

WATER USE/RESOURCE MANAGEMENT COMM. MEETING MINUTES
June 18, 2019

Committee Members Present: Andy Boyar, Jim Greier, Fred Peckham, Al Henry, Ginny Dudko,
Doug Case, Evan Padua
Committee Members Absent: Pat Jeffer
Staff : Laurie Ramie, Pete Golod, Ashley Hall-Bagdonas
NPS Partner: Don Hamilton
Guests:

The UDC's Water Use/Resource Management Committee held its monthly meeting on Tuesday, June 18, 2019 at the Council office in Narrowsburg, NY. Chairperson Boyar called the meeting to order at 7:03 p.m.

A motion by Dudko, seconded by Greier, to approve the May 21st meeting minutes was carried. There was no public comment on the agenda.

Old Business

5/29 NY-PA Joint Interstate Bridge Commission's Annual meeting: Ramie provided the press release for the NY-PA Joint Interstate Bridge Commission meeting that was held in Binghamton on 5/29 at the 6/6 full council meeting but was unable to discuss it due to time constraints. NYS DOT Region 9 recently appointed a new Regional Director Nicolas Choubah. He replaces Jack Williams, who retired. PennDOT District 4 has an Acting Executive, Richard Roman. George Roberts retired from that position. There were inspections of the Delaware River's 10 interstate bridges with reports on what they found as deficiencies and issues and how to address them. They also approved capital projects. Nearly all projects are coming up for bid in 2020 and construction in 2021. There was concern about the fate of the Skinners Falls-Milanville Bridge that Ramie and Park Service representatives asked about when that topic was brought up. A field meeting on 6/13 was scheduled to discuss the future rehabilitation. Ramie contacted Gary Borgacci at PENNDOT today and he said the field meeting was changed to today. He said it was a productive and he will forward minutes when they are complete. The commission confirmed there would likely be no ribbon cutting ceremony for the Pond Eddy bridge that has been open since November. Ramie also inquired about naming of bridges. It is possible but it takes a legislative sponsor to make the proposal. An issue of visibility for people coming from River Road on the Pennsylvania side of the Narrowsburg Bridge making the left turn was brought up. The railing decreases visibility and you have to pull far out into the intersection to see.

6/3 Upper Delaware Scenic Byway Meeting Report: UDSB did not have a quorum for the 6/3 meeting. Resulting actions items were sent out to vote on by email. NPS Acting Superintendent Marilou Ehrler was in attendance for her first UDSB meeting. Bill Dudko, a guest, had pointed out that somebody ran into the wall of the Hawk's Nest. Dudko said they have put up Jersey barriers up around that site and he asked the NYDOT representative Kris Gilbert what the plans were for addressing that. She said that is NYDOT Region 8 and she wasn't aware of it, but will check and report back. The Town of Tusten cut many trees back on the hill. Gilbert reported that all of those areas have been seeded so that it won't look quite as barren as it does now. Gilbert also informed UDSB that there is a paving overlay job from Minisink Ford to Barryville. According to the Sullivan County Engineer they will be start to restore the shoulder back to the original width of the road on 7/8. It would be enough for a bike lane, but not an official designated bike lane. A lingering issue with signage was in the Hamlet of Callicoon, which was added late to the contract. Those signs were delayed to the end of June.

The Town of Hancock had been wavering about UDSB membership and the day after the 6/3 meeting they unanimously voted to rescind their membership. UDSB went from ten municipal members back down to nine. The Town hasn't sent a letter but a member of the UDSB was in attendance and reported they had a visit from DEC Region 4 and did not feel reassured that there wasn't extra scrutiny to be given to their projects (logging, blue stone, etc.) because of the Byway designation. They didn't feel comfortable belonging any longer. The argument was made if they are on the committee would it not be more influential to have input? The former Hancock Town Supervisor,

Sam Rowe was quoted saying “We don’t need another non-regulatory agency between landowners and the public... Route 97 is not that scenic. People drive through Hancock anyway. We don’t need any more signs. Route 97 is the Hancock Veterans Memorial Highway. Period.” Ramie asked if this would affect the Highest Elevation signs that are in Hancock. The committee felt it remains an accurate fact and the Town did not have to be a member for them to proceed. The signs were already ordered. Peckham said several Bouchoux Trail signs are missing. Now there are only three.

