

## UPPER DELAWARE COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES

January 5, 2017

(Annual Meeting)

The Upper Delaware Council held its monthly (annual) meeting on Thursday, January 5, 2017 at the Council office in Narrowsburg, NY. Chairperson Fred Peckham called the meeting to order at 7:00p.m. The Pledge of Allegiance and roll call followed.

In attendance: Town of Hancock-Fred Peckham, Town of Fremont-Jim Greier, Town of Delaware-Harold Roeder, Jr., Town of Cochecton-Larry Richardson, Town of Tusten-Susan Sullivan, Town of Highland-Jeff Haas, Town of Lumberland-Leigh Sherman, Town of Deerpark-David Dean, Damascus Township-Jeffrey Dexter, Berlin Township-Al Henry, Lackawaxen Township-Doug Case, Shohola Township-Aaron Robinson, Westfall Township-Michael Barth, Commonwealth of Pennsylvania-Tim Dugan, National Park Service-Kris Heister. Staff in attendance: Executive Director-Laurie Ramie, Resource Specialist-Pete Golod, Secretary-Cindy Odell. Also in attendance: Ginny Dudko, Town of Deerpark alternate, Tony Ritter, Town of Tusten alternate, and Debra Conway, Town of Highland alternate. Absent: State of New York, Delaware River Basin Commission. Guests: Dr. Claire Jantz, Antonia Price, Jonathon Chester, Carla Hahn, Jamie Myers, Shannon Thol, Jim Barth, many municipal planning board members and citizens.

**Election of 2017 UDC Officers:** Peckham thanked the staff and the Council members. He said it was an honor to serve as the UDC Chairman as a river front landowner. He feels that all the members take their responsibilities seriously. He noted that the River Management Plan should be followed and he tried to do that the best he could as Chairman. He said, "Let's keep going for another 25 years." Ramie referenced the written ballot included in members' packets. The Nominating Committee's slate of officers was presented. Candidates were: Chairperson – James Greier (Town of Fremont); Vice-Chairperson – David Dean (Town of Deerpark); and Secretary/Treasurer – Alan Henry (Berlin Township). Ramie noted that write-ins are welcome. Votes were cast and ballots were collected and presented to Ramie for tallying. Ramie reported the result was unanimous with fourteen votes cast for the slate of officers as recommended by the Nominating Committee. Greier thanked all his peers and colleagues for granting him the honor to serve as Chair of this great Council. He stated that 2016 was the 50-year anniversary of the Town of Fremont instituting a Planning Board. He said that his father Charles Greier was one of the founding members of that board. He said he is proud and honored to follow in his direction. He conducted the remainder of the meeting.

**Presentation about the Development of a Modern Map of the Upper Delaware Corridor by Dr. Claire Jantz of Shippensburg University's Center for Land Use and Sustainability (CLUS):** Carla Hahn of the National Park Service explained that this project is the result of a request from the UDC to provide technical assistance by developing a computerized twenty-first century way of dealing with maps. Hahn acknowledged Shannon Thol who began this process in 2015 by developing a Prototype of a Geographic Information System for the Upper Delaware River Region which served as the capstone project for her Master's in Geographic Information System (GIS) degree from Penn State University. Hahn said the next step is to develop this "tool" into something that we all can use. As a result, the NPS has entered into an agreement with Shippensburg University to bring this tool to that level. Hahn introduced Dr. Jantz. Jantz said that she and her team were here to talk about the development of a mapping tool that will help

