

Upper Delaware Council
WATER USE/RESOURCE MANAGEMENT COMM. MEETING MINUTES
August 16, 2016

Committee Members Present: Tony Ritter, Pat Jeffer, Al Henry, Deb Conway, Fred Peckham
Committee Members Absent: Andy Boyar
NPS Partner: Don Hamilton
Staff: Laurie Ramie, Cindy Odell, Pete Golod
Guests: None

The UDC's Water Use/Resource Management Committee held its monthly meeting on Tuesday, August 16, 2016 at the Council office in Narrowsburg, NY. Chairperson Ritter called the meeting to order at 7:02 p.m.

A motion by Peckham seconded by Conway to approve the July 19 meeting minutes was carried. There was no public comment on the agenda.

Old Business:

NPS Law Enforcement Contract Discussion Update: Ramie noted that she reached out to Chief of Law Enforcement Larry Neal earlier in the day for an update about this proposal. She said Neal emailed her and stated that he "spoke with Karen Henry earlier today and she is waiting to hear back from her contact on the issue. That is all I have to report at this time. I don't see this happening in FY17 at this point. I will keep you posted as I get more information back from Karen." Ramie noted that Karen Henry is the Park Service's Chief Administrative Officer. Henry said he hopes the financing issue does not affect law enforcement efforts. Ramie said this topic will be kept on the agenda until we have a firm answer.

Upper Delaware Scenic Byway July 25th Meeting Minutes and Visitor Center Application: The minutes of the July 25th meeting of the Upper Delaware Scenic Byway were provided in members' packets for their information. Ramie noted that the minutes are quite lengthy because this meeting was when the discussion ensued about the visitor center, and the tug-of-war with Sullivan County over where it should go and how the federal money should be repurposed. Ramie reported that the Sullivan County Legislature passed a resolution authorizing the Sullivan County Planning Division to move forward with a grant application for two visitor centers and a rail-trail concept. One visitor center would be associated with the Montreign Resort Casino in the Town of Thompson and the other with Upper Delaware Scenic Byway Visitor Center at Fort Delaware along Route 97. Ramie said the applications were filed with the NYS Department of Transportation (NYS DOT) by the August 1st deadline and a determination is supposed to be made by the end of the month, she added. Ramie spoke of the presentation made by the owners of the Narrowsburg Union to locate a visitor center in their building under a lease agreement.

Ramie referred to the narrative section of the Upper Delaware Scenic Byway Visitor Center @ Fort Delaware application made to the NYS DOT provided in members' packets. She noted that schematic drawings that had been done as part of a feasibility study were also attached to the submitted application. Ramie said given the opportunity, the Byway would have liked to provide some tourism and visitation statistics they have available to include in the application. Ritter spoke of the studies on tourism and its economic value that have been done. He added that providing those statistics would have been logical.

Ramie noted that letters to the eight member local governments were sent on July 13th. She shared the text which states, in part, "The UDSB committees urges your municipality to address the topic of visual impacts from New York State Route 97 in your zoning ordinances and land use decisions because scenic vistas play such a significant factor in what makes the Upper Delaware River Valley so distinctive and desirable as a region to reside in and visit." She said the Byway has not taken a stance for or against solar arrays.

Henry questioned what the status is of the Park Service locating a visitor center in the Narrowsburg Union. Ramie said that NPS Superintendent Heister said she would consider providing staffing for a visitor center at the Narrowsburg Union and donating some exhibits. She suggested it could be used as a federal match in an amount equivalent to \$100,000 for grant purposes. Ramie stated that the Byway is not currently pursuing a visitor center at the location, and she is not aware of any other active

proposals at this time. Ritter said it was noted that the state would not look favorably on projects to be located at leased facilities. Ramie added that the Byway does not have a steady source of income where it could meet a monthly payment of any sort. A lengthy discussion regarding operation and maintenance costs took place. Ritter shared his frustration about the Byway organization not being notified about the Congressional earmark funds that had become available. A brief discussion about the proposed project at Montreign Resort Casino took place. Henry noted that operation and maintenance costs are a huge consideration for any project.

D&H Transportation Heritage Council July 27 Meeting Update: Ramie said this meeting took place at the DePuy Canal House in High Falls, New York. She reported that 100 copies of the long-awaited, newly-available DVD, "The Delaware & Hudson Canal Co.: Its History and Legacy. Chapter One – The Gravity Railroad" were delivered by Bill Bollinger of Bollinger & Rutter Production and Services. The video is under 15 minutes in length and is available for a retail cost of \$10. The proceeds from the sales will be used to fund the remaining planned subsequent videos that will cover different sections of the route. Video number two will cover from Honesdale to the Roebling Bridge over the Delaware River. Ramie told members if they are interested in purchasing a video, to let her know.

Ramie said the Council was asked to write a support letter to the Orange County Legislature on behalf of the Orange County Parks Department request for 2017 funding to address the deteriorating condition of the canal at the D&H Canal Park in Cuddebackville and two other sites. A motion to write a letter of support was made and carried.

Ramie said the DHTHC will add the National Geographic's Scenic Wild Delaware River MapGuide emblem link on their website now that it's available.

Ramie reported there's been somewhat of a resolution regarding the D&H Company maps and records in storage with the Canadian Pacific Railroad in Montreal. They have an agreement to make digital copies of the 82 pages of hand-drawn maps which provide an aerial view of the entire canal from 1865 for \$2,500. The organization members have decided these maps are important enough that they've started to make pledges and have thus far received \$2,100 in pledges.

