

Upper Delaware Council
OPERATIONS COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES
September 25, 2012

Committee Present: Nadia Rajs, Larry Richardson, Harold Roeder, Jr., Jack Niflot, George J. Fluhr, Fred Peckham
Committee Absent: None
NPS Partner: Sean McGuinness (6:36 p.m.)
Staff: Laurie Ramie, Dave Soete, Cindy Odell
Guests: Travis O'Dell, Debra Conway (7:15 p.m.)

The UDC's Operations Committee held its monthly meeting on September 25, 2012 at the Council office in Narrowsburg, NY. Chairperson Rajs called the meeting to order at 6:31 p.m.

Approval of July 24 Meeting Minutes: A motion by Richardson, seconded by Roeder to approve the August 28 meeting minutes was carried. There was no public comment on the agenda.

Executive Session: A motion to go into Executive Session at 6:33 p.m. for personnel and unemployment issues was made by Rajs, seconded by Richardson and carried. A motion to come out of Executive Session at 7:27 p.m. was made by Roeder, seconded by Niflot and carried. A motion that the Personnel Committee recommend to the Operations Committee the offer of an employment agreement with the terms which were agreed upon to Travis O'Dell for the position of Resource Specialist was made by Richardson, seconded by Peckham and carried. A second motion for a resolution to be presented to the full Council for approval setting out the reasons for recommending Mr. O'Dell was made by Richardson, seconded by Peckham and carried. Ramie noted that she will get the draft resolution out to members prior to the October 4th meeting.

Executive Director's Report & UDC Calendar: Ramie reported that on September 20th, she, Sean McGuinness of the National Park Service, Jeff Dexter of Damascus Township, and Fred Peckham of the Town of Hancock attended the Buckingham Township Planning Commission meeting. An invitation had been extended by the Commission Chairperson Russell Warner. Buckingham Township Supervisor Kurt Mueller also attended the meeting and noted that he had been involved with the drafting of the River Management Plan, referencing his copy and calling it a "masterpiece." Ramie said the UDC/NPS presentation and question and answer time lasted from 7:00 until 8:15 p.m. The commission members who spoke and those in the audience were very welcoming, attentive, inquisitive, and overall appeared quite positive in acknowledging the benefits of UDC participation and membership. Ramie said that many questions were directed to Jeff Dexter. She said that Dexter told them that it was a unanimous decision of the Damascus supervisors to join the UDC and said also that the township felt that by not having had a seat at the UDC table, they did not have the input they should have and lost out on a lot of privileges and rights. Ramie said that McGuinness pointed out that to not be a participating member of the UDC does not mean that you are off the hook, but then you have a federal agency that is overseeing you. Richardson questioned if there are any other civic organizations in Buckingham that the UDC might give a presentation to. The Equinunk Watershed Alliance was mentioned. John Fletcher, the president of the organization, attended our March 24th RMP workshop and has been supportive. Ramie noted that one of the questions posed was, does the fact that Buckingham does not have zoning mean that they can not join the Council? She replied that it absolutely does not. Not being in substantial conformance does not prevent a town or township from participating in the UDC. Fluhr said that 15 years or so ago, a conference was held where all the fire chiefs from the area were invited to talk about such issues as train wrecks and river rescues and how to work together on both sides of the river. He suggested that this could be done again sometime and an invitation could be extended to the non-participating townships as well. Richardson agreed and said that the UDC needs to demonstrate how we can help. Ramie said that the UDC's Technical Assistance Grant (TAG) program was stressed during the presentation to Buckingham. Roeder said that he and McGuinness spoke during a recent luncheon about taking the monthly UDC meeting to a different town or township all up and down the river so that it would be more accessible to residents of the corridor. Ramie noted that she sent a thank you letter to the Buckingham Planning Commission on September 21st.