many of those in attendance to do their jobs better. She introduced members of her team which consists of herself, Antonia Price, the project coordinator, and Jonathon Chester, a student fellow for CLUS. GIS specialist Alfonso Yanez was unable to attend tonight's presentation, Jantz added. Jantz provided some information about the Center for Land Use and Sustainability, noting that it is housed within the Department of Geography Earth Science at Shippensburg University. Jantz stated that if people have used Google maps before, they have used GIS. The textbook definition of GIS is a system designed to capture, store, manipulate, analyze, manage, and present spatial or geographic data. Jantz noted that GIS is widely-used in Land Use Planning. She said that during the course of the development of this tool, she and her team will be working with the users, who will consist of the local municipalities, counties, states, the UDC and the NPS, to identify data that is needed to answer questions that are relevant to them. All of the data will be in one place and will provide spatial overlays, which are superimposed layers of geographic data that cover the same area to study the relationships between them. Jantz emphasized that for planning purposes, GIS is mainly used for visualization, to see data and how all the different features on the landscape interact. She noted that most of the datasets they have used have come from trusted sources, but is not survey quality data. It will help the users make an assessment of what the context is. Jantz said that the partnership that CLUS and the NPS have entered into is a Cooperative Agreement. The main objective is to build on Shannon Thol's work and to complete and launch an effective and efficient, on-line spatial decision support tool for substantial conformance and project review. The GIS tool will be used by the Upper Delaware local municipalities, counties, states, the UDC, and the National Park Service. The tool will be tailored to what the needs of the target audience are and the decision-making processes they have to undertake. She explained that when people use paper maps, it forces them to create mental overlays and that can be hard to do accurately when you're working with maps of different sizes. The GIS tool will allow for quick, easy, and accurate visual assessment. Jantz provided a demonstration with an example parcel of how the tool should ultimately work. Thol was asked by Jantz to discuss the origins of the project. She said she presented the prototype system to the Council in April 2015. The GIS work Thol did for the National Park Service and the Upper Delaware Council served as the capstone project for her Master's in GIS degree from Penn State University. She said she dug deep into the needs assessment to determine what information was required to accomplish Project Review with the tool. Hahn noted that the UDC staff was part of the needs assessment conversation. Thol stated that the prototype that she developed is a good foundation, but it has been known that in order for it to have "life and longevity", it needs to move forward. She feels the partnership with CLUS is a great opportunity to continue the project. Jantz acknowledged that Thol has given them a really good foundation to build on. Peckham spoke of Delaware County's Community Online Mapping Information Tool (COMIT). Jantz said she understands that Pike County in Pennsylvania has a similar program, but noted that many towns and townships do not have access to such programs. Jantz shared the project objectives moving forward and details of a meeting held earlier in the day with county planning departments. They will be reviewing datasets and making sure they are complete and up to date as their first objective, Jantz explained. That will be followed with the web-mapping component in which they will take all of the datasets and make them available on-line and designing the on-line system so that it is easy to use and navigate. Jantz said that these first two objectives will be the focus of the team's work for the next year. Once the web-map is where they want it to be, they will do a roll out of that project. They anticipate coming and working with the target audiences to introduce them to the tool and provide technical support for the implementation. This is to be accomplished in year two followed by years three through five of the Cooperative Agreement maintaining UPDE's project review GIS system so that it remains up to date and relevant. Jantz noted that because the data is dynamic, there needs to be a mechanism in place to update the datasets as needed. More information can be obtained by visiting the project website at [www.centerforlanduse.org/upde](http://www.centerforlanduse.org/upde) or by contacting one of the project managers, Jantz reported. A brief question and answer session took place. Jim Barth asked if the tool will be publicly available. Hahn said it will be available to the target audience. She suggested that individuals may be able to go to their town or township to use it. He asked if there is a target date. Price said that date has not been set. Jantz noted that the project began in October 2016 and it is hoped to complete the first two objectives by the Fall/Winter of 2017. Hahn said that cooperation from the towns and townships in providing the requested information will be very helpful and move the project along faster. She referred to the process of collecting data as a "complete roundtable". Robinson questioned how the tax parcel information will be kept current when it changes so fast and what would be the guess as to how accurate

