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

December 4, 2025

The Upper Delaware Council held its monthly meeting on Thursday, December 4, 2025. Vice-chairperson Padua called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m. Roll call followed reciting the Pledge of Allegiance.

Attendees:
Town of Delaware- Harold Roeder, Town of Tusten- Evan Padua, Town of Highland- Christine Martin (Zoom), Town of Lumberland- Nadia Rajsz (Zoom) Town of Deerpark- Ginny Dudko, Berlin Township- Al Henry, Damascus Township- Jeff Dexter, Lackawaxen Township- Doug Case, Shohola Township- Aaron Robinson, Commonwealth of Pennsylvania- Christine Dettore (Zoom), Delaware River Basin Commission- Beth Brown, National Park Service- Lindsey Kurnath

Absent:
Town of Fremont- Jim Rodgers, Town of Hancock- Katt Judd, Town of Cochecton- Larry Richardson, Westfall Township- Michael Barth, New York State- Ryan Coulter

Staff:
Executive Director- Laurie Ramie, Resource & Land Use Specialist- Kerry Engelhardt, Administrative Support- Stephanie Driscoll

Media:
Tri-County Independent- Peter Becker (Zoom), River Reporter- Carla Guzman

Guests*:*
Town of Deerpark- Bill Dudko, Town of Tusten- Cathleen Breen, Town of Delaware- Bob Lindquist, Dr. Peter Kolesar, Anne Willard, Andy Boyar, DRBC- Anthony Pontarelli, Don Hamilton (Zoom), Jeff Skelding (Zoom), Steven Mongiardo (Zoom), John Ogozalek (Zoom), Brian (Zoom)

Presentation: "Thermal Mitigation in the Upper Delaware, 2019 to 2025": Padua introduced Dr. Peter Kolesar (Columbia University, Professor Emeritus; member of Columbia's Earth Institute Water Center) as a familiar face returning to the UDC with a long history of work on Upper Delaware water policy, including contributions that helped shape the 2007 Flexible Flow Management Program (FFMP), the 2010 Joint Fisheries White Paper, and the incorporation of a thermal mitigation protocol in 2019. Kolesar has received awards recognizing this work (UDC Distinguished Service Award in 2013; Catskill Fly Fishing Center & Museum Lee Wulff Conservation Award in 2021) and Padua shared his other interests in fly-fishing, guitar, and photography.

Kolesar said it is a pleasure to be back and that he has been appearing before the Council for many years, starting in 2008. He said he wanted to focus on what matters to everyone in the room: river conditions, what has been done to protect the fishery during heat events, and what may be coming next. His presentation will include: (1) background and history for people who may not be fully familiar with the FFMP and thermal issues; (2) a more detailed explanation of how thermal-release decisions are actually made in practice (he emphasized this is done by New York State DEC); (3) a year-by-year look at how the thermal mitigation protocol introduced in 2019 has performed through the present; (4) concerns looking ahead—especially climate projections for Catskill-region conditions that will impact the river; and (5) the big-picture policy reality that the current FFMP expires in 2028, meaning the Decree Parties will face major choices and the Upper Delaware region should be prepared to make its needs heard. He reminded everyone that the "decision makers" are the Decree Parties: the States of New York, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, Delaware, and New York City. He said big decisions are coming and expressed hope that the fishing community and residents of the Upper Delaware Valley will have meaningful input in those negotiations. The thermal issue is fundamentally about trout, a cold-water fish. Trout do best when water temperatures are below about 68°F; temperatures can become stressful as they rise, and water temperatures around 75°F can be lethal. The Delaware has experienced those high-temperature conditions, especially during summer heat waves. The Upper

Delaware trout fishery is dependent on cold-water releases from the bottom of New York City's reservoirs. Without the dams, "we wouldn't have that trout fishery at all." Because of that, the region is deeply dependent on releases being adequate—particularly during summer heat events—to keep mainstem temperatures cold enough for trout survival and a healthy fishery.