Deb Conway on behalf of The Delaware Company informed UDSB she would like to extend the walking path from the NPS Towpath Trail to the Highland river access owned by the NYSDOT. That would make it a two-mile, round-trip path where she is envisioning bluestone benches, signage, and a snubbing post along it to interpret the canal history. Conway approached UDSB to ask about the Scenic Vistas Enhancement Grant as there would be an opportunity along that trail to open up viewsheds to the river. Ingrid Peterec of NPS said NPS includes the idea about extending the trail in their interpretive plan. Ramie said private or public lands are eligible for that grant and it’s the applicant’s responsibility to find a contractor to do that work.

The UDC River Corridor Clean-up Proposal was mentioned at the UDSB meeting. Ramie provided UDSB members with the outline Boyar wrote. UDSB said it’s a terrific idea, they are on board, and they don’t want to be the ones organizing it but will certainly help and participate. Gilbert mentioned that since Rt. 97 is a state highway, the Adopt-A-Highway Program would work well for that. They have various resources, handle permits and potentially help out with equipment. It was also discussed for the Sullivan County portion of the Corridor, Sullivan Renaissance could offer a Challenge Grant. A member of Sullivan Renaissance sits on the UDSB board. Larry Richardson said if they do offer any incentive programs it shouldn’t be confined to municipalities. There are many community beautification groups out there that would also want to compete. Peterec said NPS has an Adopt-an-Access program that pertains to the developed accesses along the river. NPS hasn’t yet put any signs out to tell people who has adopted the accesses but that’s being worked on. UDSB will provide a link to that volunteer opportunity on the UDSB website. UDSB put the Corridor Cleanup on the next meeting agenda to further discuss the issue. They asked what can be done right now, since this Clean-up is scheduled for 2020. UDSB contacted Sullivan County Parks and Recreation. They have a youth employment Summer program called the Clean Team and would like them to clean Route 97, which they have never done. Ramie sent a letter to Sullivan County Parks and Recreation Director Brian Scardefield and they are receptive to the idea. Scardefield will be attending the 6/24 meeting. Ramie also reached out to Orange and Delaware Counties and has gotten responses back from each.

Regarding the Scenic Vistas Enhancement Program, the Town of Delaware has a project ready to go. Ramie provided a photo taken from the Route 97 viaduct. Ramie said you see that the river is back there, but you can’t actually see it because there’s a grove of trees on the railroad property obstructing it. If you reduce the height of the tops of the trees, that would do a lot to open up that view and make it more scenic. Rosie DeCristofaro, the Town of Delaware representative, submitted that project. DeCristofaro got a quote from Mootz Tree Trimming of Callicoon for \$2,000 minus sales tax. Mootz Tree Trimming has an existing relationship with the railroad so they expect that they can get permission to do that project. Via an email vote that project was approved for a \$2,000 grant for which there was \$11,000 in the original pool. There is still money for Highland if they do come in with an application.

Regarding the 1010 WINS Radio UDSB Commercial Campaign, several audio files were played. They start the same and at the end, a sponsor of a business along the byway is mentioned. Ramie said they ended up with more sponsors than planned. It was suggested UDSB do a press release to say how the marketing money is being spent. Also, the message is getting to the metropolitan area to hopefully boost visitation.

On 5/10 Ed McMahon had his program “Preserving Community Character”. There were about 50 people in attendance. It was sponsored by the Hancock Gateway Tourism Council at the High School.

UDSB wrote a Letter of Support to the Town of Highland Planning Board regarding the New Barryville Farmer’s Market. The DOT put out a press release about the work on the Route 97 bridge over Ten Mile River and what that

schedule would be. That \$2.5 million project is supposed to be substantially complete by this fall. The next UDSB meeting will be 6/24.