the layer lines will be relative to the parcel. Jantz said she learned in meeting with the county planning departments that they all do their parcel map updates differently. She said the team is discussing how to do the updates and considering a bi-annual or annual update to the parcel maps. Jantz said that the accuracy of the parcel boundaries will vary by county to a certain extent. She said it needs to be kept in mind that when using spatial data, the accuracy can be variable and the only way to determine boundaries is to get on the ground and survey it. David Hulse asked if there will be a layer for population. Jantz said she did not show that, but they will have that layer available. Jantz said that she and her team plan to be responsive to the users' feedback regarding needs. Price said the tool will not replace the users' process for decision making, it is just to help in visualizing the locations of projects. Henry asked if they will be able to respond to software changes. Jantz said they should know when updates are coming and hopefully be able to respond to those changes within the Cooperative Agreement timeline. Robinson asked if soil maps will be integrated as a layer. Jantz told him yes and explained that for many of the many datasets, they will be able to "pull" them from servers of different agencies. Dean asked if there will be a disclaimer as far as accuracy goes. Jantz said CLUS will be providing the users with guidance in terms of the best ways to use the tool and the best ways to use the different datasets. Ed Jackson asked if the tool will show endangered species and archeologically sensitive areas. Hahn said that information will probably not be available, but the NPS could work with the towns and townships regarding that. Jantz added that many of the agencies that collect that information, do not make it available. Hahn provided a handout to members of what she referred to as the "nuts and bolts" of the River Management Plan. She suggested that if members look at the handout as they process this project, it all "starts to make sense." Greier thanked Jantz and her team and presented Jantz with a UDC lapel pin.

**Approval of December 1 Meeting Minutes:** Greier asked for approval of the December 1<sup>st</sup> meeting minutes. A motion by Richardson to accept those minutes was seconded by Haas and carried.

**Public Comment on the Agenda:** None.

**Committee Reports:** Committee reports were provided based on the meeting minutes. They were: December 20 Project Review by Richardson; December 20 Operations by Peckham; and December 20 Water Use/Resource Management by Ritter.

### **Status Reports**

**Delaware River Basin Commission:** The DRBC was absent, however, the hydrologic report was provided. The NYC Delaware River Basin Storage as of January 3, 2017 was at a combined capacity of 50.6% with Cannonsville at 35.4%. Also included in members' packets was a press release dated December 14<sup>th</sup> titled, "DRBC Approves Fee Restructuring".

**NYS Dept. of Environmental Conservation:** No report in the absence of Representative Bill Rudge, however a press release dated December 5<sup>th</sup> titled, "DEC Summer Camp Registration Opens January 25, 2017" was included in members' packets at Rudge's request.

**PA Dept. of Conservation & Natural Resources:** Dugan provided members with the PA DCNR 2017 Smokey Bear pocket calendars.

Dugan provided information on grant announcements made last month. In Pike County, The Nature Conservancy was awarded \$340,000 toward the acquisition of approximately 318 acres near Route 402 in Porter Township, Pike County for an addition to the Delaware State Forest and protection of the Bushkill watershed. For Pike and Wayne Counties, the Pennsylvania Environmental Council, Inc. was awarded \$200,000 to coordinate and fund activities of the Pocono Forests and Waters Conservation Landscape including the 2017 mini-grant program; identify priority parcels for land conservation and outreach to property owners; conduct trail forums and identify priority trail gaps; and conduct special events to promote brand awareness.

Dugan noted that his UDC alternate Rhonda Manning was able to provide a list of Growing Greener Projects in Wayne and Pike counties beginning in 1999 to the present in response to Ramie's

request on behalf of the National Parks Conservation Association (NPCA). NPCA is gathering information on how the Commonwealth's Growing Greener grants program has benefitted the Upper Delaware Scenic and Recreational River region throughout the years. Ramie said the list Manning provided was perfect.