He walked through the evolution of policy and management decisions leading to the 2019 thermal mitigation protocol:

- Phase 1 – 1954 Supreme Court Decree: He said the 1954 Decree governing releases focused on protecting New York City's interests and the downstream basin states, while ignoring the upper river's environmental needs. He referenced the minimum Montague flow provision (1,750 cfs). On its own, it was not adequate to protect the upper river environment and fishery.
- 1977 Environmental releases: Angler advocacy—especially by the Catskill Waters Group—led to the first environmental releases imposed by New York State on New York City. That framework included temperature targets (e.g., Callicoon, Harvard, Woodbourne, Hale Eddy) and a "budget" of water intended to meet those targets, but Kolesar said the water budget was not sufficient and the rules did not achieve the objectives.
- 2007 FFMP shift: He described later work (including his own) that led to FFMP in 2007. At that time, the view was the earlier bank-and-target approach was not working, so the strategy shifted to advocating for higher base releases. It was a nice idea but did not fully work out. By 2008–2009 it became clear the river still experienced thermal stress.

He described a recurring cycle. During summer heat waves, river temperatures rose; fishermen "went bonkers" and there would be frantic advocacy—calls to congressional offices and Decree-party representatives—asking for emergency increases in releases. Sometimes nothing happened; sometimes something happened. He said the combination of advocacy and analysis (his team at Columbia, along with work by NYSDEC and the Pennsylvania Fish and Boat Commission) resulted in the 2019 introduction of a formal thermal mitigation program into the FFMP—creating an established, pre-approved mechanism for extra cold-water releases during heat events. He explained that the protocol's operational objective focuses on a specific mainstem location: Lordville, at the USGS gauge. The goal is to keep water temperatures at Lordville below 75°F during heat waves by releasing pulses of additional cold water. The Decree Parties permitted a constrained bank of water for thermal mitigation: 2,500 cfs-days. The bank opens June 1 and expires May 31 of the following year. The implementation is at the discretion of New York State DEC. The day-to-day decision-making lands on one NYSDEC staff member (Brenan Tarrier) who, during the summer, makes a daily decision: do we or do we not release additional water? He credited multiple people (including Jeff Skelding and Jim Serio) for roles in guiding approval of the program. He said Lordville is the target, but the broader objective is protection of the reach from Hancock to Lordville—important to the fishery because of the strong rainbow trout population depending on lower temperatures. He compared the system to a bathtub: if you have hot water and need to cool it, you add cold water; the question becomes 'how much?' In a river, it's complicated because everything moves and changes simultaneously. Releases, current temperatures, air temperature forecasts, and possible precipitation all interact, supported by statistical/historical analyses.

Thermal-release decisions are essentially gambles because weather and forecasts can change, and analysis is never perfect. He said Tarrier makes these calls every morning within a short window because he must call dam operators with release instructions. What information is used each morning? Models and historical analysis; USGS gauge data (cold water below dams, hot water at Lordville); current air temperatures; near-term forecasts for temperature and rain; and the constraint of a small dedicated bank. He said he would like to see advocacy to increase the size of that bank. He described a real-case snapshot (around 2023): Lordville about 10,070 cfs and 74°F (near the 75°F threshold), Cannonsville release around 621 cfs at about 47°F, with forecasts from Binghamton and the reality of a bank more than half depleted. He framed the daily question: release more now, or hold back for later?

Since 2019, there have been 87 thermal releases permitted across 27 days. He said that as many potential crisis days avoided—days that would otherwise have triggered ad hoc lobbying and emergency requests. He called the protocol imperfect but a major benefit for predictability. The bank has never been exhausted and temperatures have been kept below 75°F most—but not all—of the time. He cited 2020 as the toughest year, with near-bank usage and 11 days above 75°F, but a maximum around 76.3°F. Excel estimates suggest many more days would have exceeded 75°F without the program. He described a June–September chart of daily maximum Lordville temperatures with a red 75°F target line. The goal was met on all but two days in 2025 and pointed to markers indicating when thermal releases were made. One critique is that some releases might not have been strictly necessary—water that could have been saved for later—highlighting again the gamble inherent in these calls.

