

WATER USE/RESOURCE MANAGEMENT COMM. MEETING MINUTES
May 18, 2021

Committee Members Present: Ginny Dudko, Andy Boyar, Fred Peckham (phone), Al Henry, Pat Jeffer, Evan Padua (phone)
Committee Members Absent: None
Staff: Laurie Ramie, Shannon Cilento, Ashley Hall-Bagdonas
NPS Partner: Don Hamilton
Guests: Heather Jacksy- Sullivan County Planning (phone)

The UDC's Water Use/Resource Management Committee held its monthly meeting on Tuesday, May 18th, 2021 at the UDC office in Narrowsburg, NY. Dudko called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

A motion by Boyar, seconded by Henry approving the April 20th, 2021 meeting minutes carried.

Old Business

Upper Delaware Litter Sweep Final Report: Cilento provided in the meeting packet a news release recognizing all of the Litter Leaders. We had so much great publicity around this event and received a lot of positive messages back from some of the Litter Leaders. We are missing about six hardhats but we are narrowing that down.

Cilento said we are working with our Sullivan Renaissance Healthy Community Initiatives Grant to create 12 litter clean-up kits that will be available for volunteers to borrow free of charge year-round. The UDC will house the kits at its office and replenish the supplies as needed. Designed for use by two people, each kit will contain a five-gallon bucket, a trash grabber tool, contractor bags, neon safety vests, work gloves, face masks, a travel-sized first aid kit, litter clean-up safety tips, a Visitor Information Map & Guide for the Upper Delaware Scenic and Recreational River, and relevant literature such as a briefing on the Delaware River Microplastics Study. Sullivan Renaissance awarded \$500 towards this project. We did get inventory stickers that are numbered and say "Property of Upper Delaware Council". Next year when we loan supplies, we can reference our spreadsheet and know we gave Boyar hardhats #10-15, for example. The stickers will go on the more durable items like the helmets, litter grabbers, and buckets. Cilento just purchased UDC logo stickers to be placed on the orange buckets. Hall-Bagdonas said they are already thinking of ways to improve next year. Boyar said he will make up a draft questionnaire to send out to the Litter Leaders for feedback. He said it would be interesting to know what the most interesting piece of litter was found and ways to improve. The most common litter he found was medical masks which is a sign of the times. Ramie said staff discussed putting together a standard operating procedure based on lesson learned from this event. We can block off specific time periods for when we need to apply for permits. We wouldn't presumably have the benefit of the PA grant so we would have to start fundraising sooner. She said between supplies and t-shirts there's an expense. Boyar said we may want to locate sponsors.

Ten Mile River Access BSA-NPS Lease Status and Boat Ramp Plan: Hamilton said Superintendent Salvatore doesn't have an update on this matter at this time. Padua asked if the NPS lease is getting renewed for the Ten Mile River (TMR) access? Hamilton said they are in the process of that. Dudko thanked Padua for sharing pictures of a tree that feel at TMR access with the WU/RM committee.

Hamilton said he was able to get a review of the current boat launch design from some members of the Wild and Scenic Rivers committee and there are some issues. The profile of it is 3ft above grade within the banks of the Ordinary High-Water Mark of the river perpendicular to the flow. It has the potential to interfere with the free-flowing conditions of the river and it may need some revisions. Ramie requested a write-up from NPS with those concerns. Henry asked when those comments are provided that they provide their credentials. He said TMR is an eddy, protected by a delta, protected by a stream that comes out protected by huge rocks and NPS is concerned that the boat ramp will interfere with the river. Padua said it also comes back to the fact that this access has come under scrutiny and a need for improvement for years from a lot of different parties. He said if we don't do something

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we're just going to sit here and talk about it. If we get an engineer at the site to build something for everybody to use, it will provide a lot less headaches. Hamilton said it is a National Wild and Scenic River and there are things you can and can't do. NPS can't re-engineer the river and there's a limit to how much they can change. Boyar noted if you took a rubber ducky and set it in the river the river flow a lot of times of the year there depending on the height of the river is coming back up. He said that sounds like having a perpendicular boat ramp isn't that bad. Hamilton said they can get a Hydrologist involved if needed. Henry said they already have an engineer looking at it. Henry said this is an ad hoc committee that travels around making comments on Wild and Scenic Rivers and we have the expertise right here in the corridor from people that use the river and access. Henry said these people on the committee might come here for just the weekend. Ramie said it's good for us to see what we're up against. Henry said UDC requested of Superintendent Salvatore public safety hazard documentation that they have declined to provide. Ramie said UDC wasn't denied the information; we were told that information doesn't exist because there weren't case incident reports. Ramie said once NPS said they were rescinding the prohibition on trailered boat launching, UDC was satisfied with that. Henry said that was never decided on this council or brought to any type of motion.