Dugan reported on the status of jobs in Pennsylvania. He noted Governor Wolf is effectively limiting the size of the state workforce to the number of positions filled as of December 2<sup>nd</sup>. Dugan said this means, at least for the remainder of the year, in Pennsylvania State Government, there will be at least 3,000 positions that won't be filled. There is currently no talk of layoffs or furloughs. Dugan said that DCNR has retained much of its staff, but all agencies have been reduced since 2007. Peckham asked if the agency is funded with gas monies. Dugan said that pre-Marcellus Shale, DCNR held onto all the money that was acquired from DCNR lands through oil and gas mineral rights. He said that when Marcellus Shale came in, there was an adjustment to the rules. The Department is now allowed to keep a portion of the monies. Dugan said in the larger scheme of things, "The Department of Conservation and Natural Resources is based on a foundation of sustainable, long-term management and sustaining ourselves on a finite resource." Robinson asked if timbering has supported the agency. Dugan said that it has and provided some figures and history. He stated that the agency's target rotation of the forest is 120 years. He explained that whether the market is high or low the agency is selling timber because their job as a state institute is to keep moving product to retain the jobs in the industry in the state.

**National Park Service-Upper Delaware:** Heister reported that the NPS has finalized the Section 7 determination for the Orion Pipeline Project and sent it off to the Army Corps of Engineers.

Heister said she met in December with Damascus Township staff and surveyor Gary Packer to discuss the digital boundary issue. She stated that the meeting was a productive one.

Heister said that they have released the final Commercial Use Authorization (CUA) fee schedule. A meeting was held with CUA holders on December 15<sup>th</sup> both in person as well as a call-in for those not in the area.

Heister announced the retirement of Connie Lloyd after 34 years with the National Park Service. She was a great asset to the park, she added. The Interpretive Division will now go from one full-time position to two part-time positions. This model will allow for seven-day coverage in the summer.

Heister said that the two maintenance positions have been filled, noting one is by a local resident.

Heister reported that she was in Washington, D.C. on December 2<sup>nd</sup> to meet with our federal representatives and provide briefings on various topics. Topics included explaining the working structure of the UDC-NPS partnership, what is special about this place, and CUA fee increase. Heister stated that between November and December, she also made it a point to meet with a majority of the state representatives.

**UDC Executive Director's Report:** Ramie reported that a modification to our Cooperative Agreement with the NPS was executed on December 23 to allow access to an additional 57.37% of the UDC's annual funding allocation. This is based on the latest Continuing Resolution approved on December 10 and expires on April 28.

Effective January 1, 2017, the standard mileage rate for business expenses dropped to 53.5 cents per mile. Meeting attendance reimbursement checks will reflect that change, Ramie noted.

Ramie referred members to the "Compilation of Comments Submitted to Upper Delaware Council on Draft Position Paper on Large-Scale Solar Energy Systems" handout provided in their packets. We solicited feedback from October 3 to December 30<sup>th</sup> and received comments from 7 out of our 13 local government members as of today. Ramie suggested that this topic be referred to the Project Review Committee which has been handling the Position Paper to determine any follow-ups to bring back to the full Council. Ramie added that if any other towns or townships have comments, we will still welcome that input.

Ramie referred to the copy of an article titled, "Delaware River Basin Conservation Act Passage is 'Dawning of a New Day' for Federal Attention" that she was asked to write for the River Reporter which covered the December 22<sup>nd</sup> press conference in Hancock to celebrate passage of the Delaware River Basin Conservation Act. The conference was sponsored by the Friends of the Upper Delaware River, Inc. (FUDR) and the Coalition for the Delaware River Watershed, and was one of Congressman Chris Gibson's last acts as he leaves politics for teaching. Ramie said that the legislation sets up the mechanism to provide

grants for restoration projects and technical assistance through this non-regulatory program under the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. Unfortunately, the intended \$5 million to support its grants got pulled from the bill at the last minute. The next step will be seeking appropriations to fund it.

