

Upper Delaware Council
OPERATIONS COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES
July 22, 2008

Committee Members Present: Bowers, Roeder, Richardson, Wieland, Niflot, Fluhr
Committee Members Absent: Shafer
Partner: Martinez
Staff: Douglass, Coney, Ramie
Guests: None

Committee Chairperson Alan Bowers called the meeting to order at 6:34 p.m. A motion by Fluhr seconded by Wieland to approve the minutes of the June 24 meeting was carried. There was no public comment on the agenda.

PR/Fund Raising Specialist's Report: Ramie reviewed the written report she handed out. Reservations for the Council's family raft trip on Aug. 3 are coming in slowly.

UDC website officially launched July 4, www.upperdelawarecouncil.org.

The \$10,000 Gunther grant is completed and the reimbursement request to NYS was issued July 16.

Paperwork from NYS is still pending on the \$75,000 Bonacic grant. This grant period will end Aug. 31, 2009.

The Council's summer edition of its newsletter, *The Upper Delaware*, was mailed July 9. This issue covers the natural gas leasing and drilling activities in the corridor. While the newsletter is now available on the Council's website, the committee decided to continue with a "printed" newsletter bid with reduction in the number of copies for the next year. A tear-off coupon will be added to the next newsletter asking people to let the Council know if they still want a "paper" copy of the newsletter now that it is appearing online.

Council staff is participating in the 40-30-20 anniversaries projects with the National Park Service-Upper Delaware. The next meeting is July 24. An Expo at the Damascus School will be held Oct. 25. Planning is still ongoing with a number of the projects.

Executive Director's Report: No written report. Working on line-item budget that will be discussed later.

Old Business

Letter to NYS Assemblywoman Gunther, UDC member of Upper Delaware River Greenway: The committee was provided with copy of final letter that was issued through committee recommendation to Gunther relative to the UDC being a member of the Upper Delaware River Greenway Council. The letter stated in part "Our members agree that the UDC desires to have a presence at the Greenway Council to assist in the development of objectives and coordination of projects, particularly to avoid duplicating efforts. Given our budgetary constraints that impact staff time, we would participate to the best of our ability. The UDC agrees with a point raised in a June 5, 2008 UDSB letter on this subject about the need to hold a local meeting to update municipalities on the status of the Greenway initiative. We would be happy to help coordinate arrangements for such a meeting and to host it at our Narrowsburg office."

New Business

Damascus Township (PA) votes to join the UDC: The committee was provided with copy of a UDC news release issued July 22 announcing that "the Damascus Township Board of Supervisors voted unanimously on July 21 to join the Upper Delaware Council, Inc. (UDC), becoming the non-profit organization's first Wayne County, PA municipal member." UDC 2008 Chairperson, Alan Bowers, stated "Unity among the river valley municipalities is important as we continue advocating for the conservation of our resources and the protection of the quality of life that we enjoy here. I thank the Board of Supervisors and the citizens of Damascus for their decision to work with us."

Summary of pending bills/financial statements: Following review of the summary of pending bills, a motion by Wieland seconded by Niflot to approve the bills for payment was carried. The financial statements for period ended June 30 were provided for review.

UDC offering in-kind services to Sullivan Co. Planning under NYS grant: Ramie reported that the support letter the Council issued for a Sullivan County Planning grant through New York State also involved providing in-kind services as a match to the NYS funding. This would involve attending meetings once a month; Bill Douglass would attend. Douglass mentioned that the grant work would start on Jan. 1, 2009 and goes for 1.5 years. They're working on waterfront revitalization in the River corridor.