Henry said Tony Ritter had text messaged him that he tried to get into the TMR Access where the log is that Padua took a picture of and met NPS on the scene and they advised him that NPS can't clean up anything at the access because of the renegotiation. Hamilton said his understanding is until that lease is in place NPS can't do anything in terms of maintenance.

NYS DEC & NPS Mongaup River Access Parking Lot Redesign Update: On 4/9 there was a meeting held on site at the Mongaup River Access between NPS, UDC, the DOT, and DEC. The decision was made at that time to attempt a redesign of the parking lot to attempt to get more cars in there. Since then, DEC worked up a site plan which was shared earlier today. Ramie sent a copy around the room. The front sheet shows the existing conditions and the next page shows what they have come up with. The current plan estimates can fit 33 vehicles and the revised site plan could fit approximately 60 vehicles plus 4 accessible parking spaces. Bill Rudge said today that they do have a potential funding source but don't yet have an allocation through that source. In addition, they can't yet commit to a date with limited staff. He will let Ramie know once he has a better idea of a start date. Ramie said this is great progress. Hamilton said they are gaining quite a few parking spaces there. He thinks it's a step forward and will increase the capacity by about 40%.

4/22 NPS Water Safety Committee & 4/30 Annual Partners Meeting Report: Hall-Bagdonas said at the 4/22 Water Safety Meeting they mostly prepared for the 4/30 Annual Partners Meeting. A highlight was the lessons learned from the National Canoe Safety Patrol in 2020. The core group worked well to avoid COVID amongst other members but there was burnout due to repeated shifts at the same location and with some members having full time jobs. There was overall low turnout from NCSP because of COVID.

At the 4/30 Annual Partners Meeting Kevin Reish welcomed everyone and said he will be retiring on 5/30. He introduced Ron Babus who has been appointed as the interim Water Safety Program Manager. Babus has been at UPDE since 2008. Superintendent Salvatore was introduced and he gave his experience. Reish presented on the status of the DOI-COVID policy and a plan for UPDE operations for summer 2021 and anticipated staffing for NPS. Reish informed the liveries NPS is assessing the risk of our loaner life jacket stations on 5/13 and that they may not be up this summer. They have discussed other options to mitigate drownings at "problem locations". One of the mitigation factors that we will be putting the bilingual river safety signs back out (where they formerly were prior to the Loaner Stations) at Lukes, Riverside, Minisink and Skinners. There will also be targeted and focused patrols by NPS and NCSP. Brendan Dohn spoke about 6ft mandatory life jacket wear and High-water alert notification - alternatives for information sharing and dissemination for which he will be giving a presentation at UDC full council. Ingrid Peterec talked to partners about how to pick up water safety signage at Zane Grey Museum. Mongaup issues last year with parking and access to the river were discussed. Rick Lander commented that last year was one of better years with communication. He said 6ft could be dropped to 5ft or 5 1/2 ft and he wishes he could have an earlier email to send out. Others had the same concerns. There was discussion about NYS and the legalization of marijuana. Standing enforcement at the Park Unit is that it will still be federally prohibited until it changes.

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At the 5/13 Water Safety Meeting NPS worked the Risk Assessment Tool to determine if they will be putting out the Loaner Life Jacket Stations this summer. Kevin Reish sent that to the Office of Public Risk Management to review and provide comments. Once the final determination has been made NPS will let everyone know the status.

