

Upper Delaware Council
PROJECT REVIEW COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES
June 23, 2009

Committee Members Present: Roeder, Shafer, Richardson, Fluhr, Keesler, Peckham
Committee Members Absent: Bowers; NPS
Staff: Douglass, Soete, Coney, Ramie
Guests: None

The committee chairperson Harold Roeder Jr. called the meeting to order at 7:46 p.m. A motion by Fluhr seconded by Shafer to approve the May 26 meeting minutes was carried. There was no public comment on the agenda.

Discussion Items Report: The report was reviewed by Soete.

NPS Mongaup Visitor Center Update: The Upper Delaware Scenic Byway has approved a \$25,000 grant to the NPS for the Mongaup Visitor Center site preparation. This grant is reimbursable so the Town of Lumberland has offered \$10,000 to upfront the monies to get the project started. The NYS DEC has given permission for the temporary use of part of its parking lot at the state-owned river access along Rt. 97 at the Mongaup River for the Center.

New York Regional Interconnect power line proposal withdrawal, follow-up: On June 8 NYRI filed with FERC a 28-page preliminary protest of NYISO compliance filing and motion for extension to provide further comments. A news article in the June 23 Oneonta *Daily Star* states, "NYRI is not dead. New York Regional Interconnect is seeking help from the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission to revive plans for a large electrical transmission line from Marcy in Oneida County to New Windsor in Orange County." Soete mentioned that if FERC gives them 13.5% rate of return NYRI might re-submit its application to New York State PSC. For NYRI to get NYISO blessing, they needed 80% of other power companies' support, but they only received 79%. NYRI is asking FERC to change that rule.

Natural gas leasing/drilling in the region update: Congressman Maurice Hinchey and others introduced legislation in the House and Senate to protect drinking water supplies from harmful chemicals often used in natural gas drilling, the FRAC Act - Fracking Responsibility and Awareness of Chemicals Act. The legislation would close a loop-hole created in the Energy Policy Act of 2005 that exempted hydraulic fracturing from the Safe Drinking Water Act. The Act would also require the oil and gas industry to disclose the chemicals they use in their hydraulic fracturing processes.

The Wayne Conservation District is compiling a list of abandoned oil and gas wells in Wayne County. Landowners are asked to telephone the District if they have information on any abandoned wells.

Natural gas drilling operations are still taking place in Oregon Township, Wayne Co., PA. Peckham mentioned that a new gas permit for a well in Stockport, not far from his home, was listed on the PA DEP website. The gas companies are focusing on the Pennsylvania side of the River as DEC has not issued its supplemental GEIS. They seem to be working in a triangle from Hancock, Deposit, to Susquehanna County, Buckingham Township. Leasing offers have been \$3,000 an acre with 20% royalties. He noted that Penn State Cooperative Extension has an informative tutorial on gas drilling online.

Proposed Sullivan County (NY) casinos update: The *Times Herald-Record* is reporting that casino developer Louis Capelli and Empire Resorts are saying that despite a stoppage of work at the site of the former Concord Hotel in Kiamesha Lake, a new hotel-casino will ultimately be built. With the economy the way it is, financing for the Concord has not materialized yet.

Sullivan County (NY) Updated FEMA flood maps available: News reports have indicated that the new Sullivan County flood maps are now online. The maps are produced by Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) and the NYS Dept. of Environmental Conservation. The update is part of a national FEMA map modernization program to ensure that the maps are up to date. Sullivan County is in FEMA Region 2. The maps are also available at the Sullivan County Planning office and the local municipalities.

Wawarsing, Delaware Aqueduct in TV special: It was reported that Wawarsing (Ulster County, NY) and its problems with the leaking NYC Delaware Aqueduct will be part of a two-hour prime-time special on the History Channel called “The Crumbling of America”. According to the shows producer this kind of problem is being experienced coast to coast and that the country loses 20% of its water in leaks.

Village of Kiryas Joel proposed Catskill Aqueduct Connection update: According to news media, the Village of Kiryas Joel Board of Trustees, as lead agency, has accepted a Final Environmental Impact Statement on the proposed connection to the New York City Catskill Aqueduct. The action involves the construction of facilities to draw water from the Aqueduct and convey water to within the municipal boundaries of the Village. Orange County officials reviewed the expanded EIS and there may be a lawsuit filed over the pipeline, again. A public hearing on the proposal will be held June 29.

Sullivan County Open Space Plan Update: Sullivan County is continuing its planning workshops in relation to its Open Space Plan. The next workshop is July 1, “Making Trail Connections”, and will be held in Wurtsboro, NY.

Old Business None

New Business

Technical Assistance Grants: The committee reviewed two requests from TAG recipient Town of Lumberland. ♦TAG 2007-07 revise and update comp plan: project completed, request for payment. The amount expended on this project was \$4,983.64, the grant was for \$6,500; the result will be a de-obligation of \$1,516.36 in funds back to the Council. ♦TAG 2008-02 compilation of final comp plan: this task was accomplished under TAG 2007-07 so the Town will withdraw its grant for the project; the result will be a de-obligation of \$2,500 in funds back to the Council.

The committee reviewed these requests. A motion by Fluhr seconded by Richardson to approve payment, accept withdrawal, and de-obligate funds was carried.

Public Comment None

Adjourn A motion by Richardson seconded by Shafer to adjourn the meeting at 8:26 p.m. was carried.

Carol Coney, Office Manager