

UPPER DELAWARE COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES
October 4, 2012

The Upper Delaware Council held its monthly meeting on Thursday, October 4, 2012 at the Council office in Narrowsburg, NY. Chairperson Nadia Rajszyk called the meeting to order at 7:05 p.m. The Pledge of Allegiance and roll call followed.

In attendance: Town of Hancock-Fred Peckham, Town of Fremont-Jack Niflot, Town of Delaware-Harold Roeder, Jr., Town of Cohecton-Larry Richardson, Town of Tusten-Tony Ritter, Town of Highland-Debra Conway, Town of Lumberland-Nadia Rajszyk, Town of Deerpark-David Dean, Damascus Township-Jeffrey Dexter, Shohola Township-George J. Fluhr, Delaware River Basin Commission-Kenneth Najjar, National Park Service-Sean McGuinness. Staff in attendance: Executive Director-Laurie Ramie, Secretary-Cindy Odell. Absent: Berlin Township, Lackawaxen Township, Westfall Township, State of New York, Commonwealth of Pennsylvania.

Approval of September 6 Meeting Minutes: A motion by Dexter seconded by Richardson to approve the September 6 meeting minutes was carried unanimously.

Public Comment on the Agenda: None

A motion to go into executive session at 7:06 p.m. to discuss personnel matters was made by Richardson, seconded by Fluhr and carried. A motion to come out of executive session at 7:12 p.m. was made by Richardson, seconded by Roeder and carried. No action was taken at this time.

Committee Reports: Committee reports were provided based on the meeting minutes. There was no Water Use/Resource Management meeting on September 18th as it was canceled due to a power outage. Ritter did, however, report that the total storage in the New York City reservoirs currently is at 76% where normal for this time period is 74%. He added that the actual precipitation for July, August, and September was 13 inches and noted the historical average is 12.3 inches. He reported the release from the Cannonsville Reservoir on the West Branch has been cut down since October 1st to about 150 cfs. Ritter noted that there were handouts in members' packets that he requested be provided for informational purposes. He briefly described them. September 25 Operations meeting report was provided by Rajszyk, and reports from the September 11 and September 25 Project Review meetings were given by Richardson.

Status Reports

Delaware River Basin Commission: Najjar reviewed the hydrologic report provided in members' packets and reported that storage in the reservoirs is close to the long term median, September flows were up and down, and there were no directed releases from any of the reservoirs in September.

Najjar noted that on the natural gas regulation front, the Commissioners continue to discuss some of the issues that they have with moving those along and that progress is slow. He added that New York has decided to do some health impact assessments.

Concerning the Flexible Flow Management Program (FFMP), Najjar noted that the members of the decree parties have been meeting on a regular basis with a goal in mind of getting a multi-year agreement passed in May.

Najjar said that the Nature Conservancy is doing a study for the Commission to look at basin-wide ecological flow needs. The Commission is also looking at some of the longer-term water supply needs. The Director would like to put together a plan that looks forward and considers such issues as ecological flows, climate change and sea level rise in order to be prepared for water supply in the future.

NYS Dept. of Environmental Conservation: No report in the absence of Representative Bill Rudge.

PA Dept. of Conservation & Natural Resources: No report in the absence of Representative Dennis DeMara.

National Park Service-Upper Delaware: McGuinness reported that October 1st was the start of the Park Service's new fiscal year and that they are on a continuing resolution until March 9th. He added that they are also in a "black out phase" with the finance system until mid to late November.

McGuinness noted that Park Service staff members Don Hamilton, Jamie Myers, and Jessica Newbern will be attending the "Water, Water Everywhere" conference on October 9th hosted by the Friends of the Upper Delaware River. Hamilton is on the agenda to discuss current National Park Service/Partnering Agency natural resource studies on the Delaware River.