4/26 Upper Delaware Scenic Byway Meeting: The April 22 meeting was the annual meeting which included the election of officers. Dudko was elected vice-chair, Johnny Pizzolatto will continue as chairperson, and Larry Richardson is the secretary/treasurer. Discussion took place about the status of the Scenic Byway Visitor Center at the Callicoon Depot which has recently been open for tours on 4/10, 4/11 and 4/17. The tours proved to be popular as prescheduled and socially distanced. The interior of the depot has been cleaned up and some of the modernizations by Central New York Railroad have been removed including a particle board wall and a drop ceiling that were not original to the building. That's really spruced up the space and showed what was behind and under it all. One member of the Callicoon Depot committee, John Erik Karkula, is an interior designer and staged a lot of artifacts. They also housed one of Beechwoods Yacht Club's recreations of an antique canoe. The next phase of marketing is expected to include additional tours advertised through callicoondpot.org or the Visitor Center project's Facebook and Instagram pages. A Request for Proposals is being drafted to do the renovation part of the project with the \$250,000 grant the Upper Delaware Scenic Byway (UDSB) originally obtained. NYS Senator Mike Martucci was a visitor on 4/12 the day of Congressman Delgado's press conference, as did Sullivan County Legislature Chair Rob Doherty, and Legislators George Conklin and Nadia Rajsz. There was also discussion about the vision of welcome centers or kiosks at the gateway communities of the byway (Hancock and Port Jervis). They are looking into what infrastructure already exists such as an information booth in Port Jervis, if it's still active, and would they entertain having a UDSB presence there as well as Hancock.

There was approval to add a line to the display ad for the UDSB for the Orange County Travel Guide which says "Visitor Center Coming Soon!" to start building excitement. The Sullivan Catskills Visitors Association held their Brochure Exchange Tailgate Event on 5/10. Ramie handed out brochures from UDSB and UDC at the SCVA parking lot in Liberty.

Ramie said the roadside pull-off in the Town of Lumberland is in rough shape. There is supposed to be a view to the river but it is overgrown with vegetation, riddled with trash, the signage is deteriorating, and the tables aren't in good shape. This is going to potentially be the focus of three different UDSB grant programs for vista enhancement, butterfly garden landscaping, and new signage. That was one of the areas that was part of the Upper Delaware Litter Sweep. They collected approximately 40 tires, car parts, a sofa, mattresses, and a lot of garbage thanks to one person rappelling down the cliff and the formation of an assembly line. The property is owned by NYSDOT and the existing signage that reads NO DUMPING and DUMPING HOUSEHOLD GARBAGE PROHIBITED is old and deteriorated to the point that it seems to invite trashing it more. Contacts were made with the adjacent property owner who seems to be on board with any work that could happen but it would require the permission of the NYSDOT. Sullivan Renaissance could potentially be involved because they have beautification grants that could assist with that and the Lumberland Beautification Group does have an interest in taking that over long-term. Those discussions are underway.

A restructuring proposal was brought before the Sullivan County Legislature Management and Budget Committee on 3/11 and was essentially tabled while the Legislature renegotiated the contract with the Sullivan Catskills Visitors Association. Pizzolatto is requesting a second meeting. The objective is to develop overall branding, preservation, and marketing strategies to promote the character of the UDSB. The key is getting Delaware and Orange County involved too since the gateway communities are critical as a complete, unified entity.

UDSB wrote a comment letter to PennDOT about the Skinners Falls, NY-Milanville, PA Bridge supporting historic rehabilitation. Larry Richardson said that Senator Martucci pledged to him that he will support the historic preservation position, as had his predecessor Senator Metzger.

The Hancock Junction Pool Access is going to be improved under the Hancock Partners, Inc. They were successful in getting their NPS technical services grant and held a preliminary meeting to coordinate with Friends of the Upper Delaware River (FUDR). An on-site meeting will be arranged. The work can be used as an in-kind match to apply for the next round of Delaware River Watershed grants through the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation.

Sullivan County's bid package for improvements at the Highland River Access is being prepared to go out shortly.

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UDSB wrote a thank you letter to Congressman Delgado for his press conference on 4/12.

Rosie DeCristofaro attended a webinar called "Byway First Impressions" which was about how to capitalize on the resources that you have and work with your visitors. The biggest idea she came away with was that if you could find another byway with whom UDSB could do an exchange and have their representatives drive ours and vice versa to give their opinions. There is a Delaware River Scenic Byway in NJ which seems like a good option.

