Upper Delaware Council
PROJECT REVIEW COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES
November 25, 2025

Committee Members Present:	Larry Richardson, Al Henry, Aaron Robinson (Zoom), Harold Roeder, Jim Rodgers, Ginny Dudko, Jeff Dexter, Christine Martin (Zoom)
Committee Members Absent:	None
Staff:	Laurie Ramie, Kerry Engelhardt, Stephanie Driscoll (Zoom)
NPS Partners:	Carly Marshall (Zoom)
Guests:	Bill Dudko, Barbara Arrindell (Zoom), Anie Stanley (Zoom), Rosie Starr (Zoom)

The UDC's Project Review Committee held its monthly meeting on Tuesday, November 25, 2025. Chairperson Richardson called the meeting to order at 6:31 p.m. There was no public comment on the agenda.

Approval of October 28, 2025 Meeting Minutes: A motion by Rodgers seconded by Roeder to approve the 10/28 meeting minutes, carried.

Resources and Land Use Specialist Update:

New York State Projects
DRBC Dockets – The DRBC Notice of Applications Received has not been posted for November.

Town of Delaware, NY
Callicoon Depot – Kris Scullion, the Code Enforcement Officer for the Town of Delaware, has confirmed that the Callicoon Depot will not be required to obtain a special use permit. He has filled out the checklist from the Project Review Workbook, confirming that no Substantial Conformance Review is required. Engelhardt said even if the UDC were to review this project for substantial conformance, it would be a compatible use in a hamlet. Rodgers asked why the town isn't requiring a special use permit? Engelhardt said the town made it clear they are not requiring one, and that it is a principal permitted use. B. Dudko said they are not planning to change anything with the building. If anything, they are making the building more useful with bathrooms. He asked if there will be only handicapped parking at the building? Richardson said they will have handicapped spots and a couple of regular spots – there are issues on restricting parking spots.

Open Substantial Conformance Reviews

Project ID	Project Name	Municipality	Action	Status
2025-04	Golden Horde Farm and Campground	Cochecton, NY	Class II – Site Plan	Recommendation of substantial conformance sent to NPS on 11/21.

Additional Comments:
Golden Horde Farm and Campground – The public hearing was held on 9/25. The town will be sending the application to the County for their 239 review. The application was not heard at the November meeting. The next Planning Board meeting is December 18 where they will most likely vote on this project. This was on the agenda at the October meeting that Engelhardt wasn't able to attend. The recommendation for substantial conformance was sent to the NPS last Friday.

FY 2025 Technical Assistance Grants
We received completion documentation from all three grant recipients. We will discuss more later in the agenda.

Applicant	Project Description	Award	Project Status
2025-01 Town of Tusten	Pt II of Open Space and Recreation Plan Development	$9,740	Contract extended until plan is adopted by town.

Additional Comments:

Town of Tusten – The public hearing for the plan has been scheduled for December 9 at 6pm. If there are no negative comments or comments requiring committee review, it will then come to the UDC for Substantial Conformance review. The meeting was originally scheduled for November, but was rescheduled. If finished in time, this project may get a 2025 project number.

FY 2026 Technical Assistance Grants

On 10/2 the full council approved a $3,000 grant to each of three applicants. The mid-term progress reports are due by February 20, 2026. Contracts have been received for all three projects.

Applicant	Project Description	Award	Project Status
2026-01 Town of Tusten	Zoning Revisions	$3,000	Signed contract returned
2026-02 Town of Delaware	Callicoon Crosswalk Study	$3,000	Signed contract returned
2026-03 Damascus Township	ADA Website	$3,000	Signed contract returned

Richardson asked if the crosswalk study in Callicoon has been completed? He saw people there doing surveys. Ramie said she also saw evidence of it happening, she doesn't know the status of it.

New Business:

River Valley Zoning for AI Data Centers: Richardson said the council has been through this before with solar facilities in terms of land use the River Management Plan does not specifically address. Ramie said UDC staff received an email from Barbara Arrindell and Anie Stanley from Damascus Citizens for Sustainability ahead of last week's WU/RM meeting after they had approached the Town of Tusten specifically, urging the town to revise its zoning laws to directly address AI data centers. No additional documentation or formal correspondence has been provided since. Richardson asked Arrindell if she would like an opportunity to speak on the subject. He added that AI data centers are coming, and municipalities need to be ready. Arrindell said there is a plethora of information on AI data centers available at DamascusCitizens.org containing public reactions from communities near existing data centers, scientific data on impacts, and a recent BBC/Guardian article on refrigerant issues. She added that F-gases (fluorinated gases) are used as refrigerants. They are not comparable to PFAS in structure and persistence and U.S. regulations are much looser than Europe's. When maintenance occurs, large portions of refrigerant can be vented to the air. European standards require special values to prevent mass release; the U.S. does not. AI data centers can damage biological tissue with low-frequency noise. Low frequency noise can travel up to five miles depending on geography. This poses risks to humans, wildlife, and ecosystems. Arrindell urged the towns and townships to take these issues seriously and regulate proactively, noting that PA and NY differ in terms of what townships are legally allowed to regulate.