He described a chart with a green line for Cannonsville releases (each bump is a thermal release) and a blue line for downstream conditions at Lordville. He emphasized added complexity from precipitation/inflows and a time lag (around 12 hours) between release points and Lordville.

Kolesar discussed climate concerns, referencing NOAA projections for New York State temperatures under different scenarios. He emphasized near-term focus (2030–2050) and clarified the chart relates to annual highs/ranges rather than averages. He reviewed Binghamton summertime average temperatures from 1952–2025, with a fitted trend line indicating increasing temperatures. He projected a modest increase on the order of 0.17°F by around 2035 based on that trend. Projections suggest precipitation may increase (beneficial for water supply), but he warned more may arrive in storms/sudden bursts, creating additional management challenges.

He highlighted major items likely to shape the next FFMP negotiation cycle and urged UDC involvement.

- Aqueduct leak: uncertainty in repair timeline; NYC re-contracting; leak volumes far exceed what is banked; questions about how saved water would be allocated.
- Montague target and Trenton salt front: flow needed for Montague (1,750 cfs) and to repel salt front; NYC has signaled it may not want accountability; legal/negotiation issues ahead with sea level rise.
- Outdated year-round Montague target: he argued it should be seasonal and environmentally informed.
- Interstate allocation disputes: he referenced NJ's prior veto leverage (2016) and said it could recur.
- Climate change committee report: still pending.
- Fisheries issues: size/rules for thermal bank; possible benefit of combining thermal bank with rapid flow mitigation bank.
- 2010 Joint Fisheries White Paper: current releases don't meet recommended levels; potential advocacy area.
- Endangered species: Dwarf Wedge Mussel needs may need to be reflected.

Padua asked about trout population/mortality in the Upper Delaware. Kolesar said he does not believe here has been mortality attributed to flow/temperature anomalies since the protocol, but did not have population data on hand. G. Dudko said that without the FFMP, there may not be trout in the Upper Delaware. Kolesar said historical trout were mainly brook trout in tributaries and spring mainstream conditions; without dams, the summer mainstem would not support the current fishery. Robinson said it seems like water is spilling in the reservoirs during the wintertime. Kolesar described findings that NYC's conservative summer posture once led to winter spills; shifting some of that water to thoughtful summer releases was key to improvements. FFMP is built around keeping reservoirs between seasonal 'adequate' and 'drought' lines; allowing summer drawdown and winter refill; also building a post-June 15 buffer for storm/flood concerns.

Padua thanked Dr. Kolesar for the presentation and presented him with a UDC lapel pin. Kolesar said the council has had a positive influence on Decree Party decision-making and predicted FFMP renewal will be a hot topic in coming years.

Approval of the November 6, 2025 Minutes: A motion by Roeder seconded by Henry to approve the November 6, 2025 meeting minutes carried.

Committee Reports: There were no questions regarding previously distributed minutes for Water Use/Resource Management 11/18 (Evan Padua), Project Review 11/25 (Larry Richardson), or Operations 11/25 (Jim Rodgers).

Public Comment on the Agenda: None.

Status Reports:

Delaware River Basin Commission: Brown introduced a new face: Anthony Pontarelli, who joined the DRBC team over the summer as the Government Affairs Lead.

The DRBC's 4th Quarter Business meeting is scheduled for Wednesday (12/10) at 10:30 a.m. She said there will be several New York-based docket items up for a vote, with a few from Pennsylvania.

She pointed everyone to the hydrologic conditions report included in their packets and highlighted the drought-indicator chart — the one with the yellow, orange, and red threshold lines — and noted that people often forget those lines shift with the seasons. She explained that it takes far less depletion to hit a drought watch in spring than it does in autumn, which is why the October lines sit so much lower. That seasonal nuance matters, especially now, because basin-wide dry conditions are

persisting. The DRBC itself only evaluates reservoir storage, but the states look at additional indicators. New Jersey is now contemplating issuing a drought warning, not only because conditions have been dry but because of complications with their water-supply system. She said that Spruce Run Reservoir is extremely low, which is influencing their decision. On the Pennsylvania side, she said an official announcement is expected soon that Monroe and Pike Counties will likely be moved into drought watch status.

