

WATER USE/RESOURCE MANAGEMENT COMM. MEETING MINUTES

February 20, 2024

Committee Members Present: Ginny Dudko, Al Henry, Fred Peckham (Zoom), Pat Jeffer, Jim Rodgers, Christine Martin (Zoom)

Committee Members Absent: Evan Padua

Staff: Laurie Ramie, Stephanie Driscoll

NPS Partner: Michelle Stevens, Kaetlyn Jackson, Carly Marshall (Zoom)

Guests: Bill Dudko

The UDC's Water Use/Resource Management Committee held its monthly meeting on Tuesday, February 20th. 2023 Chairperson G. Dudko called the meeting to order at 6:30 pm.

Election of Committee Chair and Vice-chair: Bill Dudko will be the meeting representative for the Town of Deerpark going forward, with Ginny Dudko attending as alternate. Henry made a motion to nominate Evan Padua for Chairperson and Bill Dudko for Vice-Chairperson of the Water Use/Resource Management Committee for 2024. The motion was seconded by Rodgers and carried.

Approval of December 12, 2023 meeting minutes (January 16th meeting cancelled): A motion by Henry seconded by Peckham approving the December 12, 2023 meeting minutes carried. There was no public comment on the agenda.

New Business:

UDC 4th Annual Litter Sweep Progress Update: A copy of the UDC's 2/6 news release, "Be a Litter Leader, Volunteer, Sponsor of UDC's 2024 Upper Delaware Litter Sweep" was included in the packet. Driscoll reported that Litter Leaders were still needed for Hancock, Fremont, Cohecton, Lumberland, Deerpark, Damascus, Shohola, Lackawaxen, Berlin, Manchester and Buckingham. B. and G. Dudko both volunteered to be Litter Leaders for Deerpark, Henry will volunteer as Litter Leader for Berlin, and Jeffer for Shohola. Henry said there was a section between Berlin and Damascus that *Keep Hawley Honesdale Beautiful* did last year that he wanted to discuss with Driscoll before the Litter Sweep. A donation came in today's mail by check of \$250 from North American Packaging Company (also known as Econo-pak) in Milford, PA. B. Dudko asked Driscoll if there was a flyer he could distribute throughout the Town of Deerpark. Ramie said we will create a flyer once we have the new logo, which will be done by March 1st. Driscoll went through supplies left over from last year to see what was needed and put a list together. Needed: garbage bags, gloves, litter grabbers, orange cones, and caution signs. B. Dudko suggested ordering contractor-grade garbage bags, since they hold up better than the normal household garbage bags. Ramie said we've gotten some feedback that the contractor garbage bags were too large and heavy to carry. Driscoll will check to see if they have 30-gallon rather than the 50-gallon standard size. B. Dudko asked if sponsors will be listed on the t-shirts this year. Ramie said no, but WJFF Radio Catskill has graciously donated air time and advertising as our media sponsor for which we offered to include their logo on the sleeve of this year's t-shirt. The UDC's logo will be on the back and this year's artwork on the front. B. Dudko asked if the American Flag could be added to the right shoulder. Ramie said that would be an extra cost for screen printing, so probably doesn't make sense economically. Everyone agreed. The safety color of the t-shirt this year will depend on what the artwork looks best on. Ramie reported on the grants that Engelhardt has been working on for the Litter Sweep. March 1st is a deadline for a Community Development Grant from Sullivan 180 at a maximum of \$500. Engelhardt is also working on an application for a grant through the Pocono Mountains Visitors Bureau due March 3rd that requires a 50% match. We have money left over from last year's Litter Sweep (a balance of around \$2,300) in our dedicated account that we could use for the match. Staff is looking for other opportunities as well, but this gives us a good start financially. B. Dudko asked if there would be any money donated from Rajs's district through Sullivan County Legislative Discretionary Funds. Ramie said Rajs had indicated at the full council meeting that she is working on it.

Big Eddy Narrows Map Donation by Lisa Glover: Included in the packet is a handout telling the story of the map Lisa Glover had created and donated to the UDC. Glover is a maker of creative design and took an interest in the Narrowsburg Big Eddy. She and her partner came into the office recently to purchase UDC t-shirts and asked Ramie about the origins of the eddy. Ramie said there were a couple of newsletter articles written about it over the years. One of the articles done in the early years of the UDC (1980's) was on the eddy's geological origins by Keith

