



Upper Delaware Council

P.O. Box 192, 211 Bridge Street, Narrowsburg, New York 12764-0192 • (Tel.) 845-252-3022 • (Fax) 845-252-3359

www.upperdelawarecouncil.org

UPPER DELAWARE COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES

August 4, 2022

The Upper Delaware Council held its monthly meeting on Thursday, August 4, 2022. Chairperson Boyar called the meeting to order at 7:03 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. (Zoom), Town of Cochecton- Larry Richardson (Zoom), Town of Tusten- Sue Sullivan, Town of Highland- Andy Boyar, Town of Deerpark- Bill Dudko, Town of Lumberland- Nadia Rajs, Damascus Township- Jeff Dexter, Berlin Township- Alan Henry, Lackawaxen Township- Doug Case, Shohola Township- Aaron Robinson, Delaware River Basin Commission- Kristen Bowman Kavanagh (Zoom), State of New York- Ryan Coulter, Commonwealth of Pennsylvania- Christine Dettore- Zoom, National Park Service- Jessica Weinman. Staff in attendance: Executive Director- Laurie Ramie, Resources and Land Use Specialist- Kerry Engelhardt, Secretary- Ashley Hall-Bagdonas (Zoom). Absent: Westfall Township. Guests: Michael Brooks, Cody Hendrix-NPS, Alex Garcia-Maldonado Jane Varcoe, Virginia Dudko- Town of Deerpark (Zoom), Frank J. Guzmán- Town of Lumberland Alternate, John Pizzolato, Roswell Hamrick, Matthew McMahon, Maya Van Rossum, Mike Edison, Christine Martin. Media: Liam Mayo- River Reporter, Peter Becker- Tri-County Independent (Zoom).

Moment of Silence for Joseph Salvatore: A moment of silence was observed for Joseph Salvatore, the late superintendent of the Upper Delaware Scenic & Recreational River (UPDE) since December 2020. Boyar recalled that Salvatore was an upbeat person and friendly in nature, when Salvatore was presented with a concern he most often reacted positively and sought how he could help, a rare attribute in government bureaucracy. A sympathy card was passed for signatures. Salvatore passed away unexpectedly on 7/27. Notice of an 8/13 service in Maryland had been circulated.

Presentation: “Update on the Sullivan County Wireless Broadband Network” by Legislator Michael Brooks, chairman of Sullivan Broadband LLC: Sullivan County Broadband LDC Chairman Michael Brooks last presented to the UDC in July 2021 regarding broadband coverage through the country’s public cell towers. That continues to progress said Brooks. He also shared that Sullivan County’s broadband project could get a major boost from a proposed public-private partnership. Brooks shared that a private company approached the LDC looking to create a public-private partnership for internet service. The company currently operates in 29 states and internationally, and seeks to bring \$200 million of fiberoptic development to the Hudson Valley. Brooks projected there would be a deal before Labor Day. He said a press conference will likely be scheduled. The partnership would focus on the western end of the county first. Brooks said, “I think we’re at a point now where I feel pretty confident in saying that there’s some bright skies in the future for us as far as high-speed access to broadband.” There was a short question and answer period following the presentation and members thanked Brooks for his verbal presentation. A copy can be found: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nQBf7clf-c0>

Approval of July 7th Meeting Minutes: A motion by Rajs seconded by Henry, to approve the July 7th, 2022 meeting minutes carried.

Public Comment on the Agenda: Pizzolato said for the next Project Review meeting there’s a large number of concerns a group of them would like to share but wanted to make sure they could officially. Their group is called “Know Fimfo” and they wanted to give UDC warning that they have comments regarding the Camp Fimfo review. Boyar said Engelhardt is the UDC’s contact person as they have seen at the Town of Highland meetings and she will be evaluating the project. Boyar asked the group to save their comments until Public Comment.

Committee Reports: There were no questions regarding the following meetings: Water Use/Resource Management July 19th (Ginny Dudko); Project Review July 26th (Larry Richardson); and Operations; July 26th (Andy Boyar).

Status Reports

Delaware River Basin Commission: Absent. The Hydrologic report and meeting notices can be found at <https://www.state.nj.us/drbc/meetings/>.

NYS Dept. of Environmental Conservation: Ryan Coulter introduced himself, saying he's been with the Department since 2006 covering mostly east of the Hudson River, in Region 3. He's learning about the Delaware accesses and took a tour a few weeks ago. There's a lot of transition within their agency at the moment. Bill Rudge retired and Mike DiSarno transferred to Region 8. Bill Rudge's replacement will be Jeff Ryder, the current Acting Division Director for Land and Forest for all of NYS. Coulter will be the point person for the time being.

PA Department of Conservation & Natural Resources: Dettore said she wanted to touch base on a couple of Bureau of Recreation and Conservation Grant programs. They were in Wayne County in the last few months recognizing grants awarded to the county for some PA Fish and Boat Access launch areas along the Lackawaxen River. They are really excited about those projects that are a combination of their funds and the PA Fish and Boat Commission. They are still working on their grant reviews from last spring. Dettore said they have heard they may be having a supplemental round in the fall due to American Rescue Funds coming to the Department of Conservation and Natural Resources. The Secretary released an announcement of a new motorized park and three new state parks. From their understanding those new state parks are the only motorized parks in the eastern part of the state.

National Park Service-Upper Delaware: Weinman said right now NPS is in a grieving period for Salvatore's friends and family. There will be a 120-day detail with someone from outside the park coming in, then the Regional Director will put the permanent position out as an advertisement. Weinman will be representing NPS at full council meeting. Next month they will start to lose a good number of their seasonals, so there will be that transition.