She thanked everyone that participated in Phase 1 of the DRBC's Climate Resiliency Plan's listening and input sessions. The plan is looking ahead at long-term vulnerabilities, including climate-driven changes to water temperature, shifts in baseline flows, and the challenges these pose for a river system as heavily managed as the Delaware. The DRBC is currently processing all the input received and anticipates publishing the Phase 1 document in early 2026.

Robinson asked whether the DRBC has any discretionary funding that might support organizations like UDC. The UDC is facing a deficit "The UDC is struggling, and every partnership avenue needs to be explored", he said. Brown said she would absolutely take the request back to the appropriate people and discuss it. She said that in certain circumstances DRBC has been able to provide event sponsorships or similar small-scale support, so it's not outside the realm of possibility. Nothing was guaranteed, but UDC's ask would be considered, adding that the partnership is both valued and visible. She also shared that DRBC had meetings earlier that day with legislative delegates, where they discussed UDC's role and made sure policymakers understood the funding gaps and larger regional needs. She said it's a shared challenge and that DRBC sees the UDC as an essential partner.

Robinson asked if the DRBC could provide the monthly drought-indicator graph (in the hydrologic conditions report) in a format that fits better on the back page — clearer and easier to read. Brown said she could definitely look into it or tweak the layout to meet the UDC's needs.

NYS Dept. of Environmental Conservation: Absent.

PA Dept. of Conservation and Natural Resources: Dettore said she didn't have a full update from Dugan (who typically provides Bureau of Forestry info), but she did have several developments from her Bureau of Recreation and Conservation to share. First, she highlighted that the Pennsylvania's state budget has officially passed. The budget delay had been holding up their statewide grant announcements, particularly for the Community Conservation Partnership Program (C2P2), which handles a wide variety of parks, recreation, conservation, and acquisition grants. Now that the budget is passed, her bureau can finally move forward. Awards should be announced before the end of the year.

The bureau held its informational webinar on the new grant application round opening for 2025. The online grant system will officially open on January 12 and they have extended the application deadline this year to April 30. She emphasized that this is a significant shift because it gives municipalities and organizations more time to develop strong applications. She said if you're thinking about a park or recreation project, the new round begins right after the new year, and you'll have considerably more time than usual to prepare your submission.

Dettore said that Dugan may have already reported this, but the Bureau of Forestry recently held a ribbon-cutting for its brand-new Resource Management Center at the Delaware State Forest. The facility is located right on the Pike–Monroe County border. Dugan has already graciously put up a cubicle for her in the building, so she'll be sharing space with the forestry team when she's on site.

National Park Service: Kurnath said she's finally back in person after months away and that, as a federal employee, it feels really good just to be back at work again. Her temporary assignment with the NPS Regional Office in Philadelphia officially ends next Friday, so she's doing a bit of "double duty" for the moment, but she's looking forward to being able to focus fully on the Upper Delaware again. She thanked the Council for their patience during the months when she was juggling both roles and for working closely with Acting Superintendent Jessica Weinman and the rest of the NPS team to keep things afloat. She said the NPS is "digging out" from the longest shutdown on record. She thanked law enforcement rangers, who continued working full-time throughout the shutdown, as well as the maintenance staff who came in periodically to keep essential operations going. With the rest of the staff furloughed for over 40 days, NPS had been unable to attend meetings or keep up with normal communication, and she appreciated everyone's flexibility and understanding during that period. Now that they're back, she and Marshall, has already begun reconnecting with the UDC staff to work through a backlog of tasks. If something fell through the cracks, they welcome reminders so nothing gets overlooked.

