Upper Delaware Council
PROJECT REVIEW COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES
December 16, 2025

Committee Members Present:	Larry Richardson, Al Henry, Aaron Robinson, Harold Roeder, Jim Rodgers, Ginny Dudko, Christine Martin (Zoom)
Committee Members Absent:	Jeff Dexter
Staff:	Laurie Ramie, Kerry Engelhardt, Stephanie Driscoll
NPS Partners:	Carly Marshall (Zoom), Tom Kearns (Zoom)
Guests:	Bill Dudko, Liam Mayo (River Reporter), Pat Jeffer, Evan Padua

The UDC's Project Review Committee held its monthly meeting on Tuesday, December 16, 2025. Chairperson Richardson called the meeting to order at 7:38 p.m. There was no public comment on the agenda.

Approval of November 25, 2025 Meeting Minutes: A motion by Robinson seconded by Roeder to approve the 11/25 meeting minutes, carried.

Resources and Land Use Specialist Update:

New York State Projects
DRBC Dockets – There were no projects in the State of New York listed on the DRBC's Notice of Applications Received in December.

Town of Delaware
Callicoon Riverside Park – Engelhardt said she received a message from Sara Guerrieri at Fisher Associates about this project and the substantial conformance review thereof. She sent her information about which checklist to use for the application but have not had a chance to speak with her on the phone. (According to marketing information on the Sullivan County website, the county obtained a 38-acre parcel in order to develop it as a passive outdoor recreational asset.) An article is included at the end of this report. She explained that this is reviewable as a Class 2 Significant Project because it is initiated in the river corridor by a government agency.

Commonwealth of Pennsylvania Projects
DRBC Dockets – There were no projects in the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania listed on the DRBC's Notice of Applications Received in December.

Damascus Township
Callicoon Bridge – There was a letter to the editor in the *Sullivan County Democrat*, among others, regarding the temporary wooden pedestrian path on the Callicoon Bridge, from Andre Turan and other Residents of Damascus, PA. The letter is attached at the end of this report. Engelhardt said Turan indicated that they sent a letter to the NYSDOT Commissioner on 11/25 regarding the matter. Engelhardt asked if the committee would like to inquire about what's being done at the DOT regional level. Richardson said that's a good idea; people are obviously expressing concern.

Dog Kennel – Ed Lagarenne called to let Engelhardt know about a conditional use application in Damascus for a proposed dog kennel. She attended the planning commission meeting and we will be discussing the project for substantial conformance this evening. She reminded everyone that Damascus has zoning that doesn't always align with the river corridor.

Lackawaxen Township
Masthope Wastewater Treatment Plant – There was an article in the *River Reporter* about the wastewater treatment facility in the Masthope community. It was anticipated that the latest remediation plan would be officially adopted this month, and then reviewed by the PADEP. Engelhardt reached out to the Township to see if she could gather more information. The article is included at the end of this report. She said at the last Delaware River Sojourn Steering Committee meeting, someone suggested not paddling the Lackawaxen River past Masthope due to smell.

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.
2025-07	Sorochynskj Dog Kennel	Damascus, PA	Class II – Conditional Use Permit	To be discussed tonight
2026-01	Open Space & Recreation Plan, and Natural Resources Inventory	Tusten, NY	Local Plan Review	Under preliminary review. To be discussed at January 2026 PR meeting.

Additional Comments:

Golden Horde Farm and Campground – The project is not on the agenda for the December Planning Board meeting. It is expected to be heard at the January 2026 meeting which will be held January 29th.

Tusten Open Space and Recreation Plan – To be reviewed for Substantial Conformance in order to release the TAG funds. A public hearing was held December 9 and no comments from the public were received that would require revision. The Town Board expects to adopt the plan at the January 13, 2026 meeting. Engelhardt has shared the link to the two documents (the OS&RP, and the NRI) to the Project Review Committee, which are also available on the Town of Tusten website. She will review the plan for any major issues by the end of next week. We will conduct our formal substantial conformance review at the January Project Review Committee meeting, after the plan has been adopted by the Town.