Weinman introduced Alex Garcia, UPDE's new Cultural Resource Program Manager. Garcia said he's grateful to be back on the East Coast. Boyar said if you would like to learn more about him, read the latest copy of "The Upper Delaware". Weinman was asked to provide Upper Delaware Scenic and Recreational River (UPDE) visitation statistics to date at the next meeting.

UDC Executive Director's Report: Ramie reported that the House passed the Delaware River Basin Conservation Reauthorization Act in mid-July in a 220-206 vote. It now goes to the Senate for action. It would enhance the current legislation through 2030 by changing the 1:1 match requirement to a 90% federal investment with 10% match for small, rural, or disadvantaged communities that submit applications. Since 2018, the Delaware Watershed Conservation Fund has awarded \$26.6 million to 123 projects throughout the river basin. This is included in the National Defense Authorization Act.

This Sunday, the UDC's 34th Annual Family Raft Trip will be held with paddling from Skinners Falls to Narrowsburg. Hall-Bagdonas said at the moment we have 54 participants confirmed. Ramie compared previous trip numbers with members.

Ramie said we were pleased with the attention generated by an article that appeared in the *Philadelphia Inquirer* on Aug. 2 under the headline: "Is it the end for an 'utterly spectacular' Pa. bridge?" The article by reporter Jason Nark was well-done with the exception of the caption under the cover photo which reads: "The Skinners Falls Bridge spans the Delaware River, connecting Wayne County, PA to Sullivan County, NY. Pennsylvania's Department of Transportation plans to replace the bridge with a two-lane concrete overpass." Ramie said that's exactly what has not been determined as yet as this Planning and Environmental Linkages study continues on. The UDC's position favors historic rehabilitation. We appreciate that the article quoted from our letters to that effect. Our posting of this article on our Facebook page has prompted some comments.

Information on that bridge and many other topics can be found in the Summer issue of "The Upper Delaware" newsletter that was delivered early on 7/27 for its 8/1 publication date. We have extra copies of this available.

Weinman said that NPS would consider posting the NPS position regarding rehabilitation of the Skinners Falls, NY-Milanville, PA Bridge on the www.nps.gov/upde website and/or its social media platforms.

Ramie pointed out the UDC's August and September calendars providing meetings, activities and deadlines. One item that isn't on there is that, this Sunday, 8/7, Bill Dudko will be giving a presentation on "History of Local Railroads" at 3 p.m. at the Deerpark Museum in Huguenot. Note that next month's UDC presentation on Sept. 1 will be an update on the Delaware Aqueduct Repair Project by Jen Garigliano, chief of staff for the NYS DEP Bureau of Water Supply.

New Business

RFQ for Legal Consulting Services Report: A Motion by Robinson seconded by Henry for Ramie to extend the deadline for the UDC to accept letters of interest for legal service consultants to 8/19, in advance of the 8/23 Operations Committee meeting carried.

8/4 Telecommunications Subcommittee Report: Chairperson Robinson reported that the next subcommittee meeting will be on 9/1 at 6 p.m. at the UDC office. Staff will prepare notes from the 8/4 first meeting. Robinson will assign tasks and relevant documents will be circulated via email in the interim.

Other: Rajsiz introduced Frank J. Guzmán as the Town of Lumberland Alternate.

Old Business

Rising Nation Journey and Treaty Signing Ceremony: Ramie said the UDC had an opportunity to participate in the Rising Nation Treaty Signing Ceremony. The Rising Nation are on a 3-week journey from the top to the bottom of the Delaware River. They started in Hancock, NY on 7/30, and they'll end 8/21 in Cape May, NJ. Along the way they have organizations, and anybody that would like to, sign a Treaty of Renewed Friendship. On Tuesday, Ramie went to the Narrowsburg access where they were launching and took some photos. Later that evening was the Treaty signing at the Zane Grey Museum. The event originated 20 years ago and happens every four years. Ramie, Engelhardt, and Boyar were able to attend on behalf of UDC.

UDC Accepts Applications for Technical Assistance Grants by Aug. 19: Ramie asked members to remind towns and townships of the 8/19 deadline for the UDC to accept applications for the FY 2023 Technical Assistance Grants program. The special Project Review Committee meeting to review proposals will be 9/13 at 6:30 p.m. and the full Council will vote on awards at the 10/6 meeting.

Other: None.

Public Comment (52:58 time on recorded meeting): Engelhardt and members of the concerned-citizens group Know Fimfo discussed communication and deadlines. The group is concerned around the development of Camp Fimfo in the Town of Highland. Pizzolato said "It's not necessarily a group that's targeting not allowing the company to come in and expand and to work; we just want to see some transparency and some restrictions put on it." Engelhardt welcomed the group to correspond with her as she will be presenting her review on 8/23. A few UDC members said it would also be helpful to attend the Highland meetings to express their thoughts as the UDC meetings are not held like public hearings. Chairperson Boyar also recommended Know Fimfo air its concerns with the Highland Town Board. Delaware Riverkeeper Maya van Rossum stressed the value and importance of having the public participate in this process. She said that the Highland Planning Board stated that they are waiting for the UDC's substantial conformance review before taking next steps. Englehardt said that UDC has a 45-day review period and suggested offering concerns about the site plan's compatibility with the Land and Water Use Guidelines before her report is to be presented at the 8/23 Project Review Committee.

Adjournment: A motion by Dudko, seconded by Rajsiz, to adjourn the meeting at 8:17 p.m. was carried.