6/6 Letter to Trust for Public Land: Callicoon Riverside Park Development: Ramie put this letter together based on the committee's suggestions to politely inform them that the area is subject to flooding. She said the paragraph that's most relevant is the second one up from the bottom of the first page: "While this makes it very attractive for recreational purposes, the committee wishes to bring to your attention that this area has traditionally been prone to flooding. They would advise careful analysis of elevations and due diligence over the siting of any permanent structures or equipment." Ramie goes on to explain what the committee's Project Review function is and that the committee would like to be part of this process which hasn't been publicized too widely because they have been negotiating on acquiring the 47 acres. Since that letter went out, the Program that was responsible for that grant, the Delaware Watershed Conservation Fund, put out a flyer in which Callicoon Riverside Project is one of the projects that they tout as having a lasting conservation impact. Ramie read what Delaware Watershed Conservation Fund said about it: "The hamlet of Callicoon in Sullivan County, New York. What it will accomplish: A dilapidated RV park on the banks of the Upper Delaware River is about to get an extreme conservation makeover. Project partners will transform the 47.5-acre property into a showcase for the vision for the Delaware Watershed Conservation Fund by addressing all four strategic priorities: wildlife habitat, public access, flood resilience, and clean water. They will protect and restore habitat that supports endangered species, including dwarf wedge mussel; develop a riverside park and boat access; reconnect the river to 1,000 feet of floodplain to reduce flooding risks; and improve water quality by building a green wastewater treatment plant on site." Henry asked Ramie to explain flooding resilience. She said the current water plant is in the floodplain and they are moving it out of the floodplain. Ramie said it's going to be subdivided into three parcels. Henry said with a heavy duty flood it basically flattened canoes, structures and trailers. It's not just a trickle up there and the problem wasn't fixed with the culvert when they put in for Callicoon.

6/11 Delaware River Watershed Signage Meeting Report: Ramie said the 6/11 meeting was very successful. There were 14 people present and they were all the right people. Ramie passed around a map of where they want to put the four signs. By the end of the meeting the group decided to request more at every state road intersection. Ramie said if it's about marking the NYS portion of the Delaware River Watershed. The Coalition for Delaware River Watershed is doing this as a state-by-state initiative and they decided to start in New York not only because it's the headwaters but they knew they had the built in capacity of UDC and FUDR to help them. Boyar asked the main motive behind this. Ramie said because we don't have them and want them. Other watersheds have signage and the Delaware River is only scattered here and there. NYC marks its Watershed for the DEP area. There's nothing that tells you you're entering the Delaware River Watershed. At this meeting, Jeff Skelding of FUDR said, "Of all the hard things we do, we hope this is a simple one." DOT has a policy for watershed signs. It states that the organization that has ownership and management responsibility for the watershed has to be the one to make the request. The group was pondering who that is and in this case it turns out to be the Delaware River Basin Commission. They said since the DRBC in New York is represented by the Governor who delegates it to the DEC, then the DEC should be the one to make the request for New York. Bill Rudge was in attendance at the meeting and he was fully on board with it. So it will be the DEC petitioning the DOT to put up these signs, at hopefully the State's expense, because they put up signs for other purposes. One question asked at the meeting was should the signs say "You are now entering the Delaware River Watershed" or "You are now entering the Upper Delaware River Watershed"? Those at the meeting favored Upper because of the headwaters situation. Ramie said ultimately whatever the DEC submits is in their hands right now. They will be the standard green and white highway sign size on breakaway posts. Ramie said it would most likely be 2020 before this would happen because it's too late in this construction season.

Other: None.

New Business

Correspondence with NYS DEC on River Accesses: Boyar said he got a call from Tony Ritter, who has been a past Chairperson of WU/RM. He mentioned about the blockage at Ferry Street Access and the property next door in Long Eddy. Boyar wrote a 5/30 letter to Bill Rudge of NYS DEC. Rudge responded; a copy of both letters was

provided in the meeting packet. NYS DEC is aware of the issue and are trying to figure it out. They observed that the parcel, even if it does become some kind of access, it is such a small size it's going to have limited use. Padua said he believes it would alleviate a lot of the issues that are there. Maybe three weeks out of the year that parking lot would be overflowing. Padua said probably five river-users use that access a day. If there's a parking lot, it could potentially attract more. Padua said Soaring Eagle uses it as an access. At least it would provide some parking because there is almost no parking in the Town. Boyar asked Padua if most of the drift boats are getting off earlier at Shehawken? Padua said he has used the Long Eddy access a few times this Spring and he knows some people that use it every day. Some people arrange so they don't have to park in Long Eddy, which Padua said is a nightmare for anglers but they do it. Some people have been floating further to Soaring Eagle and paying to use it as a private access. Padua said there were some tickets written and some other issues. He said people were parking by the railroad. People who were mad told the railroad and they came and put up no trespassing/tow away signs. Henry asked who issued the violation notices. Padua said he did see a Sullivan County Sheriff writing a ticket to a parked vehicle. There were people parking on private property and he believes they had been warned and then continued to do it. Peckham said a lot of the anglers are getting out in private areas. The fishing clubs take boats out. He's not sure if they are charging them money. Ramie noted Rudge's response letter says, "Concurrently we are working to draft a plan for subsequent public use of the property that we hope will improve public access to the Delaware River at this location. We have committed to sharing that plan, once drafted, with the local community and interested stakeholders before making any improvements." Boyar asked Greier if things have calmed down in that area? Last year and the year before there were "No DEC access, Go away." signs. Greier said the homeowners and landowners are doing their thing and that has nothing to do with the Town.