Ramie noted that S. Robert Powell, Executive Director of the Carbondale Historical Society and very renowned author about the D&H Canal and Gravity, was interviewed by Brian Lockman, President and CEO of the PA Cable Network about Volumes 6 -10 of his DVD series that covers detailed aspects of the Gravity Railroad. The interview was broadcast on "Pennsylvania Books" on PCN-TV on January 17, 2016. Ramie said she has a copy of the DVD of the one hour interview for interested parties to borrow.

The next quarterly meeting of the DHTHC will take place on Wednesday, October 26th at the D&H Canal Park at Lock 31 in Hawley, PA, Ramie stated.

Other: Henry asked what the status is regarding the Skinners Falls Bridge. Ramie said the updated information she heard was that completion of the project is now set for November due to the unavailability of material. Henry asked if the contractor will have to pay penalties as the project was to have been completed by the end of August. Ramie said she is unsure, but can inquire about that.

Henry said he read in the *River Reporter* that regarding the Pond Eddy Bridge project, the Damascus Citizens for Sustainability (DCS) are concerned that the laws might have not been followed concerning colonies of mussels in the river that are threatened or eligible to be listed as threatened. Ramie noted that is one of their several concerns. Hamilton said the project was reviewed thoroughly under Section 7 of the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act to address many different concerns. Jeffer noted that article is on the front page of the paper. Ritter said it would be a good idea for the Park Service to respond to the allegations. Henry asked that Hamilton pass along to Superintendent Heister the WU/RM Committee's recommendation to consider offering a response to the concerns expressed in the *River Reporter* article over the mussels. The cost of the bridge replacement project was discussed. Hamilton spoke of the mussel survey done there and relocation by hand of certain cells of mussels within that area of direct impact.

New Business

Early Warning System for Reservoir-Related Emergencies Update: Ramie referred to the handout titled, "Summary of Actions for the Upper Delaware Council's Proposal to establish a Supplemental Public Notification System for Hazardous Incidents Involving New York City's Delaware River Basin Reservoir System" that was originally handed out at the August 4 full Council meeting noting that any new

information is presented in bold type. Ramie reported we have heard back from four out of the five counties regarding the request for assistance in compiling a directory of active or existing emergency sirens within their jurisdiction. We await a response from Wayne County, PA, she said. Copies of the letters of support for a Reservoir Emergency Public Warning System sent by Westfall Township and the Town of Tusten were included in members' packets. Also included in the packets was a copy of *The River Reporter* article titled, "UDC Siren Call Stings NYC; Recent Letter Deemed 'Too Aggressive.'" Henry stated that the public warning system will have to be a combination of different technologies in order to be effective. He said we need to know if there is some sort of infrastructure available in the river corridor where NYC could mount equipment that would be used as part of this system. He said we need to be clear that the system is not going to solely consist of sirens and that needs to be reinforced anytime we discuss the issue. Ritter reported that the cell phone service on the river today is much better than it was just two years ago. He shared some of the locations that he does have Verizon service on the river. Ritter spoke of a new NYC DEP app available for smart phones. Peckham referred to Delaware County's response where it states, "The Schoharie Valley (below the Gilboa Reservoir) is a good example of this. The warning system has been engineered to reach the most amount of people in the shortest amount of time – and it's a very loud, unique sound, designed to wake someone from sleep. The sirens extend down the entire valley, spaced at various intervals so the hope is no one does not hear it." He said this is an example of a system that already exists in a river valley. Ritter said that in this day, digital technology should be used as well. Ritter spoke of the free RiverFlows App. RiverFlows offers a quick and easy way to view data from river gage sites using an Android device, he noted. Peckham spoke of the lack of cell service on the river from Hancock to Narrowsburg. Henry said he's used his cell phone on the river in certain sections of that stretch. Henry suggested an inventory of cell service on the river. A brief discussion about the Open Signal app took place. Henry said the app provides cell phone signal coverage maps based on data submitted by users. After more discussion, it was decided that Hamilton would pass along the idea of having the National Park Service rangers, National Canoe Safety Patrol, and/or licensed fishing guides help field-test the availability of cellular signals on the Upper Delaware River through a survey that would request specific locations of gaps in coverage and information on the individual's service carrier and device. Peckham suggested that we request details of the Schoharie Valley's early warning system of siren usage associated with the Gilboa Reservoir. Peckham said he is often in areas of no service, but his phone will allow him to hit 911. He will pose a question to the Frontier Communications speaker at the September 1 meeting's telecommunications presentation about how the 911 direct call button functions in terms of what technology it uses to operate.

Delaware River Flow and Storage Report: A copy of the August 15th New York City DEP Current Reservoir Levels report was provided in members' packets. Total storage as of that date was 84% with Cannonsville at 74.6%. Normal total storage for this date is 83.7%. A brief discussion about current precipitation took place.

Referring to the quote from the *Hancock Herald* in the Summary of Actions handout in members' packets, Henry said there are sirens located in many other Pennsylvania communities. He does not want that quote to cause any confusion.

Other: Hamilton said that the NPS conducted a Young of Year Shad sampling on the Lower East Branch at Fireman's Park in Hancock on the night of August 15th. He reported they caught 404 Young of Year Shad there. Ritter questioned how big they were. Hamilton said they were 3 to 4 inches long. Peckham asked how long they've been keeping these numbers. Hamilton said that not much sampling has been done on the Upper Delaware, but they hope to continue in the future. He added that this year's count is much better than last year's count in the upper section with the cold water being released from the Cannonsville. Peckham asked if the results of a mussel survey being conducted by the USGS will be shared with the Park Service. Hamilton said they will share information about some of their findings with them. Hamilton told Peckham he could share the public version of a mussel survey conducted by the NPS with him.

Public Comment: None

Adjournment: A motion by Henry seconded by Peckham to adjourn the meeting at 8:13 p.m. was carried.