Fletcher, a consultant for the UDC. Charlie Wieland, a former Town of Tusten UDC representative and Water and Sewer Superintendent for the Town of Tusten, also had his own theory about the Big Eddy. Ramie gave Glover all the information she had on the Big Eddy and Glover did her own research as well. In the handout Glover refers to the sketches that were done to explain how the hole formed and how it's been measured through diving. She also went to the NYS Geological Survey and to the Delaware River Basin Commission (per Ramie's referral) to get additional information. Through this, the map that is being passed around the room was created. Glover printed and donated 50 copies of the map to the UDC. Ramie asked what value she would put on the map. Glover said she sells a similar map at Gather in Honesdale for \$25 per map with \$5 of each purchase going to a local non-profit. She said it's up to the UDC if and how much we want to charge. Ramie mentioned Glover's website: www.lisathemaker.com which includes her biographical sketch. Ramie thanked Glover for such a generous gift. She asked the committee what they think we should do with the maps? Should we sell them as a fundraiser? Rodgers asked if Glover is charging the UDC \$25? Ramie said no, this is a donation. Henry recommended that we charge \$20 per map; the artwork is top shelf. Ramie said we'd phrase it the same way we do the UDC t-shirts, that it is a donation to the council. G. Dudko said when UDC staff goes to events, we could sell them there. Ramie plans on writing a newsletter article about this. G. Dudko asked if we could write an explanation of the map to attach to it. B. Dudko asked if we could get more if we wanted. Ramie said probably; she's sure Glover has a digital file that we could use.

Delaware Highlands Conservancy's Women and Their Woods Retreat: Ramie reported on Engelhardt's behalf and referenced page 2 of her written report included in the handouts. Engelhardt had come to Ramie and said the Delaware Highlands Conservancy (DHC) asked if she could give them some time to work on this September 15-18th retreat. The program teaches women landowners to effectively care for their land, holds workshops, offers programming like chainsaw safety classes, and they also offer other 4-day retreats. These retreats used to be held every other year, but there has not been one since Covid hit. Engelhardt was asked by DHC's Volunteer Coordinator Rachel Morrow if she'd be interested in collaborating. Engelhardt told Ramie she had taken this course before being employed with the UDC and considers it very valuable. The retreat starts on Sunday, September 15th and runs until Wednesday, September 18th. Engelhardt asked Ramie if she thought it was appropriate for her to be involved. Ramie said she thinks the UDC and the DHC have a sister organization relationship since the UDC conserves the river and DHC conserves the land. Personally, Ramie supports it. She is asking the committee for their approval. B. Dudko said he thinks getting the UDC's name and mission out there is always valuable. Everyone was in favor of Engelhardt collaborating with and helping during the DHC's Women and Their Woods Retreat from September 15-18th.

Articles: Rainfall Effects on the NYC Reservoirs and Lackawaxen River: Engelhardt thought these articles would be of interest to the committee and they are included in the packet for information. The *Sullivan County Democrat* called the UDC first for information after Publisher Fred Stabbert had driven by the Cannonsville Reservoir and noticed how full it was. Ramie referred him to the DRBC. The article by the *Tri-County Independent* notes that this was the longest release in memory on Lake Wallenpaupack by Brookfield Renewable.

Delaware River Flow & Storage Report: Included in the packet for review.

Other: None.

Old Business:

1/4 and 2/15 Upper Delaware River Watershed Plan Steering Committee: Ramie said the January 4th meeting was mostly about a re-grant program that is part of the Upper Delaware Watershed planning effort. They anticipate in the first year about \$150,000 will be available for projects that advance the watershed protection goals of the program. It will be open to municipalities, 501(c)3 organizations, and academic institutions. The four categories of projects would address habitat, water quality, flood mitigation, and recreation. Once the application process is open the funding will be available for "shovel ready" projects that need to be completed in 2025 and also must have other project funding in place if it's a larger project. They anticipate applications will be due by October 18, 2024 and awards made by November 22, 2024. That would become part of the 2025 contract with NYS DEC. Ramie isn't sure if this would benefit the council directly, but we will promote it to the communities.

At the February 15th meeting the draft action agenda for the watershed plan was put out for discussion by this steering committee. Ramie was impressed by the content and visual appeal of the document. She's not sharing it yet, since it's still in its draft form. She read through it and made edits. There's a Google document for members to make

comments. They are giving people until February 27th at 5 o'clock to make comments. This will be a living document that leads to project implementation. They decided to divvy it up into upper, middle, and lower Upper Delaware regions; some of the geographic areas pair together well with certain needs and demographics. This will be subject to three public meetings; the first on February 27th for the Northern part of the watershed at the Walton Fire Dept. from 1:30-3pm, February 28th for the Southern section in Sullivan County down to Port Jervis at the Crawford Public Library in Monticello from 1:30-3pm, and on March 5th from 6-8pm there will be a virtual Zoom meeting. They will then ask for another round of public comments by March 12th and plan to provide this document to the DEC by March 27th.

