zoning. Ramie looked on the acreage chart and 6.5% of Hancock is in the River Corridor. She's not saying that should negate their application but they have that tiny section and when UDC funds a Comprehensive Plan it takes in all that area outside that 6% which pertains to the River Valley. Ramie said she would feel safe spending what we did this year on TAGs which was around \$23,700. Henry said he still feels we should pursue the First Quarter money from NPS. Ramie said we don't have access to that until after 10/1. Henry said it's FY20 money obligated this year and we just got \$6,000+ back from a TAG that wasn't used. He said why don't we reach out and see if we can use it? We can tell them we have FY20 money we can obligate this year and come up with a contract where we can assign it this FY. Henry said it was earmarked for TAGs so why not apply it for next FY? Ramie said she could ask. Ramie said in the First Quarter Budget there is no line for TAGs because the payments come at the end of the fiscal year. Richardson said let's explore that. Robinson said don't we have the flexibility of 10% of our Annual Budget to use per our discretion if it conforms with the criteria of the funding? Henry said the concern is if it's FY20 money; these are FY21 TAGs. Discussion continued. Richardson said he would love see something move forward on Hancock because getting a good Comprehensive Plan in place would be ideal.

Other Business

Public Comment: None.

A motion was made by Sullivan, seconded by Henry to recess the special Project Review Committee meeting at 7:35 p.m. with discussion to resume at the 9/22 regular meeting carried.

Minutes submitted by Ashley Hall-Bagdonas, 9/21/2020