Upper Delaware River Corridor Clean-up Proposal Status: Boyar said he knows Ramie sent out a nice press release regarding the Upper Delaware Corridor Clean-up. Ramie said on 6/10 she sent a memo to the UDC membership (all the Towns and Townships) asking them to send UDC their contacts. Ramie also did a press release to the general public and asked for names by 7/10. UDC has also reached out to the three counties for New York to see if they have any existing litter programs. Research has been ongoing for other existing cleanups of this scale. Pocono Mountains Visitors Bureau does one called "Pick up the Poconos" which is a one-day event where they get all kinds of individual cleanups under that banner. Ramie referenced the article Boyar initially mentioned when proposing this, an article in the *Times Herald-Record*, about a Hudson Riverkeeper Sweep. Ramie said these events all look well organized and have been going on for several years. Ramie said UDC can call experts from those groups for advice. UDC is in the process of starting a database of names and organizations. Boyar said *The River Reporter* organized the first Litterpluck, and they told Boyar make sure they are on the list. Peckham said FUDR typically does the West Branch but they have all their partners that tie in and help out. Ramie said that's what she as thinking, groups can do their own thing if they tie in to this event on the same day. Hamilton asked if there a timeframe for the on-the-ground litter pick-up? Boyar said that is to be determined at these roundtable meetings. Some of the questions that will need to be answered are when is it best to hold the event, who will do publicity, who will handle safety issues and permits, who will work on disposal, etc. Ramie asked the committee to consider a date for the roundtable meeting because she has had one reporter from a local newspaper ask her for more information. Her suggestion is late July with a daytime and evening meeting to accommodate everyone's schedule. Ramie said July is a long month. There are five Mondays and Tuesdays. Most people don't have anything scheduled for the fifth Monday or Tuesday. Maybe a meeting could be 7/30? She recommended two identical sessions in afternoon and evening. Ramie said she will do a press release and then hopefully will hand it over to some sort of leadership network. Boyar felt that a steering committee will come out of the roundtable meeting.

Delaware River Flow and Storage Report: A copy of June 17th NYC Current Reservoir Levels was provided in members' packets. Total combined storage was at 100%. June's precipitation was 3.65 and historical was 3.07.

Other: Peckham said somewhere in Manchester Township they are having a big 3-day concert on the river. It's been advertised in the newspaper with tickets for sale. It's somewhere between Equinunk and Stalker.

Henry requested Hamilton to follow up on an issue from 2014 when NPS Superintendent Sean McGuinness was here. There was a big issue of extending the southern terminus of the Upper Delaware to incorporate Sparrowbush access because of concerns in Town. It was for sale but the Town of Deerpark contemplated buying it and he would like an update.

He mentioned to Steve Tambini and Amy Shallcross at the 6/6 meeting about a 100-year reference in the Supreme Court. He said the 1987 Draft Environmental Impact Statement for the Upper Delaware is in book form on the internet. Henry said DRBC was correct, it's not in the Supreme Court Decree but in the Compact with unanimous consent to extend and not go back to the Supreme Court for 100 years. Henry is requesting the Final Environmental Impact Statement. He went to the link NPS provides and it wasn't working.

Padua said he realizes this is outside of the river corridor but there was talk of a whitewater park in Port Jervis. He asked if there has been any follow up on that? Ramie said it's happening but very slowly because of all the environmental studies that have to be done. Once and a while the City of Port Jervis will give an update on it. UDC receives the *Pike County Dispatch* so we do read about it. Hamilton doesn't believe they have had any public meetings about it.

Public Comment: None.

Adjournment: A motion by Peckham, seconded by Greier, to adjourn the meeting at 8:15 p.m. was carried.

Minutes prepared by Ashley Hall-Bagdonas, 6/25/19