Ramie expressed the UDC's thanks to the UDSB for the donation of \$400 toward the Upper Delaware Litter Sweep event t-shirts and submitting a letter of support to NYSDOT for the work permits that were ultimately received for specific state highway pickup locations in the three counties.

UDSB will be meeting earlier at the next meeting on 5/24 at 6:30 for an Enhancement Concept Plan workshop.

Henry said UDSB is advocating putting out trash containers and if they do that it will be a mistake. He said historically NPS put out dumpster at the accesses, then made it 55-gallon barrels and it was overflowing not by river users or people at the access but by private property owners in the corridor. They found it to be a quick and easy way to get rid of garbage. He said that's one of the reasons NPS did away with them. He said it's almost like if you put something out there it's an attractive nuisance. Dudko said she thinks that's why a lot of locations have gone to "Carry in carry out".

Henry noted on page 4 of the minutes, Hancock Partners was awarded a NPS grant. Ramie said the Rivers, Trails and Conservation Assistance Program is a Technical Services Grant for professional services and can use that as a match for a cash grant. Henry noted that wording is confusing, being awarded a grant with no money.

4/28 D&H Transportation Heritage Council Meeting & NHL Update: Ramie said the D&H Transportation Heritage Council (DHTHC) meets four times a year. They didn't meet in January so the 4/28 meeting was the first meeting of 2021 and they met in person. It took place in High Falls, NY at DePuy Tavern which is the future home of the D&H Canal Historical Society of High Falls.

The DHTHC adopted a Code of Conduct and Ethics in order to submit that as a requirement with its NYS Incorporation.

A new member was introduced, Don Drewett. He worked for the federal government for over 30 years while serving on a national legislative council overseeing federal prisons. He is now retired and developed a passion for the canal's history after getting familiar with the historic resource through his work with USP Canaan in Waymart. He hears constantly about bureaucracy and roadblocks when it comes to seeking federal funding and advocacy. He may be able to help in developing a strategy to emphasize the message of national significance and potentially leverage state and county funds for D&H projects.

There was a feasibility study to look into rewatering the Neversink Feeder Dam in Cuddebackville. There was a meeting on 4/29 at the senior center in Huguenot led by Orange County Legislator Tom Faggione to discuss the report. There was a 5/4 Zoom meeting with Orange County Parks over their proposal to take over that property through donation. Support letters have been written for that; the UDC was asked to do one and submit it. Ramie said the problem is the feeder canal is from the early 1900s and put there by an electrical company for their usage and it has failed. It has a couple holes in it and there are two major breeches in the towpath. There are three options from the feasibility study ranging from leaving it as is and cleaning it up and beautifying it with a price tag of \$236,500 up to a plan that is \$5.7 million to do a full rehabilitation of the dam and waste weir or the option of doing nothing.

Videographer Bill Bollinger plans to resume filming on Chapter 4 for the historic DVD series in mid-May. This will focus on the section of canal from Port Jervis to Spring Glen. Footage and historical photos will be edited down to 15 minutes like the other videos. There will be a fifth Chapter to complete the series. Once Chapter 4 is complete they would like to have a bus tour that will coincide with that same section. Hopefully that will happen by this fall.

Planning is underway for the 200th Anniversary of the D&H. They are doing a timeline of what the milestones were for the D&H and its history across 108 miles. Generally, it's been decided that 1823 is the critical date for when the

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D&H company started. Ramie said feel free to look at dhthc.org and their Facebook page that shares videos and other resources.

The 2021 World Canals Conference is coming up from 8/30-9/3 in Hagerstown, MD. Cliff Robinson, Jr. will be attending and giving a 20-minute presentation on the D&H Canal. He's putting together a teaser video that's about ten minutes to show the first three DVD chapters for that purpose. Bill Merchant noted that he will be a presenter at the New York Canal Society coming up in September in Schenectady.

Cilento said NPS is working with a consultant to update the National Historic Landmark designation of the D&H Canal to expand and strengthen it. There are some inaccuracies in the original form as well. Phase I was to update the outline, bibliography, and the extant site lists. The Landmark Committee was given the document to review and Cilento submitted four comments. Page 2 Line 19 states the canal had 108 locks and then Page 7 Line 7 it says 110 locks in total. Cilento's not sure if there were 110 at one point, but said the discrepancy should be clarified. Her second and third comments are syntax corrections. The last comments were that the document reads "Cowin" Farm. NPS has spent time recently correcting the historical misspelling of "Corwin" to "Cowen" and she said a note on spelling for this name should be addressed in footnotes or otherwise. Comments are due by 5/28.

