



Upper Delaware Council

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UPPER DELAWARE COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES December 1, 2022

The Upper Delaware Council held its monthly meeting on Thursday, December 1, 2022. Chairperson Boyar called the meeting to order at 7:01 p.m. and roll call followed.

In attendance: Town of Hancock- Fred Peckham (Zoom), Town of Fremont- Jim Greier, Town of Delaware- Harold Roeder, Jr., Town of Tusten- Sue Sullivan, Town of Highland- Andy Boyar, Town of Deerpark- Virginia Dudko, Town of Lumberland- Nadia Rajsz, Damascus Township- Jeff Dexter, Berlin Township- Alan Henry, Lackawaxen Township- Doug Case, Shohola Township- Aaron Robinson, Westfall Township- Mike Barth (Zoom), State of New York- Ryan Coulter (Zoom), Commonwealth of Pennsylvania- Tim Dugan, Delaware River Basin Commission- Kristen Bowman Kavanagh (Zoom), National Park Service- Kara Deutsch. Staff in attendance: Executive Director- Laurie Ramie, Resources and Land Use Specialist- Kerry Engelhardt. Absent: Town of Cochection, Ashley Hall-Bagdonas- Secretary. Guests: Dr. Claire Jantz (Zoom), Alfonso Yanez Morillo (Zoom), Bill Dudko- Town of Deerpark Alternate, Evan Padua- Town of Tusten Alternate, Heather Jacksy, Bernard Lohman, Cathleen Breen, Jane Luchsinger, Kara P. Becker, (Zoom), Sharon Davis (Zoom), Chris McCann (Zoom), Ben Johnson (Zoom), Peter Manning (Zoom), Alex Garcia-Maldonado- NPS (Zoom), Don Hamilton-NPS (Zoom). Media: Liam Mayo- River Reporter, Peter Becker- Tri-County Independent (Zoom).

Presentation: “3D Visualization of Land Use in Upper Delaware Corridor” by Dr. Claire Jantz and Alfonso Yanez Morillo, Center for Land Use and Sustainability at Shippensburg University, introduced by Sharon Davis, National Parks Conservation Association: Davis introduced herself as the National Parks Conservation Association (NPCA) Delaware River Program Manager. NPCA has about a decade long involvement with issues on the Upper Delaware River. They exist to advocate for national parks and for additional funding and also manage the Scenic Wild Delaware River Geo-tourism program which is a National Geographic endorsed program that encourages visitors when they come to the adjacent communities to our National Parks to go to the local businesses, farmers’ markets, community events, local air b&bs, and to spend their money with the people that have always lived and are attempting to sustain the Upper Delaware region. The UDC has been a founding member of the Scenic Wild Delaware River Geotourism Program so NPCA and UDC have a relationship going back. NPCA works with the William Penn Foundation and has dedicated some of their grant money to assisting the UDC with such things as last year they helped put the UDC Project Review Workbook online, get the project submission forms digitized, and helped plan the 5-Year retreat. The project she’s about to introduce grew out of their continuing interest in helping to support the UDC. Davis, not being an expert in zoning or climate impact, said she has personally seen visualizations that drive home the point and the need for good zoning and planning. NPCA found Dr. Claire Jantz and Alfonso Yanez Morillo at Shippensburg University Center for Land Use and Sustainability and asked them to do a 3D Visualization of Land Use in the Upper Delaware Corridor to show what full build-out to existing zoning might look like. Their original plan was to do two towns and two townships but they may have been biting off more than they could chew so they settled on one town and township. Davis said she thinks the UDC will understand the usefulness of having something like this as you move forward in planning good zoning in your region. Davis introduced Dr. Claire Jantz and Alfonso Yanez Morillo.