Ramie reported that the Fall/Winter 2012 issue of *The Upper Delaware* newsletter was submitted by her to Courier Printing on the September 14th deadline and the mailing list was e-mailed in advance of the September 21st deadline by Odell. The newsletter was posted in color to the UDC website on September 17th. Ramie said that on September 18th she received a call from Courier that they were not able to open the file because they use Quark Xpress Version 7 software whereas the UDC has upgraded to Quark Xpress Version 9. She said she was able to work around the issue by submitting the file as a PDF with their greyscale manipulation of the digital photo files. Ramie noted that given this was the last newsletter of the FY 2012 contract, she may look to solicit bids from printers and advise them that we use Quark Xpress Version 9 in order to avoid this extra step in the future. The blueline proof was received and returned on September 20th, and delivery and mailing is expected on October 1st. Ramie noted that her time spent on research, compilation of contents, information gathering, selecting and uploading photos, familiarizing herself with the new features of the upgraded software, formatting, layout, composition, and proofing from August 22nd to September 20th was 52.5 hours.

Ramie reviewed the next news release topics listed in her written report.

Financial Issues were highlighted including a strange occurrence with Park Service funding in which we received September's payment twice. The UDC will be required to issue a refund check back to the NPS for the amount. Ramie reported that the UDC's bookkeeper, Mike Poska, has assured her that we will meet the target goal of our full funding by the September 30th end of Fiscal Year 2012. The UDC's bank account balance was noted in Ramie's written report.

Under Administrative Issues, Ramie included a timeline of the activities that took place for the Resource Specialist vacancy and a health insurance rate update. Soete noted that he has switched over his health insurance plan to a new provider to be effective upon his retirement. He requested permission to continue coverage under the UDC's United Concordia dental policy at his own cost. Ramie noted that if approved, Soete would need to pay the Council the monthly fee and the UDC would remit payment to Chamberchoice NEPA. Chamberchoice will not accept a personal check from a non-active employee. Roeder questioned if any of the UDC's bill payments are being made electronically. He was told not currently. Members suggested this may be something to discuss with the bookkeeper. Ramie stated that occasionally due to the timing of the Operations Committee monthly meeting, the dental insurance bill is remitted late and we incur a \$10 charge. A motion to allow the Executive Director to approve any regular, recurring monthly bills including utilities and insurances, was made by Richardson, seconded by Niflot and carried. After a brief discussion, a motion to allow Soete to stay on the dental insurance at his cost with his payments made quarterly was made by Roeder, seconded by Peckham and carried with Richardson opposed as it is his opinion that Soete should pay monthly.

Ramie reported on the capital projects completed in the last month that were accomplished utilizing FY 2012 surplus funds. Those projects were: lighting upgrade throughout the office, installation of exit/emergency combo light, and disposal of old fixtures and ballasts by Schwatz & Mall Electric; patching and painting of office ceilings by John's Handyman Service; replacement of old air conditioning unit with a new window in the conference room, and removal of an exterior 220 volt wire by Ted Kille; and crack filling and striping of parking lot by Duffy's Pavement Markings.

Ramie covered current grants under administration and she noted that she researched the Norcross Wildlife Foundation guidelines for submitting applications. She found out that an organization may make one request per year for grant funding. The UDC's last application was submitted on Jan. 11, 2012. She will apply for a PowerPoint projector, screen, and case; laptop computer; two new printers; and any other technological needs when next able. Conway asked if there is a maximum amount that can be applied for. Ramie said there are guidelines to what the typical request is, which is less than \$5,000. The UDC's last request was for \$4,920, \$2,500 was approved.

Ramie referred to page two of her written report which contains a list of Upper Delaware Scenic Byway activities. She noted there were interviews conducted September 24th for the secretarial position which would replace her in that role.

The last page of Ramie's report includes lists of special meetings or events during this period and recently-produced documents. She said copies are available upon request.

Referring to the calendar provided in members' packets, Ramie noted that on October 11th, the Common Waters Forum will be held at the Nurture Nature Center in Easton, Pennsylvania. She said that she has been serving on the planning committee for the forum and has a role to play that day in the marketing and communications part of the break-out sessions. She said there is a \$20 fee involved which has to be submitted by October 3rd. Peckham asked if this is another one of those forums where most of the

attention is “preserving up here for the benefit of down there.” McGuinness said it is not; it is about all working together to make the communities and the area successful while taking care of water quality. He said you can call it conservation or preserving a way of life. A motion to allow Ramie to attend the October 11th Common Waters Forum and cover her costs was made by Richardson, seconded by Fluhr and carried.