McGuinness said he just received in the mail the Visitor Survey report. Every summer the rangers go out and hand out survey cards to the public and ask them to rank how we're doing in a whole bunch of categories including park facilities, visitor services, and recreational opportunities. The score he received back was 99% from 155 responding surveys. He said the area where they scored high which he feels really good about is the assistance from park employees. Dean asked how much the survey cost. McGuinness said he did not know, that it is part of the Government Performance and Results Act. Rajs asked how the results are acquired. McGuinness said they are done by the University of Idaho. Rajs asked if there is a count of the number of visitors this year. McGuinness said there is and he will have that information at the next Council meeting. McGuinness said his numbers just reflect the visitors coming into park facilities. He feels we need to work on getting a better count of the number of visitors to the Delaware River. A brief discussion on this topic took place. Rajs agrees we need to get a more accurate "picture of what is going on here." Dean noted that he feels there will be less livery traffic from at least Westfall Township, Pike County, PA if the proposed tax on that activity is passed. He said that "nothing stifles activity more than taxes."

UDC Executive Director's Report: Ramie referenced the October calendar which represents upcoming meetings, activities, and deadlines and highlighted some of the dates. She reported that the Fall/Winter 2012 issue of "The Upper Delaware" newsletter was mailed on October 1st and that our copies were received at the office on October 3rd. She expressed disappointment with the print quality of the photos and images and noted it is upsetting to her as she does put in equal amount of work into the layout and design as she does into the writing of the articles. She wishes she could encourage all who received the newsletter in the mail to go to the Upper Delaware Council website to view the photos in full and vibrant color. She explained the problem with this particular issue of the newsletter was that our new Quark Xpress software was a newer version than the printer's. Ramie said she will be soliciting bids from printers who use the same version software as she does for future publications since this issue completed the FY 2012 contract.

Ramie said the Upper Delaware River Roundtable meeting was held this afternoon and the topic of the meeting was the Local Waterfront Revitalization Plan (LWRP) which covers the whole Upper Delaware corridor from Hancock to Port Jervis. She noted that Sullivan County Planning administers the Department of State grant that was received to develop the plan, but it does include Orange and Delaware counties as well. Heather Jacksy, a Sullivan County planner, is hoping that by January a draft plan will be produced. She has until the spring of 2013 when the grant expires. In conjunction with this plan, the Pike County Office of Community Planning recently applied for a grant from PA DCNR to develop a greenway plan for the Lackawaxen and Upper Delaware corridors. Pike County's Lackawaxen and Upper Delaware River Greenway would follow the Lackawaxen and Delaware Rivers from the Pike/Wayne County border

to the river access in Milford Borough. A greenway plan would help identify action items found in county and municipal comprehensive and open space plans that can then be targeted for implementation in subsequent grant periods. Pike County is hoping to know whether the grant application is successful by late 2012. Pike County planners have attended many of the LWRP meetings to see the model of how this plan is working on the New York side of the river. If the project is funded, it is intended to be a three-year one. Ramie said there was also discussion at the Roundtable meeting about signage because Sullivan County has been successful in getting grant funding for water trail signage and also some design work at six different community accesses on the New York side. There was talk about the need for a sign summit to try and determine if there could be some cohesive themes that could be developed for along both sides of the river. Conway said that she felt the main topic of the meeting was the signage issue and she went away feeling discouraged because when you start layering on everybody who has an opinion or a regulation pertaining to signs, she does not see any sort of a cohesive answer coming anytime too soon. She said she personally would just like to see simple signs providing basic information regardless of color theme or whose logo is on it. Ramie agreed that unfortunately it is not too simple as everyone has their regulations. Ramie said that on December 7th the Roundtable is receiving a "Ground Breaker" award from Pace University Land Use Center at their annual conference in White Plains. There will be a panel discussion about what the Roundtable has accomplished at that meeting.