Draft Letter to Editor *Sullivan County Democrat* – Scenic Byways Visitor Center: The committee was provided with copy of a draft letter to the editor of the *Sullivan County Democrat* that came through the Water Use/Resource Management Committee. The letter stated in part, "The Upper Delaware Council, Inc. (UDC) disagrees with a recent *Sullivan County Democrat* editorial assertion that the Upper Delaware Scenic Byway Visitor Center project in Cochecton lacks justification. To the contrary, we feel that the proposed facility will fulfill a legitimate need to provide orientation, services, and amenities to Upper Delaware River Valley visitors, while simultaneously stimulating the tourism-based local economy, and showcasing our natural, scenic, cultural, and historic resources. Productive discussions are taking place with all of the involved entities to determine partnership contributions toward future staffing and maintenance." A motion by Wieland seconded by Roeder to recommend full Council approval of the letter was carried.

FY 2009 draft committee Work Plan: The committee was provided with the fiscal year 2009 draft committee work plan for review prior to the meeting. The committee reviewed the plan and made some changes. Following discussion, a motion by Roeder seconded by Wieland to recommend full Council approval of the amended draft was carried.

FY 2009 draft UDC line-item budget: The committee was provided with copy of the draft fiscal year 2009 line-item budget as prepared by Douglass. Douglass explained the columns included the proposed 09 budget; the adopted 08 budget; and the projected actual expenditures to the end of this fiscal year. He commented that things don't change much as the budget has been static for 20 years aside from any donations or state funding received. However, expenses have been going up. He reviewed the budget figures. The committee had some questions. It was decided that Douglass would re-draft the budget figures and provide to members prior to the UDC meeting in August.

FY 2009 NPS-UDC Cooperative Agreement Timeline, FYI: The committee was provided with copy of a task timeline prepared by Coney relative to the submission of paperwork for the fiscal year 2009 NPS-UDC Cooperative Agreement. This timeline was requested by the Park Service. Martinez noted it was imperative that the paperwork reach NPS-UPDE by Oct. 1, or before.

Policy Decision – Supporting gas moratoriums, member towns: The committee discussed the issue of the gas drilling/exploration that will impact the Upper Delaware River watershed. One of the major concerns for the towns would be road impacts. They can pass ordinances concerning this issue but it would have to be generic across the board for all truck traffic. While some towns were in favor of moratoriums, others were not, and the possibility of gas companies filing suit if a moratorium were passed was a possibility. Richardson felt the Council could come out in support of home rule as the Energy Policy Act exempts the gas companies from many local, state and federal oversight regulations. The Sullivan County supervisors' association has issued letters to the NYS Legislature in support of returning home rule to the local municipalities on this issue in order to deal more effectively with the gas drilling/exploration activities. Wieland offered that the Council should have a policy on the water withdrawals and other impacts. The committee discussion resulted in the position that the committee will look at any requests for support on a case-by-case basis.

NPS Report: Martinez briefed the committee on discussions at the recently held NPS Superintendents' conference in Utah. Over 400 Park Service Unit Superintendents attended. They discussed issues, accomplishments and challenges. There was concern over impacts from invasive species; ecosystem

protection; becoming lead agency for “green” living; getting families to parks near their homes given the gasoline prices and economic trends; and they are starting to plan now for the Centennial Celebration in 2016 (Martinez will discuss ideas with UDC later).

In the fall of 2009, PBS will air Ken Burns and Florentine Films’ six-part series on America’s National Parks. The film is a documentary history with some of nature’s most spectacular locales as its backdrop. It promises to be an engaging series.

Martinez handed out the official decals and commemorative lapel pins for the 40-30-20 anniversaries year (this year) and noted the Expo in October and Retrospective in November are special events still in the planning stages. The UDC is participating in these projects.

Executive Session: Motion by Wieland seconded by Richardson to go into executive session at 8:34 p.m. to discuss personnel matters was carried. Motion by Roeder seconded by Niflot to come out of executive session at 8:45 p.m. was carried. A motion by Wieland seconded by Richardson that the Operations Committee was sending the recommendation of the Personnel Subcommittee to the full Council for action was carried.

Public Comment None

Adjourn A motion by Roeder seconded by Richardson to adjourn the meeting at 8:46 p.m. was carried.

Carol Coney, Office Manager