

Upper Delaware Council
OPERATIONS COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES
January 22, 2013

Committee Present: Harold Roeder, Jr., Jack Niflot, Jeffrey Dexter, Larry Richardson (6:40 p.m.)
Committee Absent: Nadia Rajs, Fred Peckham
NPS Partner: Sean McGuinness
Staff: Laurie Ramie, Travis O'Dell, Cindy Odell
Guests: Debra Conway (7:05 p.m.)

The UDC's Operations Committee held its monthly meeting on Tuesday, January 22, 2013 at the Council office in Narrowsburg, NY.

Election of Chairperson and Vice-Chairperson: The meeting was called to order at 6:38 p.m. Roeder made a motion to nominate Jeff Dexter chairperson of the Operations Committee for 2013. The motion was seconded by Fluhr. Dexter was elected by a voice vote. A motion by Niflot to nominate Roeder as vice-chairperson of the committee was seconded by Fluhr. Roeder was elected by a voice vote.

Approval of December 18 Meeting Minutes: A motion by Roeder seconded by Niflot to approve the December 18 meeting minutes was carried. There was no public comment on the agenda.

Executive Director's Report: Ramie reported that she successfully submitted a payment request for the UDC's federal funding account draw-down at 2:30 p.m. this afternoon following repeated inquiries, assistance from NPS Northeast Regional and Upper Delaware staff, and approval of Cooperative Agreement Modifications #10 and #11 to change the UDC's award number. The transaction states that the payment request is "queued to be sent to ACH". She added that notification was received on January 18th that the Automated System for Payments (ASAP) will temporarily suspend all accounts from January 23rd to January 28th to accommodate a system conversion to XML. Ramie said she feels it is unlikely for the funding to appear in the bank account before January 28th. The UDC's October 2012 payment is still missing; however, there is progress in tracking the issue back to the duplicate September payment for which NPS deposited our refund check but did not post it to the system and credit our grant award account. Ramie said we've been assured this issue is being worked on. Ramie reported on the bank account balance.

Ramie said she heard from Dick Eckersley of Eckersley and Ostrowski, LLP. He called to advise that he is finalizing the FY 2012 audit report, IRS Form 990, and NYS Charities Bureau Form 500 to return to the UDC for signatures for filing. He provided various recommendations, including a need to simultaneously reflect any line item budget changes made during the fiscal year in the work plan functional allocations, and offered assistance with preparation of the FY 2014 spending plan to comply with budgetary requirements.

Ramie noted that the Bylaws revisions were approved on January 3rd. They have been circulated and added to the Council's official documents here in the office and supercede all previous versions of the Bylaws.

Ramie said she believes, based on the most recent statement that we received, that our unemployment claim has been finalized. It appears to have ended the week of December 9th. Payments charged against the UDC account began the week of September 16th. The most recent quarterly Unemployment Insurance Return covering October 1 through December 31, 2012 shows the UDC's tax rate was 1.425%. She noted the next statement will show how much of an impact on the rate this claim has made, for 2013.

Ramie reported that we are updating our Visitor Information Map & Guide brochure. Printer specifications have been prepared and sent out for quotes to be returned to us by January 30th. A press release "Call for Business Listings" has been issued and responses are due by January 31st. A handout with project information, including a timeline of activities that need to take place in order to make this brochure happen, was provided in members' packets. She noted that the expense of printing the brochure is typically offset by donations from businesses that are listed in it. Ramie said staff met on January 16th with Jamie Myers of the Park Service to review a draft of the new map being created by Myers and a GIS specialist from the Delaware Water Gap. Ramie is very grateful that the Park Service is partnering with us on this

project. Ramie said the businesses listed in the brochure have to be in one of the following categories: Accommodations; Restaurants/Food; Bait and Tackle; or Liveries and Campgrounds, and also have to be physically located within the river corridor. No exceptions are made for this, she added. She asked members if they know of any businesses within their own communities that fit one of those categories, to please let us know. She noted that we want to be comprehensive in listing all that qualify. Ramie hopes to have everything in order so that the brochure can be printed and available by April 15th in order to coincide with the tourism season. A recommendation for a printer will be made to the full Council in February for approval in order to keep the project moving, Ramie advised. She added she will send a report out in advance of that meeting.