FY 2025 Technical Assistance Grants

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 – See above.

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 February 20, 2026.

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

New Business:

Substantial Conformance Review 2025-08: Sorochynskyj Dog Kennel, Damascus Township: Engelhardt said this application involves the construction of a new building on a residential parcel located within a rural residential zoning district where the applicants currently reside. The purpose of the building would be to operate a dog kennel on the property. The proposed structure was described as either a 40-by-60-foot or 40-by-70-foot building that would contain ten individual dog suites. Each suite would include an indoor kennel space with an associated outdoor run, providing a split indoor–outdoor arrangement for each dog. She had attended the Damascus Township Planning Commission meeting at which the applicant was present and provided additional background on the project. During that meeting, the applicant explained her intent to develop what she described as a higher-end dog kennel operation. The applicant is a licensed dog trainer with a significant level of experience in canine care and training. She currently holds professional certifications and plans to advance to the next certification level in order to lawfully accommodate up to ten additional dogs on the property, beyond her own personal pets. In addition to training, the applicant has experience fostering dogs through the local shelter in Honesdale and also works with canine search-and-rescue organizations.

The proposed development was limited to the construction of the kennel building itself, with no other major site alterations. As part of the conditions required to obtain a conditional use permit under the Damascus Township Zoning Code, the applicant would be required to provide three off-street parking spaces. The existing parcel is 21.6 acres and located on Plank Road. Richardson asked about nearby residences; dog kennels can generate noise, but the size and configuration of the parcel mitigated many of those concerns. The applicant has a background in landscape architecture and had prepared a clear and detailed site plan. While there are neighboring properties, several adjacent parcels identified on the plan are also owned by the applicant. The remaining neighboring residences are located on surrounding parcels labeled on the site map. The applicant's parcel is largely wooded, except for the area immediately surrounding the existing residence, and this natural vegetation would help buffer potential impacts. The applicant is required by zoning to install landscaping screening, including a row of coniferous trees or shrubs, to further mitigate visual, noise, and odor impacts. It was also noted that, consistent with zoning regulations, all dogs would be kept indoors between the hours of 8:00 p.m. and 8:00 a.m. Engelhardt confirmed that the proposal either currently meets or is planned to meet all of the conditions outlined in the Damascus Township Zoning Code, including the parking requirement, which is calculated at one parking space for every four dogs. Questions were raised about whether the parking area would be impervious, and it was explained that the parking surface would likely be gravel rather than pavement, minimizing impervious coverage.

Martin asked if the operation would involve boarding and training only, and that no dog breeding would occur at the site. Engelhardt said correct, no dog breeding. Engelhardt said that dog kennels are not specifically defined in the Land and Water Use Guidelines and do not fit neatly into existing use categories. After consultation with Carly Marshall, they agreed that the closest and most appropriate classification for purposes of the River Management Plan would be agricultural use, particularly when considering potential impacts such as noise, odors, and limited traffic. Agricultural would be a compatible use within recreational segments of the river corridor.

Henry asked if the kennel would be visible from the river. Engelhardt said no. She recommended a finding of substantial conformance with the River Management Plan. A motion by Robinson, seconded by Henry to recommend substantial conformance and forward the application to the full council, carried.

Other: None.

Old Business:

Vote on 2023-2024 Code Enforcement Report: Engelhardt said she had thought the committee had voted to approve the report, and therefore sent it out to NPS on 12/5. Ramie said the plan was for Engelhardt in the interim to reach out to the Town of Fremont to request their information, but she never received any, so that was the final version. This vote would be retroactive. A motion by G. Dudko to approve the 2023-2024 Code Enforcement Report, seconded by Henry, carried.