Robinson said coincidentally, the Shohola Planning Commission just reviewed information about potential AI data centers. They found that typical facilities use over 400,000 gallons of water per day. Based on the River Management Plan (RMP), they are incompatible within the corridor. Shohola doesn't have the necessary commercial zoning districts, so it was essentially a moot point – their zoning inherently prohibits this development; the facilities' size, water demand, and energy needs classify them as large-scale industrial developments. Most towns in the corridor could not support such an operation.

Rodgers suggested that the UDC compile baseline technical requirements for AI data centers (acreage, water use, energy load, noise, etc.) so future discussions are grounded in concrete facts. Richardson said in the RMP under the Land and Water Use Guidelines, these types of facilities would fall under industrial use. The real question is whether they are considered light or heavy industrial. Engelhardt said industrial uses are incompatible in both Scenic and Recreational segments of the river corridor. Therefore, AI data centers are already prohibited in those areas. In Hamlets, only light industrial is allowed as a conditional use. However, she felt it is very unlikely any Hamlet-zoned lands have the space or scale needed for a data center. Realistically, an AI data center could not be sited anywhere in the river corridor. Rodgers asked how large these facilities typically are? Richardson said he knows of one around 1,000 acres. He said we shouldn't wait until we're faced with it. We should be proactive – possibly updating the RMP. G. Dudko said if AI data centers become defined as a critical national technology, the federal government might preempt local zoning. Martin said Northern Virginia has become a hotspot for data centers, especially in communities suffering economic decline, replacing old coal towns with "AI economy promises". Richardson said developers promise jobs or tax revenue and towns may feel pressured to accept facilities despite environmental or quality of life risks.

Ramie said one way the UDC has approached situations like this is with a position paper, similar to ones created on cideries, solar facilities, and other specialized land uses. Martin asked whether the UDC has done something like this for fracking. Ramie said the fracking stance was handled through formal comments and letters to agencies like DRBC and state governments – not a position paper – though the council did take an official position opposing fracking in the corridor. Richardson said we will revisit this topic in January. The committee agreed and emphasized the importance of "getting ahead of it" and having a clear justification for any position the UDC adopts.

Other: None.

Old Business:

Final 2023-2024 Code Enforcement Report: The final 2023-2024 Code Enforcement Report is included in tonight's packet. Engelhardt said she received the remaining information needed from the Town of Highland, and that the data is incorporated into the final report. She noted that the completed version includes all substantial conformance reviews conducted in both 2023 and 2024, so the report fully reflects a full and accurate picture of the year's enforcement and review activity. The Town of Fremont is the only town that hadn't provided any code enforcement information. She doesn't think they are withholding any information, but they were without a code officer for some time so may not have the records required. Rodgers said he attempted to speak to Fremont's Code Enforcement Officer at the last town board meeting, but he was absent. He's planning to connect with him at next Wednesday's meeting and remind him of the reporting requirements and to clarify what the UDC needs from the town. G. Dudko thanked Engelhardt for this extensive report, which she will hold for approval pending receipt of potential data from Fremont.

Local Waterfront Revitalization Plan for the Upper Delaware River Corridor Follow Up: Engelhardt said she had spoken with Heather Jacksy of Sullivan County Planning who confirmed that the 2015 Site Designs for Six River Access Points report is publicly available on the Sullivan County website under Departments – Planning & Community Development – Plans & Studies – third item down: Site Designs for Six River Access Points. The 2015 document includes concept plans and estimated budgets for six proposed access improvements. Long Eddy and Highland have since been completed.

Henry asked whether Engelhardt brought up the RMP's section on facilities to Jacksy. Engelhardt said she mentioned it. Henry said the RMP lists all the proposed NPS and state developed facilities within the corridor, stating anything not on that list requires a plan amendment – an amendment has never been done. The Long Eddy Access wasn't originally a DEC access; it was basically an informal spot where the road dropped to the river, historically used for fire trucks. Converting such places into official, improved facilities still triggers the RMP's requirements. He said he's not against new river accesses or improvements, but we have a plan, we use the plan, and

if you read the facilities section, it specifically says anything not listed must be added through an amendment. He stressed that many people – including partner agencies – don't actually read the plan and that creates inconsistencies. The NPS insists local governments and the UDC must follow the RMP to a T. Yet, by that same standard, the NPS and the state have added significant acreage and facilities not listed in the plan – without pursuing any amendments. Examples included: the new Long Eddy Access, the Ten Mile River (TMR) acquisition and co-management, and the 15,000-20,000 newly acquired acres that weren't in the original facilities list. He said if we must amend the plan in certain situations, why are they not held to that? We should at least acknowledge what's in the plan. The facilities section was originally included to prevent the NPS or state from "going hog wild" acquiring corridor land without coordination or limits.