Their usual winter calendar is quiet, as they shift into preparations for Eagle Watch season. One casualty of the shutdown was the annual fishing guide post-season discussion, which should have happened in late October. NPS has rescheduled it as a virtual session for December 18th in hopes of still gathering feedback on the summer season from anyone willing to participate.

Kurnath noted that all volunteers and seasonal employees wrapped up their service at the end of September or into October during the shutdown. Moving forward, NPS is exploring every possible avenue for "non-permanent staffing flexibility," including expanded seasonal hiring, volunteers, and internship programs. She said this is key to ensuring the park can remain adequately staffed and accessible into 2026.

She also provided an update on the Skinners Falls Bridge Removal Project. PennDOT generously granted NPS an exception to submit their comments on the PEL Study late, recognizing that the NPS missed the deadline due to the shutdown. They are actively working on those comments now.

NPS has also issued several Special Use Permits recently, including permits to NYSDOT for bridge washing and inspections. Facilities staff are hustling to get caught up after the shutdown and managed to get plow trucks prepped before the first winter weather arrived.

UDC Executive Director: Ramie reported that since the last meeting the UDC received an anonymous donation of $25,000, made in memory of a family member who resided in the river valley and in honor of a close personal friend who serves on the UDC board. She noted that the check arrived on November 24 and represents the single largest individual donation the UDC has ever received. The Operations Committee discussed using a portion of this unrestricted gift to fund urgently needed computer upgrades to bring the office into compliance with Windows 11 and restore regular security updates, which have not been available since mid-October. This same benefactor has now contributed a total of $60,000 to the UDC since 2022, which enabled the establishment of the UDC's Vanguard account providing an important financial cushion. She further reported that additional contributions since the last meeting included a $50 PayPal donation from BKBF Productions of Narrowsburg, made in honor of former Cultural Achievement Award recipient Star Hesse, and a $100 year-end contribution from Edward C. Winters of Bangor, PA, a former Matamoras resident. At the end of the month, once any additional year-end donations are tallied, she plans to issue a press release acknowledging these gifts (to the extent the donors can be named) and reminding the public that the Council is a 501(c)(3) organization able to accept and responsibly use charitable contributions. The $2,000 Sullivan County Legislature discretionary contract allocation, secured by Legislator Nadia Rajsz to support the McHugh honorary plaque project, was received on November 26, officially closing out that project; she thanked Rajsz for her critical support.

Ramie shared news of the passing of former Upper Delaware Scenic and Recreational River Interpretive Ranger Ella Mae "Kitty" Womer, who died on October 26 at the age of 99. Womer lived in Damascus Township in an old boarding house that had served for years as lodging for seasonal NPS staff. When Ramie first joined the UDC in 1997, the two traveled together frequently to planning meetings for the Delaware River Sojourn and worked side-by-side on the "Celebrate '98" committee when the UDC marked its 10th anniversary and the river's 20th anniversary of the designation. Womer received the UDC's Cultural Achievement Award in 1999 for more than a decade of "caring and crucial" oral history interviews documenting the Upper Delaware region. Her obituary also highlighted her earlier life as an art gallery owner in Clinton, New Jersey, her status as an avid solo canoer and whitewater canoeing instructor, and her award-winning oral history work on the local railroad and canal. One of Womer's five children, Chrissy Davey, still resides in Damascus. Services will be private, and any contributions in Womer's memory may be made to the ASPCA in recognition of her long-time animal advocacy.