AI Data Center Information: Engelhardt said there is an overwhelming amount of information circulating on this topic, with articles, reports, and commentary appearing almost daily. Several recent articles were shared with the committee to illustrate how quickly this issue is emerging in the region. One of the articles described the construction of a data center in Archbald, Pennsylvania. Another article, from the *Pike County Dispatch*, discussed similar activity in Lehman Township. It was observed that there seems to be an increasing number of these reports, particularly coming out of Pennsylvania, and while some of that visibility may be due to social media exposure,

there is a strong sense that this type of development is genuinely accelerating. Pennsylvania appears to be incentivizing data center development, which has resulted in townships attempting to react quickly—sometimes too late—to address zoning and land use implications. In some cases, local governments have found themselves caught off guard, without appropriate zoning provisions in place before applications were submitted. The articles were provided to committee members as background reading so they could better understand how neighboring municipalities are responding, and in some cases struggling, to keep pace with this trend.

A key issue identified for future discussion is what position the UDC should take regarding the siting of AI data centers within the river corridor. Equally important is the reality that these proposals are likely to arise within individual towns and townships represented on the Council. Committee members were encouraged to view this information as educational, so they could proactively bring the issue back to their local governments and stress the importance of getting ahead of it. If data centers are proposed, they could be located where communities want them, and developed under conditions that reflect local priorities.

There was broad agreement that this will require a substantial and thoughtful discussion, and that it would be appropriate to place the topic on the January agenda to allow sufficient time to explore it. It was acknowledged that the scale and impacts of data centers make them difficult to reconcile with the Upper Delaware corridor. Concerns were raised about extensive impervious surfaces associated with these facilities, including large roof areas and expansive paved surfaces. The enormous power demands of data centers were also highlighted, particularly the fact that in many parts of the country, existing power infrastructure is insufficient to support them. This led to further concern about the implications for power transmission lines, especially within the river corridor, where utility infrastructure is already a sensitive issue. The combination of land disturbance, infrastructure expansion, and long-term environmental impacts raised serious questions about compatibility with the River Management Plan and the corridor's resource protection goals. The committee agreed to carry the topic forward to January for a more in-depth discussion, recognizing that while it is complex and potentially contentious, early awareness and planning will be critical.

Land Use Complaints: Engelhardt said there had not been any significant updates since the last meeting. She had a conversation with Rachel Marquez of the Wayne County Conservation District earlier today where Marquez told her to contact Keith at her office is the primary contact responsible for ensuring that projects are properly permitted, and that inquiries should be directed to him going forward. Beyond that there had been no new information related to previously discussed sites, including Outpost or Slumberland. Engelhardt asked Marshall if she had anything and she confirmed that there were no updates. The most recent complaint the council had received remained the boat ramp issue in Damascus, which had already been addressed through enforcement actions by Wayne County Conservation District.

Richardson said there was a comment at the last meeting about asphalt millings. Based on information that he had reviewed, millings are generally considered less environmentally harmful than freshly laid asphalt, particularly because they do not contain the same level of fresh oils. When properly placed and compacted, they can be a reasonable reuse material. New York State has used this process extensively, grinding pavement and reapplying it in place, which has become a fairly common practice. While acknowledging that no material is entirely free of environmental impact, it was expressed that this reuse does not appear to be a problematic practice.

Padua asked about enforcement actions related to the previously discussed Damascus complaint. Marshall clarified that Wayne County Conservation District had followed up with additional enforcement on that property and had notified Engelhardt. As part of that enforcement, the property owner was required to stabilize disturbed areas. Stabilization work was underway in the immediate term. It was further clarified that a separate project in Pike County, located across from Ascalona Campground, was a different case altogether. In that instance, the property owner had opted not to pursue permits and instead agreed to return the site to its original grade. That restoration work was reportedly in progress. For the Damascus site, it remained unclear whether the property owner would ultimately pursue permits or fully restore the area, but in the meantime, stabilization of exposed and disturbed ground was being required.

Other: None.

Public Comment: None.

Adjournment: A motion moved by G. Dudko, seconded by Henry to adjourn at 8:02 p.m. carried.

Minutes prepared by Stephanie Driscoll, 12/18/2025