Dr. Jantz thanked Davis and all in attendance, saying she wished she could be in person as she always loves to visit our area and they are happy to share their latest work with the UDC. Yanez Morillo is the research analyst at the Center for Land Use and Sustainability and is their technical expert. He provided an overview. He said this is a tool for officials or anyone in the area that are trying to start planning. It’s a tool made to grow because you are thinking of the hypothetical future. Yanez Morillo said many people in the general public don’t know how to read a map.

Traditional maps are difficult to interpret sometimes because the symbology is strange and they may not match the size of things, so 3D maps help give an idea how the topography is. You can use them in urban areas to have an idea of the size and volume of buildings, and in their case, they can introduce the user into the landscape of the Upper Delaware Corridor. The 3D map is essentially very similar to a traditional map. To create a 3D map they use different layers. They need to reserve a layer specific for the topography. That's what makes the context of three-dimensional aspects. The rest of the layers can be organized in different elements in the landscape like buildings, roads, bridges, or trees. In the 3D maps they try to simulate the real aspect of the element. Their work is based completely on LiDAR data. LiDAR is the starting point for creating every layer in their map. They start with creating a layer for elevation, then the layer for buildings and their first objective is to identify the footprints of the buildings. They can use the sides, slope and aspect to identify different parts of the buildings. You can see that buildings are not simple elements; it's not like a box with a roof. They are sometimes very complex to model. To recreate the buildings Yanez Morillo focuses not on complete details like the Zane Grey House or churches (windows and doors). What he wanted to focus on was the correct shape of those buildings. They can also create new buildings for hypothetical scenarios. The final layer Yanez Morillo mentioned was trees. They have attributes such as height, crown and diameter.

Dr. Jantz said they also had a student, Kyle Myers, work with them to do the background material for the story map where they give an introduction to the corridor. They look at a regional scale, and each map in there is interactive. For any of these maps you can click on them, zoom in, and move around. They included current land use with special zoom ins for Tusten and Lackawaxen. As you know, most of this area is forested and development has not been happening very quickly especially along the corridor, so another thing they included was looking at recent change within the region. The map is color-coded based on the change between 2001 and 2019. They also included some data about growth pressure. They did a study over 10 years ago to model future development in the Upper Delaware corridor. These growth pressure maps were developed for that project and again kind of emphasize where there is pressure for development. This isn't projected development. It's just places that are suitable for development, places that are closer to New York City places that have appropriate slope, and soils, and so forth. It just gives an idea of what places are suitable for development. One of their main inputs to visualize was LiDAR but a lot of the rules that came with how they "developed" the landscape came from the zoning regulation. If you click on the map for Lackawaxen Township it will tell you what the zoning district is, and there's also a link that will take you to the current ordinance. The rules that they came up with for developing came from them combing through the zoning ordinances, and compiling all of that information into a spreadsheet that Yanez Morillo then used to determine things like minimum lot sizes, offsets, distance from lot lines, as well as where things could be built. Dr. Jantz gave a tour of the tool. A recording of the presentation can be found at:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WPkefIM4fy8&t=10s>

Approval of November 3rd Meeting Minutes: Pending completion.

Public Comment on the Agenda: None.

Committee Reports: Meeting minutes are pending for Water Use/Resource Management, November 15, Project Review, November 22, and Operations, November 22.

Status Reports

Delaware River Basin Commission: Bowman Kavanagh shared they had a Regulated Flow Advisory Committee meeting scheduled for Tuesday 12/13 that will be rescheduled until January. She doesn't have the new date for that, but will have it by the next time we meet. The Delaware River Basin Commission virtual 4th quarter business meeting is on 12/7 at 10:30 a.m. during which a resolution on regulation amendments re: HVHF Water Importations, Exportations and Wastewater Discharges will be considered, for which public hearings already took place. Advisory committee meetings coming up that are listed on their website:

<https://www.state.nj.us/drbc/meetings/> A copy of the hydrologic report was provided in the meeting packet.