Rodgers questioned who owned the Long Eddy Access? Ramie said she believes the Delaware Highlands Conservancy had temporarily taken ownership before turning it over to the state. Rodgers recalled meetings in Fremont where many residents opposed improvements. Ultimately, people came around to the idea since the site was already heavily used, and formalizing the access would help manage use and infrastructure. Engelhardt said the 10,000-acre TMR acquisition will eventually become state forest.

Marshall said the UDC is the coordination agency for implementation of the plan. Under the Cooperative Agreement, the council's responsibilities include making recommendations to federal and state agencies that own or lease land within or near the corridor. Those recommendations must reflect the views of the host town/township. It is fully appropriate for the UDC to make written recommendations to the NPS or state about access acquisition, management, or whether the plan should be updated. Henry asked if she is implying that the RMP isn't a NPS plan? Marshall said the NPS is the agency responsible under the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act, but the plan is a cooperative plan, not a unilateral NPS document. The UDC, states, counties, and town/townships all have roles in its implementation and oversight. Therefore, there is no single entity that updates the plan alone – it is a cooperative process. Henry said the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act assigns the creation of cooperative management plans to the Secretary of the Interior. Marshall said if it were entirely in the NPS hands, then sure – update it. But it isn't. The RMP is cooperative, and updating it requires cooperation. Richardson thanked Henry for bringing the topic up again and acknowledged his logic. Martin said she was happy to see the NPS staff back after the government shutdown. Marshall said it's good to be back.

Land Use Complaints: Engelhardt said Susan Sullivan (Town of Tusten UDC Alternate) stopped by the UDC office to report illegal trash dumping in two locations, including at Tusten Mountain Trail/Stone Arch Bridge. Sullivan had found dumped trash along the Tusten Mountain Trail near the Stone Arch Bridge, which connected back to similar complaints she made last year. At that time, someone had been dumping bags of kitty litter off the Stone Arch Bridge — and this new dumping appeared to be more of the same. When the NPS returned from the shutdown, Marshall sent out a team who collected eight full bags of trash at the Stone Arch Bridge site — again filled with kitty litter. This strongly suggested the same individual from past incidents. Sullivan's other dumping concern appeared to be the same location that we were alerted to earlier in the year, where Marshall had previously found trash and contacted Ryan Coulter at NYSDEC about it. Engelhardt said they would follow up with Coulter again.

The next issue originated from Padua during a recent WU/RM meeting. Padua had emailed Engelhardt photos showing extensive construction grading directly along the river between Callicoon and Damascus, which raised immediate erosion and permitting concerns. Engelhardt reached out to the Wayne County Conservation District. She will follow up with Wayne County to clarify whether the landowner has applied for any permits or is performing grading without authorization.

Next is an unpermitted boat ramp/river access in Lackawaxen Township in Rocky Rift Farm Road. This issue came from Marshall, who was alerted over the summer that a new ramp or launch had been cut into the shoreline in Lackawaxen Township. Marshall checked and no permits had been obtained. She then contacted the Pike County Conservation District who reported that they inspected the site twice since the complaint. The property owner declined to apply for permits, choosing instead to restore the area. The owner placed straw matting to limit erosion and sediment runoff. He had cut down into the shoreline, but has since returned it to its original grade. Henry suggested that beyond involving the Conservation District, the NPS should be notified since they have jurisdiction up to the ordinary high-water mark. He said NPS has enforced similar issues before and likely would take interest, even if exact property boundaries are unclear. He emphasized as well that the Pennsylvania Fish & Boat

Commission often has a stronger enforcement role than Conservation Districts and recommended contacting their Waterways Conservation Officer. In his experience, the Fish & Boat Commission has "a bigger hammer" for violations involving riverbank disturbance, access cuts, and illegal launches. Richardson said on his road, someone dumped garbage bags twice. The first time, he cleaned it up. The second time, he called a friend at the NYSDEC. An officer arrived within an hour and sifted through the trash piece by piece and discovered a missed car dealer advertisement card, and a medicine blister pack from a NJ pharmacy. Through coordination with the pharmacy, they traced the trash to a summer home in Lake Huntington. The culprit ended up being the homeowner's son, who had been visiting and returning to NJ with a load of trash and nowhere to dump it, leading them to discard it on the road. The DEC made them pick up the trash and issued enforcement action. Richardson said this type investigation isn't unusual; the DEC takes these things seriously. Roeder said they have had similar cases in the Town of Delaware where dumped trash with identifiable mail led right to the responsible party.

Next Meeting Reminder: 3rd Tuesday, Dec. 16, at 7pm: This was included as a reminder that all three committees will meet on 12/16 due to the holiday, with Operations first at 6:30pm, Project Review at 7:00pm, and WU/RM at 7:30pm.

Other:

Public Comment: None.

Adjournment: A motion moved by G. Dudko, seconded by Henry to adjourn at 7:22 p.m. carried.

Minutes prepared by Stephanie Driscoll, 12/2/2025