Ramie said she sent an acceptance letter for Courier Printing Corp's FY 2013 printing and mailing services quote of the UDC's *Upper Delaware* newsletter following the UDC's January 3rd approval, and notification letters were sent to the two unsuccessful bidders. Ramie noted that the next Spring/Summer 2013 issue of the newsletter is due to the printer by March 22nd for an April 1st release.

Ramie reported that four news releases were issued in the past month. One of the releases was for the Upper Delaware Scenic Byway and the other three were for the UDC. Those releases were listed in her written report.

Ramie said she is happy to report that she was able to close out NYS Grant TM09050. The UDC received a call on January 15th that an electronic reimbursement payment had been made on January 9th for the final four projects as submitted on June 25th for the Town of Fremont and August 3rd for the Towns of Delaware, Highland, and Tusten. Following confirmation with the bank, Ramie wrote four checks with cover letters, issued a news release announcing project accomplishments, and updated the Directory of NYS Legislative Member Items Grants Benefitting UDC's NYS Towns, FY 2000 to present. She reported that she logged 34.5 administrative hours on this grant although the UDC did not receive an administrative fee. She added we are grateful to Senator Bonacic for securing these funds for the New York towns. Since FY 2000, Senator Bonacic has given \$390,000 for our eight New York member towns for various projects. Ramie noted a copy of the press release was provided in the packets.

Ramie noted the Scenic Byway still has one outstanding grant at the federal level which has been really difficult to get reimbursement for through the Federal Highway Administration. The Town of Delaware finalized its sign installation and submitted the in-kind services form on January 14th. Ramie said that although the UDSB still awaits satisfaction of its reimbursement submitted on August 12, 2011, she is going to prepare and submit a third payment request to finalize the project.

Ramie said a copy of the Norcross Wildlife Foundation's January 23rd letter acknowledging receipt of the UDC's grant application and a copy of the Council's January 14th letter requesting \$2,500 for the purchase of audiovisual and computer equipment was provided in members' packets. Norcross will consider the grant request during their spring quarter, with a decision announced in late May.

Ramie noted that the Pennsylvania Department of Conservation and Natural Resources offers Community Conservation Partnership Program grants. Our UDC Pennsylvania Representative Dennis DeMara suggested that he thinks we may qualify under the partnership category. With his encouragement, Ramie has downloaded the requirements and application to review funding opportunities for the UDC. The application deadline is April 10, 2013. DeMara and a colleague of his will present a grants workshop at the March 19th Water Use/Resource Management Committee meeting.

Ramie referenced a list of Scenic Byway activities in her written report and reported that an independent contractor has been hired to perform recording and corresponding secretarial duties. Her first meeting will be this month.

Ramie said her report also contains a list of special meetings or events of the period as well as recent outgoing documents.

The February calendar of UDC meetings, deadlines, and activities was included in members' packets.

Fluhr asked what the topic of the PowerPoint presentation is for which the Council is applying for the grant to purchase the equipment. Ramie said that in addition to using it for Project Review meetings, Richardson had suggested creating a photo retrospective in recognition of the Council's 25th anniversary and having it on a loop during the April 28 Awards Ceremony reception. Ramie added that Dave Soete has agreed to help with this project.

Fluhr suggested making DeMara aware of all the projects accomplished in New York State as a result of the grants secured by Senator Bonacic.

Dexter announced that it is highly likely that Pennsylvania State Senator Lisa Baker will be swearing in the UDC officers for 2013 at the February 7th meeting.