1/4, 1/31, & 2/13 Delaware River Sojourn Committee Meeting Reports: Ramie referred everyone to Engelhardt's written report included in the packet. They have chosen a theme for this year: River of Inspiration. They are coming up with a t-shirt design.

1/10 & 2/14 Water Safety Committee Reports: Driscoll said the notes from 2/14 went over mostly the same topics as the notes from 1/10. NPS is working on some final details for the Water Safety Video to get posted on their website. They are still working on the distribution of the video to the CUA holders. The vehicle in the river was removed. There are 6 people signed up for the "Wear it Watcher" volunteer program. Last year they had no volunteers, so it's progress. Rodgers asked what a "Wear it Watcher" is. Driscoll said you can sit under a shady tree and count how many people are and are not wearing their lifejackets. Stevens suggested people wanting more information should reach out to NPS Chief of Interpretation Ingrid Peterec. Driscoll said Corrine Hinton has put together some backpacks with sunscreen, bug spray, chairs, etc. Rodgers asked if there is a flyer. Ramie got a flyer from the front office to pass around. G. Dudko asked if the flyer can be included in the UDC full council meeting agenda and packet. The NPS/CUA Partners Spring Safety meeting is scheduled for April 12th at 10am at the UDC building. NPS Biologist Andy Weber will be giving one of the presentations on the Delaware Aqueduct status. Ramie said anyone on the council is welcome to attend as well.

1/19 Delaware River High-Definition Stream Survey Program: Driscoll attended this virtual program. There is a handout included in the packet with highlights from the program. Trutta Environmental Solutions are coming to the March 7th full council meeting to give a presentation. Driscoll said the program recapped the survey Trutta Environmental did on the Delaware River in collaboration with Friends of the Upper Delaware River (FUDR), Trout Unlimited, and others. They survey the river from autonomous boats, drones, tablets, backpacks, kayaks, and inflatable boats to get a full 360 view and collect data. Ramie said Trutta Environmental Solutions also gave a presentation at FUDR's Water, Water Everywhere conference. She commented that it was an interesting demonstration. G. Dudko thought it was interesting that the consultant hadn't heard of Japanese Knotweed. Driscoll said the company is not at all local.

1/22 Upper Delaware Scenic Byway Meeting: Ramie said there is a newly appointed representative for the Town of Highland, Gerard (Gerry) Finn. The Town of Tusten has a new alternate, Cass Collins, who is also on the Town of Tusten Board. The new Town of Lumberland Supervisor Suzanne Edzenga, who replaced Jenny Mellan after she resigned from the position, sat in on the meeting as well. UDSB Treasurer Larry Richardson presented a 2024 draft budget for preliminary review that will be acted upon at the February meeting. The Town of Delaware completed their Vista Enhancement Grant and was reimbursed \$8,200 for three different sites that were selectively cleared to see the river from the road, all done by the same contractor, Nick Mootz. While planning to file the NYS Charities and IRS 990 tax forms, we found out that the CPA the UDSB has been using for many years is retiring, but agreed to do them one last time. They discussed the potential continuation of the UDSB Project Manager independent contract. The prior contract was a 6-month trial period that ended in early August. The individual who had been doing that, John Pizzolato, proposed that he'd be able to do it again. Subsequently he was elected the Town Supervisor for the Town of Highland and checked with authorities in Albany and NYS Government on whether that would be a conflict of interest. The input he received is that it wouldn't, since he's a non-voting member of the UDSB committee. Since the UDSB Chairperson was not present at this meeting, a decision will be made at the next meeting. The Town of Highland had a grant application in to NYS DOT for a dedicated pedestrian lane; a \$5 million project that needs a 20% local match. The town paid a consultant \$12,500 to file an application before the end of last year when administration changed within the town. The new administration is taking a hard look at the project to decide whether it's something worth pursuing due to the match and its benefits for the town. Ramie hasn't seen the application, but Engelhardt has looked at it. The town's grant committee is looking it over. They do not have to accept the grant or can scale it back if approved. Henry asked where the starting point and ending point would be.

Ramie said she wasn't sure. The UDC and UDSB both submitted letters of support for the funding but reserved the right for comment on the project once the details were shared. Henry asked if it is the walkway proposed from the Roebling Bridge to the Eagle Observatory. B. Dudko said that's a different project. Ramie said that project is still in the works and this is another proposal. Ramie said the Callicoon Depot project is still ongoing. B. Dudko said there are some interesting VHS/DVDs available on the history of the Callicoon Depot. Ramie said that Callicoon Depot Inc. (the 501(c)3 organization behind the restoration of the depot) had an election in mid-January. They had 9 board members that continued in the middle of 2-year terms, and 6 new people joined with 2 architects now on board. The Callicoon Business Association (the third partner with CDI and UDSB) for the restoration of the depot for a Visitor Center, also held elections last month. Rodgers asked if this is the old railroad station in Callicoon. Ramie said yes, it's become somewhat controversial. Callicoon had a site with no money and the UDSB had money with no site for a visitor center. But it hasn't gone smoothly. The next UDSB meeting is scheduled for Monday, February 26th at 7 pm at the UDC building.