Ramie reported that staff have been uncovering and organizing several historic publications and artifacts related to the Upper Delaware region. She displayed a 1975 booklet titled *Stories of the Raftsmen*, compiled by local historian Mary Curtis from a manuscript written by her great-grandfather, Charles P. Curtis, illustrated by John Peterson, and edited by Delaware Valley Central School librarian Mary White, originally published by the Town of Delaware Bicentennial Commission and later reprinted by the Damascus Historical Society in 2018. The booklet had been briefly discussed as a potential fundraising reprint, however it appears that Damascus Historical Society already undertook that role, so UDC's copy will be preserved as a reference item and can be scanned or shared for educational use. She displayed a recently donated copy of what may be the first Upper Delaware River recreation guide, a 1975 *Whitewater Boating on the Upper Delaware River* brochure authored by board member Aaron Robinson under an "Upper Delaware Publications" imprint, with maps covering Hancock to Port Jervis and

colloquial river feature names. She read aloud Robinson's dedication "to the ecological preservation of the Upper Delaware River" and thanked him for donating a copy to the UDC archives. Ramie also displayed several issues of *The Upper Delaware Drummer*, a mid-1960s annual publication described as "a chronicle and guide to the scenic and historic vacation land of the fabulous Upper Delaware Valley," edited by Dorothy and Joe Purcell of Snug Harbor Country Store in Narrowsburg; UDC's collection currently includes the 1965–1968 editions. She reported that along with the recent monetary gift, the anonymous benefactor also donated vintage bridge tokens from the Delaware River Joint Toll Bridge Commission and Lackawaxen Bridge Company tickets stamped "good for one automobile passage, not good for trucks," which will be cataloged as part of the Council's historical artifacts.

Resolution 2025-14, adopting a Whistleblower Protection Policy, was approved at the November 5 meeting. Ramie said that subsequent discussions with NPS staff revealed that the policy must include specific citations to applicable Code of Federal Regulations provisions and more clearly describe procedures and notification pathways for reporting concerns. The policy must make clear that the ultimate compliance authority is the Office of the Inspector General for federal whistleblower matters, rather than the Executive Director. During the federal shutdown, UDC did not have access to NPS guidance, so staff and committee members adapted sample policies on their own with NPS now able to provide appropriate language. The Operations Committee will decide whether to rescind the earlier resolution and adopt a new policy or to substantially amend the existing one, after which a revised policy will be brought back to the full Council.

She referenced the calendars included in the packet, noting that the Fall–Winter issue of *The Upper Delaware* newsletter is due to the printer by December 8 and will feature DRBC's Beth Brown as the "Upper Delaware Profile". The issue is scheduled for release by December 22. Upcoming meetings include regular river-related committees such as the Sojourn Steering Committee and Water Safety Committee, the Regulated Flow Advisory Committee (RFAC) virtual meeting on December 15, a Pike-Wayne Conservation Partnership session on December 16, a D&H Canal Board of Trustees meeting on December 17, and the rescheduled fishing guide post-season discussion on December 18. January dates are already being populated on the calendar and she encouraged members to review the schedule and contact staff with any questions.

Robinson said he has been trying to find a bluestone feather and wedge set after Dugan had requested a set from this region for their new Resource Management Center lobby. His leads didn't pan out, however. He asked council members to keep a lookout for some.

New Business:

a. **Nominating Committee Report:** Henry thanked Martin and Roeder for their help in pulling the slate together. The committee had finalized its recommended lineup of officers for the upcoming term: Jeff Dexter as Chair, Evan Padua as Vice Chair, and Henry would remain in the role of Secretary-Treasurer. Henry said nothing is official yet; the slate is the committee's recommendation. Ramie said the election happens at the January full council meeting, where additional nominations can be taken from the floor. Once all nominations are in, the Council will conduct a ballot vote to formally elect officers for the year. There is still an opportunity for anyone to be nominated or to nominate someone else if they wish.

b. **Draft Letters: Local Government UDC Funding Contribution:** Ramie pointed everyone to the draft letter included in their meeting packets. She said the letter is intended to be sent to each of the UDC's 13 local government members, asking them to consider making a $1,000 "stopgap" contribution. This request has nothing to do with the recent large private donation; that gift is a one-time occurrence. It is not intended to be used to support the ongoing, federally required operational expenses that the Cooperative Agreement covers. When they drafted the most bare-bones version of next year's budget, they still came up over $6,000 short — and to close that gap, she had already cut a number of programs. The income simply doesn't meet the real cost of running the UDC office anymore, and the shortfall is jeopardizing the council's ability to function at the level expected by federal requirements and by the towns they represent. The letter is intended to give each town a clear understanding of how serious the situation is and to ask them to help stabilize operations with a modest contribution. Thirteen towns at $1,000 each would help close the gap. The intention was not to send out a form letter in the mail and hope for the best. The idea is for each UDC representative to bring the letter directly to their own town board meeting, presenting it in person or however they felt comfortable. Ramie said the representatives know their municipalities best — some may want to read it aloud, others may want to summarize it and hand the letter to their supervisors, and some may have other approaches entirely. We have 13 individually addressed letters so every town