Ramie noted that assuming members approve the resolution hiring a Resource Specialist, the first day of work for that individual would be October 9th and plans include accompanying Ramie to FUDR's "Water, Water Everywhere" meeting at which optimum conditions for flexible flows and other issues will be discussed. She noted that the agenda looks full of information and feels it would be a good primer as to how these issues work. The meeting is being held at the West Branch Angler Resort near Hancock, NY. She said a report will be offered at the October 16th Water Use/Resource Management meeting as to what went on.

October 11th is the Common Waters forum at the Nurture Nature Center in Easton, Pennsylvania and Ramie said she will be carpooling with Sean McGuinness and Carla Hahn of the Park Service. She noted it is the fifth anniversary of Common Waters so this forum is about celebrating its successes and what accomplishments it has had in the past five years, and then looking into the future for planning and how this organization can be useful to its members.

Ramie reported that she just found out on October 3rd that the UDC's two applications for the Executive Director and Resource Specialist have been accepted for the Pace University Land Use Leadership Alliance Training Program. She said it is a great opportunity and comes at exactly the right time to be focused on watershed management. The workshop will be four intense days of training that start on October 15th and go every other Monday until November 19th. The program, which has a tuition value of \$1,000, is being offered at no cost as it is being sponsored by the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation Hudson River Estuary Program and the New York State Water Resource Institute at Cornell University. Ramie said she learned at the Roundtable meeting that local resident Buck Moorhead will be a speaker on October 29th. He has been invited to speak about the model of the Upper Delaware River Roundtable.

Ramie noted that we had to reschedule the presentation we were going to have at last month's WU/RM meeting because of the power outage we experienced here. She said that Len Grover and Jamie Knecht from the Wayne Conservation District will attend the October 16th WU/RM meeting and discuss Pennsylvania's new floodplain regulations. She said that all members are welcome to attend that 7:00 p.m. meeting. Peckham asked if the floodplain regulations follow federal guidelines. Ramie said she did not know, but perhaps that would be discussed at that meeting.

Ramie said that one big upcoming project is the FY 2012 Annual Report which will cover October 1, 2011 through September 30, 2012 and will be posted on-line. In November, the auditors from Eckersley and Ostrowski will conduct the annual audit and will report on their findings at the November Operations Committee. At the first full Council meeting of November, Rajszyk will appoint the Nominating Committee that will put forth a slate of 2013 UDC officers for presentation at the December full Council meeting and then be voted upon in January of 2013. In November, the start of the update for the UDC's Map and Guide brochure will begin. The brochure has not been updated since 2008 and will require many changes. Ramie is hoping to have a new map produced for the brochure. She is hoping to work with the Delaware River

Basin Commission on the mapping. Fluhr asked if all the old brochures have been distributed. Ramie said they have since the spring.

Ramie said she felt that Dave Soete's retirement party on September 28th went very well. There was a nice mix of his extended family and work associates in attendance. She shared a photo taken that day of past and present employees including Bill Douglass. Ramie noted that Soete, on his own time, did research and mailed out information on twelve different subject matters including natural gas, growth, energy, wind farms, ethanol, endangered species, invasive species, floods, fisheries, global warming, history, and casinos/slots. He sent his final farewell to all the recipients of those lists over the weekend. He forwarded some of the responses back to us from some of the recipients of those clips. He received at least 50 thank-you e-mails which Ramie noted was a nice testimony to him that people cared so much. She shared a response from Tracy Carluccio, Deputy Director of the Delaware Riverkeeper Network. Carluccio wrote, "David, You 'invented' this type of service for our DR environmental world and set a high standard for what can be shared in this type of 'reporting'. Your vision about what was important really helped people expand how they think about these subjects. I have always been amazed by what you managed to do and how much you must have read over the years! Maybe you should write a book about it (after you get some sleep, some time on the river, and whatever else you have sacrificed for so long!) Your dedication and well-developed sense of what is important and meaningful in the news will be greatly missed. I always knew if I missed an important article I could find it in your offerings. Best of everything to you in your retirement from UDC as well David." Ramie also shared a note from Ken Baumel, a reporter from the Pike County Dispatch. His note read, "Please accept our wishes for a happy and productive retirement. You are one of the most amazing information resources ever. You showed the way news should be covered. Hopefully someone will take up your mantle and find a way and time to share a part of their lives to do a version of your model. Your professionalism and commitment to our collective quality of life is immeasurable. Although your retirement creates an enormous void of information, it also will allow us to catch up on sleep as well. Thank you for your dedication to truth that told a much more thorough story than we could have gotten any other way than reading all your resources and editing them down. I am guessing that you might still take an occasional fly over the Delaware Valley to get an eagle eye view of what we are care so much about and do a picture or two. Blessings, you are the best." Ramie said that Soete also sent along to us a list of the websites that he would routinely check. This service was not one that the UDC asked or expected him to do, Ramie said. Soete would spend three to five hours a night doing these listings. Ramie wanted to let members know that he was retiring from this service as well. Ramie reported that Soete's office has been cleaned up in preparation for a new Resource Specialist.