NYS Dept. of Environmental Conservation: Coulter will inquire about the New York State voting member's intentions to formally appoint a UDC representative and alternate, given the 12/8 start date of Jeff Rider as the DEC Region 3 Natural Resources Supervisor to succeed retiree Bill Rudge.

PA Department of Conservation & Natural Resources: Dugan said as many know, Thanksgiving also means it's

bear and deer season in Pennsylvania. The regular firearm season for bear opened up recently, and it closes this weekend in the extended units. Firearm season for deer goes up until this weekend, and then for one more week, he's been seeing a fair amount of activity. Keep your eyes and yours open, be careful if you're out, and good luck. There is a big change coming next year for anybody that is aware of antlerless licenses or doe tags, and the pink envelopes in Pennsylvania. Legislation was passed to eliminate the pink envelope to mail your check to the county treasury system that has been in place for many decades. The specific details aren't out yet on how it will work but individuals will be able to purchase their antlerless tags over the counter or online through the web portal. Specifics will likely come out midsummer. Voting for DCNR's Pennsylvania River of the Year is open. Four rivers have been nominated and you can go online and vote. The Conestoga River, Perkiomen Creek, Schuylkill River, and Susquehanna River- North Branch are the nominations this year based on each waterway's conservation needs and successes. <https://pawatersheds.org/2023-river-of-the-year-nominees/>

Dugan said recently in the course of the last year, DCNR has added a new office, The Office of Outdoor Recreation, and the gentleman that has been heading that has been doing a lot of research and advocating for the recreational industry in Pennsylvania. The office pulled some numbers together and evaluated a lot of financial statistics, and came out with a report that outdoor recreation added approximately \$14 billion to Pennsylvania's economy in 2021. That's an increase of 22% from the prior year. Among core outdoor activities, recreational vehicle (RV) camping makes up the greatest single contribution to PA's outdoor economy, followed by boating and fishing; hunting, shooting, and trapping; and ATV and motorcycle riding. He will share with the Council any past statistics on the economic impact of outdoor recreation in PA to show trends.

Lastly, Dugan mentioned DCNR's move to modernize their camping reservation system for State Forest campsites, to a more user-friendly, modern registration system. The number of camping permits issued has doubled in the past five years, creating a need for electronic records and reporting to help district forest staff effectively manage campsites. <https://pennsylvaniastateparks.reserveamerica.com/welcome.do>

National Park Service-Upper Delaware: Deutsch shared that the new Superintendent is Lindsey Kurnath and she will be joining the Upper Delaware in mid-January from Fire Island National Seashore. She's looking forward to being here and Deutsch has already spoken with her a little bit, starting to brief her on some of the information to get her up to speed. Hendrix shared that he has accepted a job in Billings, Montana, with the Bureau of Land Reclamation. His last day will be sometime around Christmas. Everyone at UDC welcomed him with open arms and he's grateful for that. He will also keep in touch with the new NPS Planner. In other news, Michelle Blockberger has taken a job with the Regional Office and her start day is 1/1. UDC thanked and applauded Hendrix for his work with the Project Review Committee. Ramie will provide UDC commendation letters to Community and Land Use Planner Hendrix and Administrative Officer Blockberger as they each prepare to leave NPS Upper Delaware Scenic and Recreational River in December for their other positions.

UDC Executive Director's Report: Ramie shared that "The Upper Delaware" Fall/Winter 2022 issues were delivered to the post office today, which is pleasingly early ahead of Courier Printing's 12/5 due date. It's also posted on our website thanks to Engelhardt. Ramie had received on Monday a message from the author of "A Paddler's Guide to the Delaware River", Gary Letcher, who said that its 3rd edition from 2012 had sold out and he's working on an update to be released in the spring. He said in part, "There have been so many changes on the river in the last 10 years, and I hope you can bring me up to speed on some of them. I do read every word of your Upper Delaware newsletter, and it's very enlightening; still, it's usually best to hear some things in person." He went on to ask for some photo permissions, contact referrals, and fact-checking assistance before the manuscript is published. Ramie said that is gratifying to hear when these newsletters are being used for research and historic documentation purposes.