would receive its own tailored version (that Vice-chair Padua will sign tonight if approved). Robinson said he strongly supports the idea, saying the entire purpose of the letter is to make the town boards understand the gravity of the funding situation. He noted that each UDC representative is essentially an extension of their township government, and the UDC exists to serve those towns. If the UDC is struggling financially, then the towns should absolutely be made aware that an organization they depend on is at risk of not being able to function effectively. He had already quietly tested the concept in his own township, Shohola, without even using the official letter, and the reaction was overwhelmingly supportive. The supervisors recognized the importance of keeping the UDC strong and stable, and they quickly agreed that assistance was worthwhile. That positive experience reinforced his feeling that this outreach could also help reconnect town officials to the UDC, since those relationships can sometimes become distant or vague over time. Members decided that the letter is appropriate, necessary, and should be personally delivered by each representative. A motion by Robinson, seconded by Roeder, to move forward with the local government contribution request letter carried.

c. Upper Delaware Council 2026 Meeting Dates: Ramie noted that the first Thursday in April falls during Passover, raising concern about whether the date would be problematic for board members or the public who observe the holiday. Everyone agreed: yes, that is an issue, and it should be changed. They agreed that the April full council meeting will officially be moved ahead to Tuesday, March 31, 2026. Driscoll said she would revise the list and remind everyone again when March and April come around. These 2026 dates will also be posted on the UDC website.

d. **Other:** B. Dudko presented UDC Vice-chairperson Padua with a $1,500 donation check to the UDC for the Upper Delaware Scenic Byway's use of the facilities in 2025. He thanked the council on behalf of the UDSB Committee.

Old Business:

a. **2026 Cooperative Agreement Status:** Ramie reported that, having received instructions from the NPS UPDE Administrative Officer to apply for our federal funding after the shutdown ended and with NPS operating under a Continuing Resolution through Jan. 30, we prepared a budget package for the 2026 calendar year that she provided for local NPS review on Nov. 24, shared the details with the Operations Committee on Nov. 25, and got the go-ahead to upload the Application for Federal Assistance for regional review on Dec. 1. The request would approve the release of $300,000 into our ASAP account for Fiscal Year 2026 2nd, 3rd, and 4th Quarters and FY 27 1st Quarter, to coincide with the one-year extended UDC-NPS Cooperative Agreement period through Dec. 31, 2026. Around May of 2026, we'll start working on a new Cooperative Agreement for the 2027 calendar year.

b. **Personnel Subcommittee Report:** Henry reported that Engelhardt continues to be a stellar employee, consistently meeting and exceeding expectations across all aspects of her role. Her professionalism, reliability, and overall contribution to the organization were highlighted enthusiastically. Ramie noted that Engelhardt recently celebrated her four-year anniversary with UDC. A round of applause was had for Engelhardt.

c. **Operations (6:30pm), Project Review (7:00pm), WU/RM (7:30pm) to Meet Dec. 16th:** This is included on tonight's agenda as a reminder that all three UDC Committees will meet on 12/16 due to the holidays. Operations will be first so accountant Dick Eckersley can deliver the Financial Review. All meetings will have shortened agendas to the extent possible.

d. **Other:**

Public Comment: None.

Adjournment: A motion by Roeder seconded by Dexter to adjourn the meeting at 8:12 p.m. carried.

Minutes prepared by Stephanie Driscoll, 12/15/25