Ramie noted as was mentioned by Dugan and in the Operations Committee minutes, we had offered to help the National Parks Conservation Association with its research into how the Upper Delaware River Valley has benefitted from Pennsylvania's Growing Greener grants program since it began in 1999. A memo was sent out on December 28 to our PA members requesting information. Ramie wanted to express particular thanks to Sally Corrigan, executive director of the Pike County Conservation District, and to our PA Alternate Representative Rhonda Manning for so promptly and professionally responding to that request with very thorough inventories for dozens of projects facilitated by these grants in Pike and Wayne Counties.

Ramie stated now that the election has taken place, a news release announcing our new officers will go out tomorrow. A copy of that release was provided in members' packets so that members could learn more about their backgrounds. The swearing-in ceremony will take place at the February 2 meeting with oaths of office administered, a group photo taken, and a reception to follow the meeting. By that time, we should have confirmed 2017 appointments from all members. Ramie reiterated that our three standing committees that meet monthly are open in membership to all interested representatives and alternates. The committees will be electing chairs and vice-chairs at the respective January 17 and January 24 meetings.

Ramie said that the meeting packets are available electronically and can be emailed in advance of the meetings to anyone who would like them. Anyone interested in receiving them in this manner should let Odell know.

Ramie reported that we are looking at Sunday, April 23<sup>rd</sup> as the date for our Awards Banquet. She said the banquet will take place on the Pennsylvania side this year and she awaits a response from a potential venue. She asked members if they have any ideas for a keynote speaker. Members offered a few suggestions.

Ramie referred members to the January calendar of UDC Meetings, Activities, and Deadlines which includes a listing of upcoming projects.

Ramie told members that we welcome their ideas of topics or speakers for our educational presentations at the full Council meetings. She feels these presentations are a great feature of our meetings. Dean suggested inviting back the geologist who gave the presentation "Geologic and Natural History Mapping in New York State". Ramie said it would be good to get an update on their current project.

Dugan spoke of Pennsylvania's goal of planting 95,000 acres of streamside buffers by 2025. He said in the Fall of 2016 they unveiled a new layer of grant programming. He said it is an opportunity for local governments, nonprofits and educational organizations to identify locations in need of riparian forested buffers and to design, establish, monitor and maintain those buffers and request funding for such projects. The number one goal is to improve water quality. This initiative is being driven by the Chesapeake Bay, but is available state-wide. Henry asked where one could acquire more information on this. Dugan told him on the DCNR website under "Grants".

**Old Business:** Henry reminded members of the Personnel Subcommittee that they are scheduled to meet in advance of the January 24<sup>th</sup> committees at 6:00 and he asked that they look over the e-mailed agenda that had been sent to them.

#### **New Business:**

##### **UDC Resolution 2017-01: Enter into a Contract with Eckersley & Ostrowski, LLP for FY 2017**

**Financial Review:** A resolution to contract with the firm of Eckersley and Ostrowski, LLP of Scranton, PA to provide a financial review and accounting services for Fiscal Year 2017 was presented. A motion by Richardson seconded by Henry to approve the resolution was carried unanimously.

##### **UDC Resolution 2017-02: Authorizing Signatories for the Council's Banking Accounts in 2017:**

A resolution to allow the UDC 2017 officers and Executive Director to sign the corporate resolutions and

signature cards for the accounts at Jeff Bank was presented. A motion by Peckham seconded by Henry to approve the resolution was carried unanimously.

**Draft Letter of Support for Equinunk Watershed Alliance Growing Greener Grant Application:** A motion to approve and send the letter was made by Peckham, seconded by Henry and carried unanimously. Ramie said a copy of this letter will be sent to both Manchester and Buckingham Townships as well.

**Other:** None

**Public Comment:** None

**Adjournment:** A motion by Roeder, seconded by Peckham, to adjourn the meeting at 8:20 p.m. was carried unanimously.

*Minutes prepared by Cindy Odell 1/12/17*