We recently received a card from our 2022 Distinguished Service Award winner Bill Rudge that he wanted me to share with you: "Laurie: My thanks to you, the staff and members of the Upper Delaware Council. It was my pleasure to work with all of you in preserving, protecting, and enhancing the Upper Delaware Scenic and Recreational River. I regret that I was unable to attend the recent recognition awards dinner meeting due to the cancer I've been dealing with. I have been doing much better in recent weeks and expect to live a more normal life. Please pass along my thanks. All, you have accomplished a great deal! Bill Rudge"

Ahead of Giving Tuesday, we received a letter on Nov. 28 from Edward C. Winters of Matamoras who wrote, "I hope all is going well with the Upper Delaware Council. Having spent more than 50 years visiting this region and now literally on the banks of the Delaware River, I strongly support your organization's work. Enclosed is my annual gift of \$100. Please apply it as you see fit or where it is needed most. Have a wonderful holiday season and a Happy New Year!" Ramie deposited that in the bank along with the recent Upper Delaware Scenic Byway \$1,200 donation and one \$15 t-shirt sale.

There is some movement on the Skinners Falls-Milanville Bridge front. She received an email from the consultant AECOM on 11/16 offering seven options of dates and times to schedule a virtual meeting of the Skinners Falls Bridge PEL Study Project Advisory Committee in mid-January. Ramie will attend the invitation-only virtual meeting of the Skinners Falls Bridge Planning and Environmental Linkages Study Project Advisory Committee on 1/19 and report back to the Council.

Please see our December and January calendars in your packets. Please remember as per our holiday schedule that we will have one night with all three committees on the 2nd Tuesday this month, the 13th. The order will be Project Review at 6:30, Operations at 7, and Water Use/Resource Management at 7:30, all approximate starting times except for the first one. In January, the committees will revert back to the 3rd and 4th Tuesdays but we will reverse the start time order of Project Review and Operations on 1/24 to accommodate our Fiscal Year 2022 Audit Report by Dick Eckersley. As Ramie shared during the advance distribution of our DRBC draft letter, our full Council informational presentation on 1/5 will be by Penn State University Professor Dave Yoxtheimer from the Marcellus Center for Outreach and Research, providing an update to his December 2017 talk to us on "Shale Gas Developments and Water Resource Considerations for the Susquehanna River Basin." Ramie imagines he may address the situation in Dimock ruling against the former Cabot Oil & Gas Co.

New Business

Nominating Committee Report: 2023 Officers Slate of Candidates: Boyar relayed that nominated for Chairperson will be Aaron Robinson, Shohola Township, Vice-chair will be Ginny Dudko- Town of Deepark, and for Secretary/Treasurer, it's Al Henry, Berlin Township. Ramie said UDC will conduct a ballot vote at the January meeting and other nominations can be taken from the floor at that time.

Draft Letter to DRBC: Amendments re: High Volume Hydraulic Fracturing-Related Water: Importations/Exportations and Wastewater Discharges for the Delaware River Basin: Council members opted against sending the draft letter after Bowman Kavanagh noted that the public comment period had ended. The Council had sent its official comments on the rulemaking in January.

Other: Sullivan shared that she will be retiring from UDC on 12/31/22. Padua is thinking of taking over as Town of Tusten Representative but has not decided.

Old Business

Alliance for the Upper Delaware River Watershed Letter to NYS Governor Hochul: Ramie said this letter had come out of our Operations Committee at which the UDC agreed to be a signatory to this letter. There was a deadline of 11/28 to sign on and a copy of the letter was provided in the meeting packets for members.

Other: None.

Public Comment: None.

Adjournment: A motion by Sullivan, seconded by Henry, to adjourn the meeting at 8:32 p.m. was carried.