New Business

2013 Awards Banquet venue, keynote speaker, and sponsorship: Ramie referenced a quote received from The Inn at Lackawaxen included in members' packets. The proposal was reviewed. A motion to accept The Inn at Lackawaxen's proposal was made by Richardson, seconded by Roeder and carried. Ramie said she has not issued an invitation for a keynote speaker as she wanted the input of the committee. She said Berlin Township Representative Al Henry had reported at the January 15th WU/RM meeting that Pennsylvania Governor Corbett was quite enchanted with the Upper Delaware during his visit in August. Sending an invitation to the Governor was discussed. Ramie said that if this did not work out, she feels we should seek someone who has a connection to the early inception days of the UDC and could reflect on 25 years of the Council. Ideas were shared and discussed. Ramie proposed that a letter be sent to Governor Corbett and wait until next month to see if we have received a response. If at that time, no response has been received, an alternate keynote speaker could be discussed. Conway suggested inviting former New York Congressman Benjamin Gilman as a guest of honor to the banquet. Ramie spoke of the awards banquet sponsorship program that was initiated last year. She proposed that this year, as it is the Council's 25th Anniversary, a press release could be issued inviting any business to sponsor the event in return for acknowledgement of their sponsorship. Ramie asked members what monetary amount they would suggest to ask of businesses. It was decided "\$25 for 25 years." Ramie hopes that at this level of sponsorship, we will get a good response.

New expenditure approvals: Ramie noted there is a Google Earth training session to be held on Wednesday, March 6th at Wilkes University in Wilkes Barre, PA that Travis O'Dell is interested in attending. A copy of the flyer was provided in members' packets. There is a \$45 registration fee. O'Dell said he thinks this training would be beneficial to him. A motion to approve this expenditure was made by Roeder, seconded by Niflot. Fluhr noted the flyer states the training will be offered in Hawley, PA also and that is a lot closer than Wilkes Barre. O'Dell said if he could get into the Hawley session, he would prefer that. The motion carried unanimously. Ramie said that a letter was received today inviting the Council to join the Narrowsburg Chamber of Commerce for which the dues are \$75 per year. Dexter said sometimes there is a lower rate for non-profit memberships. Ramie said that was not noted in the letter. Discussion took place of being obligated to join all the other chambers of commerce throughout the river corridor. After brief discussion, it was decided not to join.

Summary of Pending Bills 1-22-13/Financial Statements: The committee was provided with an abstract of bills dated January 22 to review. A motion by Roeder, seconded by Niflot to pay the bills listed on the abstract was carried unanimously. Financial Statements as of December 31, 2012 were provided for individual review.

Other: None

Old Business

UDC 25th Anniversary Activities: Ramie told members some ideas have been mentioned as to how we would like to mark this occasion and she would like to get their approval on to what activities staff should devote their time. Ramie said she did solicit from everyone their contributions to a top 25 accomplishments list. She feels it would make sense to time the release of this list to the actual anniversary date which will be February 22nd. The list will be noted in a press release, posted on the Council's website, and handed out at the awards dinner as well as other means of distribution.

Ramie said that t-shirts have been discussed as an easy and publicly accessible way of promoting the UDC. She reminded members that money has been allocated in the budget to support special activities for this occasion. Richardson likes the idea of t-shirts and wondered how difficult it would be to have a map of the corridor on the back of a t-shirt. Roeder said to look into t-shirts and bring the information back to the committee next month. Ramie said we will put together a proposal.

T. O'Dell suggested a 5k run/walk event possibly including a bridge between the two states of New York and Pennsylvania. O'Dell said he has been researching what is involved in planning a race and is learning there is a lot that goes into it such as sponsors, permits, insurance, registration, course coordination, and more. Before he spends any more time on this, he wanted to seek the committee's input. Ramie noted that the UDC already sponsors a Family Raft Trip annually and it was O'Dell's idea to hold this 5k event since the UDC is a partnership of land, water, and people. Many venue ideas were discussed. O'Dell noted that we would not want to compete with other similar events going on in the area. Ramie said there are a lot of considerations. She said staff loves the idea of the race, but is not sure about the execution of it. Fluhr offered to try and find out the name of the group that put on the race event held in Shohola. Members agreed this event is worthy of additional research.

McGuinness suggested someone getting in touch with Rich Egan who coordinated the Delaware River Sojourn to inquire if one of the educational programs that are conducted during their event could focus on the Upper Delaware Council in recognition of its 25th Anniversary. Ramie liked that idea and said she would look into it.

Other: None

Public Comment: None

Adjournment: A motion by Roeder, seconded by Fluhr to adjourn the meeting at 7:38 p.m. was carried unanimously.

Minutes submitted by Cindy Odell, 2/4/13