The next quarterly meeting is 7/28 at the D&H Canal Park at Lock 31 along Rt. 6 near Hawley.

4/29 Conservation & Natural Resources Advisory Council Report: Hall-Bagdonas said Conservation and Natural Resources Advisory Council (CNRAC) is an advisory board to PA DCNR, CNRAC provides input from a public perspective to the DCNR regarding conservation and stewardship of natural resources. CNRAC held its first CNRAC Conversations to gain ideas, comments and suggestions from stakeholders and users of public lands across PA. CNRAC will use the input to help DCNR create better outdoor experiences for all Pennsylvanians.

The first discussion will help CNRAC support DCNR in its efforts to learn more about how social barriers inhibit participation and enjoyment of PA's outdoors, particularly as parks and forests are experiencing record-breaking visitation numbers. The virtual event had over 100 people in attendance with a wonderful panel of speakers. One of the speakers, Marcus Shoffner, said when people see their language on trail heads, they can see themselves in that space. This made her think of NPS signage. Taiji Nelson talked about the Spiral of silence when confronting difficult issues. Sometimes people choose to not speak out at all. Nelson also spoke about the language of "native", "nonnative", "alien" and "exotic" species etc. being racialized. He is a Naturalist Educator and an Asian American. He said when he is teaching children about Japanese Knotweed sometimes, they look at him funny. You could tell the impact of this story as soon as Nelson shared this story. He recommended watching the PBS special "Asian Americans". Shoffner shared with the group this quote: "Diversity without inclusion is tokenism; diversity without equity is segregation. Diversity without accountability is an unjust system". Hall-Bagdonas said she and Cilento were able to take some time after and talk about what was impactful to them.

5/6 USGS Delaware Basin Study Stakeholder Meeting Report: Ramie said this was a shining example of why Zoom meetings can be helpful because they had 9 presenters from all over the U.S. in two hours. Ramie has reported on this project in the past. It started in 2019 when the USGS launched their pilot project called Integrated Water Availability Assessment in the Delaware River Basin. It's intended to explore, test, and refine systems and processes for assessing water availability for human and ecological uses and understanding their underlying controls. They point out that water quality plays an important role in supporting ecological health and determining the suitability of water for human consumption, recreation, agriculture, and industry. Understanding how water quality has changed over time in response to natural and human-induced changes in landscape and climate identifies potential challenges in safeguarding water for all uses.

They are working in 10 river basins over a ten-year period that are representative of the larger water-resource regions. The first three in that system are the Delaware, the Upper Colorado River and the Illinois River Basin. National target issues are water quantity, quality, use, ecological communities, and climate and socioeconomic factors. They pointed out in the U.S. there are nearly 30 million stream reaches, 143,000 community supply wells, 14 million domestic wells and of that the USGS operates 11,400 stream gages which amounts to .0004% because they are limited by funding and staffing. There are three priorities scientists are looking at in the Delaware River Basin: the influence of changing salinity on freshwater availability; study thermal regime to protect aquatic ecosystem;

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and how to optimize flow objectives and drought resiliency. Since the program started, they have added 49 new or reactivated stream gages and at 50 sites they are now testing for salinity. At 100 sites they are looking at temperature and testing out some new scientific methods. One is through thermal imagery. Another is discharge using cameras and the third is geophysical techniques. They said that climate change is the capstone issue that affects every other priority. One limitation of the scientists' work is that they don't have a centralized location where all of the data is being accessed. It is publicly available but you have to request it.

2021 Delaware River Sojourn Registration Open and Planning Update: Cilento said they opened registration for the Sojourn. Cilento is working with Friends of the Upper Delaware River (FUDR), the Delaware Highlands Conservancy and NPS as the Upper Delaware day planners. They have the first four days planned out including a River Litter Cleanup from Cadosia Creek Access on the East Branch to Hancock Access.