Ramie said that October 15th is the first day of the Pace University Land Use Leadership Alliance (LULA) training in Staatsburg, NY. The program, which is valued at \$1,000, is being offered free of charge to those accepted into it with the support of the NYS DEC Hudson River Estuary Program and the NYS Water Resource Institute at Cornell University. The program is intended for local leaders who have a commitment to watershed management, sustainable development and land use and who are interested in learning about how communities can respond to local and regional needs. A motion to approve travel for the Executive Director and Resource Specialist to the LULA training on October 15, October 29, November 5, and November 19 was made by Richardson, seconded by Niflot and carried. Ramie said she expects to hear by the end of the week who has been accepted into the program.

Ramie reminded members that a luncheon in honor of Soete’s retirement will be held Friday, September 28th at noon at the Council office.

Old Business

Letter from Joseph Martens, NYS DEC – UDC Funding: Ramie noted that this letter dated September 18th was in response to the UDC’s May 3, 2012 letter. In the letter, DEC Commissioner Martens recognizes that state funding “would have a beneficial impact on the Upper Delaware Scenic & Recreational River” and states that it will be considered in deliberations on DEC’s New York State budget review process. Rajsz said this is a very positive response. A copy of the May 3rd letter was provided for background. Ramie noted that the letter contained a breakdown of how the funding would be allocated as was suggested by David Dean, UDC Deerpark Representative.

Peckham asked if anyone had heard about the bald eagle that had been shot up near Hancock. He said it was found by a fisherman. McGuinness noted that his staff had been working on this with U.S. Fish and Wildlife staff. Ramie asked to be kept updated on this issue.

Proposed UDC Bylaws Changes: Rajsz suggested tabling this issue until next month due to the time. All were in agreement.

Other: Soete suggested that if an opportunity for the Pace University Land Use Leadership Alliance (LULA) training comes along again, he feels it would be great if Carla Hahn from the National Park Service could take it since she has taken on many local planning responsibilities. Ramie said that Hahn is interested in getting that training, but she has a conflict with the current dates.

New Business

Bids for Contracted Services: Ramie reported that three bids were included in members’ packets. They are for projects that were talked about doing after the end of the fiscal year. The first bid is for the removal of the existing three phase electrical service and replacing with a new single phase, 200A service in the existing location. The electricians would replace all old fuse/breaker panels with one new panel and install a surge arrester/protector in the new panel. The second bid is for the installation of one hardwired carbon monoxide/smoke detector in the conference room and one dusk to dawn light at the front door. The third bid is to have some tile repair work done in each of the bathrooms. A motion to move forward with the tile project and the installation of the hardwired carbon monoxide/smoke detector and dusk to dawn light by the front door was made by Richardson, seconded by Roeder and carried. McGuinness said that he would ask Pat Connolly, Park Service Chief of Maintenance, to come over and take a look at the Council’s electric service and provide his recommendation.

Summary of Pending Bills 9-25-12/Financial Statements: Ramie covered a few of the bills to be approved. She pointed out that Cintas Fire Protection was in the Council office on August 30th and performed maintenance including some that required their six year maintenance cycle. Richardson asked if instruction was given on how to use the extinguishers. Ramie said no. He suggested looking in to having

someone come in to provide that instruction. Fluhr suggested looking into the purchase of an Automated External Defibrillator (AED) and having a training class some night. Ramie noted the payment to the Commissioner of Labor was the fee for the surprise boiler inspection. Ramie said that the check for Courier Printing is on this abstract, but the check will be held until the newsletters have been mailed and delivered. Ramie explained that the check for Eckersley and Ostrowski is one that is held until the end of the fiscal year annual audit period. The fee for Outside Matters was for the disposal of the air conditioner that was taken out of the conference room wall. A motion to pay the bills as listed was made by Roeder, seconded by Peckham and carried. Financial statements as of August 31, 2012 were provided for individual review.

Other: Ramie noted that an invitation to an appreciation party for the Park Service water safety campaign was included in members' packets. It was received at the UDC today and is meant for any member that would like to attend. The barbecue party hosted by *The River Reporter* is September 29th beginning at 5:00 p.m. at the Zane Grey Museum.

Adjournment: A motion by Roeder, seconded by Niflot to adjourn the meeting at 8:24 p.m. was carried unanimously.

Minutes submitted by Cindy Odell, 10/2/12