1/24 D&H Board of Trustees and 2/20 Roebling Aqueduct 175th Anniversary Meetings: Ramie said the trustees met on January 24th. Notes on the meeting are included in the packet. A bicentennial of the D&H Canal and Gravity Railroad is taking place. It will be a 5-year celebration that started in 2023 to mark milestones that occurred along the canal, the 108 locks, and the Gravity Railroad. This requires funds to put on all sorts of celebratory and educational events. The group is looking at various grant opportunities and trying to get member organizations to take ownership of certain events. They will also go to each county tourism agency to request help with promotion. There are several designs for a logo that would encompass the railroad and canal boats together that will go on banners, flyers, etc. The D&H Board of Trustees will meet again on March 27th and the D&H Transportation Heritage Council (DHTHC) will meet on April 24th at the D&H Canal Museum and Visitor Center in High Falls.

This year is the 175th anniversary of the first crossing of the Roebling Aqueduct that occurred on April 26, 1849. 175 years later, they would like to commemorate that on Saturday April 27th. Kenny Christianson with the Lackawaxen River Conservancy, Rowland Cooperative and the DHTHC had organized a planning meeting that took place today (2/20) at 4pm for people to talk about what could be done in a relatively short time frame. Christianson is working with the New Inn at Lackawaxen for a luncheon with exhibits, speakers on D&H Canal topics, and tours with the NPS. There will be music, history lessons, and more. The plan is to put together a sponsorship request letter. There is another meeting on March 5th at Zane Grey Museum hosted by NPS.

2/14 DRBC's Water Management Advisory Committee Meeting: Ramie said the UDC has a role on this committee as the designated Watershed Organization. They meet three times a year and her notes were included in the packet. In the upper basin the precipitation over the last year has been 18% above normal; the highest percentage on the map of the entire basin. In the past two months it has been 4% above normal. There are two new DRBC staff members in the Water Resources Department. DRBC Executive Director Steve Tambini discussed a proposal to form a new subcommittee of the Water Management Advisory Committee and the Water Quality Management Committee, specifically for Delaware Source Water Protection. There have been hazardous spills that affected the basin, such as the 2018 trail derailment in Deposit among other chemical and toxic releases, that has prompted the organization of the subcommittee. The purpose of the subcommittee would be to have a forum for fostering regional dialogue and cooperation to enhance and promote information and knowledge sharing, provide a basin and Delaware River centric focus on drinking water, source protection issues, and best practices. The membership is proposed to consist of 6 reserved members appointed by each basin state, the US EPA, and the City of Philadelphia, along with other eligible members. The DRBC would provide a staff liaison who would call meetings, get minutes together, get agendas ready, etc. They would meet at least once a year, elect their own chair, and meetings would be open to the public. They issued a Sunset Clause where the subcommittee would expire after 3 years of whenever the resolution passes (assuming it does,) unless they opt to continue or change into a different format. The next step is the DRBC holding a public hearing about it in May 2024, the commissioners would vote on a resolution in June, and if they want to proceed then the first meeting could take place in the fall of 2024. So far, the only objection was from the representative from the Coalition of the Delaware River Watershed who said he'd like to see non-profit organizations involved in the subcommittee; they may have great ideas about hazardous protection and protection of the water supply. Tambini said he appreciates that and that's why the meetings are open to the public. At some point you need to have a specific membership. Henry said under the Water Audit Study discussion in Ramie's report, it states there is 182 million gallons per day lost in the basin of which approximately 41 MGD are estimated to be "unavoidable". Did they give an explanation? Ramie said maybe we can have a presentation done on it. Henry suggested asking the DRBC representative to report on it at the full council meeting. Ramie said she will ask.

Peckham commented it sounds like the proposed subcommittee is another committee where the upper basin won't be represented.

Other: B. Dudko asked if there's been anything on the Skinners Falls Bridge. Ramie said there is a meeting on February 28th of the Project Advisory Committee. She will be participating in the meeting; it is not open to the public. She will report on that at the next full council meeting.

Public Comment: None.

Adjourn: A Motion by Jeffer seconded by Rodgers to adjourn the meeting at 7:40 p.m. was carried.

Meeting minutes prepared by Stephanie Driscoll, 2/23/2023