2021 Upper Delaware BioBlitz Research Underway: Cilento said the bird team went out this past weekend. The herpetology team has gone out. They have started social media engagement. One member is working on the Facebook page and Cilento is running the Instagram account: upperdelawarebioblitz. They have been posting photos from the BioBlitz collections that the teams have collected so far. She just received an email that they received a photo dump from the bird team from this past weekend and she's excited to review those and get those out to the public. It's a bit of a different BioBlitz from years past because it is taking place over a longer period of time instead of a one-day event but it does give them an opportunity to keep engaging people about the biodiversity of the Upper Delaware throughout the entire summer. The BioBlitz is being held at the Dodge/Snyder property in Damascus Township outside of Abrahamsville on the riverside and it's just on the edge of the river corridor.

Other: None.

New Business

Sullivan County Planning Update on Upgrade of Highland River Access: Jacksy said Sullivan County Planning (SCP) is making headway on the upgrade of the Highland River Access and hope to finish this year. They have until December to complete the project. She is currently working on securing 21 permits to get the work done. They are looking into the Consolidated Funding announcement that just came out. SCP has their Upper Delaware River Making the Connection Plan and the Ten Mile River Access is part of that. Depending on what the Department of State says, SCP may be able to help get some funding to advance that project. Jacksy will keep the committee informed. Jacksy said if SCP puts in for a grant, they can move it forward with the help of everyone that's been at the table from the beginning. NPS was onboard with the plans that were in SCP's schematics. Henry asked if the plans she is talking about are similar to the ones the committee has seen from JHA Companies. Jacksy said the design JHA proposed for the TMR Access was not so different. It was a smaller chunk of the overall plan SCP designed out. The launch into the river was not so dissimilar. Carla Hahn and Kris Heister from NPS were at the table during the process. Hamilton asked if SCP's launch plan had sheet piling that was 3-feet above grade for that launch site? Jacksy said no it did not. Hamilton said that is part of the issue NPS is dealing with. Henry said we need to get the plans from SCP and JHA together and look at what NPS likes so this issue can move forward. Jacksy said she could attend the next meeting in person and looks forward to seeing the TMR boat launch plans.

NY-PA Joint Interstate Bridge Commission Annual Meeting: 5/26 at 10 a.m.: Ramie said this is a reminder that the Annual Meeting of the Bridge Commission is open to the public but you do have to let them know so they can give you the code to participate virtually and receive the meeting packet.

Comments Due on Skinners Falls-Milanville Bridge Study by 6/1: Ramie said this is a reminder that the comments are due on the Skinners Falls-Milanville Bridge Study by 6/1.

Delaware River Flow & Storage Report: A copy of the 5/17 DRBC Hydrological Conditions Report was provided in members' packets. Total combined storage was at 100.2%.

Other: Ramie said provided in the meeting packet is an article from the *Sullivan County Democrat* from today titled "Researchers peer at river's health" about a study underway by Stroud Water Research in Delaware River tributaries.

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Hall-Bagdonas asked Padua how his 4/29 seminar on Fresh Water “How-To” Fishing Techniques went? Padua said it went well. It was held virtually by Western Sullivan Public Library with 16 participants. Padua may do another seminar mid-summer based on small-mouth bass fishing on the Upper Delaware River. Padua said he’s always available for questions and his contact information is available on his website: <http://www.sweetwaterguide.com/>

Henry asked if there were any updates on the Narrowsburg DEC sign? Ramie said a new sign has been ordered and that was the last update we heard from DEC. Henry said he spoke with Tony Ritter and tried to get in the Narrowsburg Access the within the last few weeks and it was pretty muddy. Hamilton said he doesn’t know if any mud has been removed there.

Boyar referenced his Spring 2021 *Trout Unlimited* Magazine noting an outfit called “Leave No Trace”. The Trout Unlimited Chapter in Chattooga built kiosks providing information about “Leave No Trace” principles and how those principles should be applied to the wild and scenic Chattooga River and the adjacent wilderness area. He suggested getting someone from that group to speak at UDC. He provided the article to staff.

Public Comment: None.

Adjournment: A motion by Henry seconded by Boyar, to adjourn the meeting at 8:23 p.m. was carried.

Minutes prepared by Ashley Hall-Bagdonas 5/28/2021