Ramie wanted to reiterate how well the Buckingham Township Planning Commission meeting on September 20th went. She felt very positive about the reception they received and how open the members were to the information about sharing the benefits about UDC participation. She thanked Dexter and Peckham for their contributions at the meeting because it meant a lot to the Commission members to hear on a peer to peer basis about what their town or township has enjoyed as result of membership. Peckham said that two of the three township supervisors were not present at the meeting, and it his opinion that it is still an uphill battle to get them to join. Ramie noted that grassroots support such as from the Equinunk Watershed Alliance would be important in this case and she remains optimistic about the prospect over time.

Old Business:

Fluhr asked McGuinness if the Park Service has totally determined that there will never again be funding for police and trash removal on the river. McGuinness said that trash removal was not done this year mainly due to the fact that most towns/townships can not accept electronic transfers and it was a bookkeeping nightmare to try and get checks out. The law enforcement funds will still be available and the information will be sent out soon, McGuinness said. McGuinness believes the amount available is somewhere around \$100,000. Niflot asked if that is for the whole corridor. McGuinness said yes and that more money used to be available, but they found that some of these funds were not being used for the intended purpose. He said the Park Service is looking into which towns deal with a lot of law enforcement issues on the river in order to distribute the money accordingly. McGuinness noted that a majority of last year's allocation went to the Sullivan County Sheriff's Department.

Peckham asked McGuinness if he knew where the sensors that the United States Geological Survey (USGS) is using to conduct groundwater discharge research on the Upper Delaware are located. He wants to be sure they are not located on his property. McGuinness said that Don Hamilton is really good about talking to landowners for permission to do anything. McGuinness said he will follow up on it for him. Peckham believes the sensors are where the dwarf wedge mussel beds are located.

Conway, referring to the Lackawaxen and Upper Delaware Greenway Planning Proposal that had been passed around earlier in the meeting, asked if the reference to a Southern Visitor Center located at Corwin Farm meant that the proposed visitor center at Fort Delaware was being moved as she had heard rumored. McGuinness told her that it is not accurate. McGuinness did note that they are going to continue to look at the Park Service's Corwin property in Barryville to try and determine if there is a way to make it more available to the public.

New Business:

Draft Resolution 2012-10: Resolution approving FY 2013 Technical Assistance Grants: A motion to approve the resolution was made by Richardson, seconded by Conway and carried unanimously. The approved projects and awards were:

<u>#</u>	<u>Applicant</u>	<u>Project</u>	<u>Amount</u>
01	Deerpark (Town of)	Update existing Town Subdivision Ordinance	\$3,600.00
02	Tusten (Town of)	Finish Town's Zoning Law re-write and put in binders and on CDs	5,000.00
03	Damascus Township	Index Damascus Township Zoning Ordinance	2,000.00
04	Cochecton (Town of)	Codify Local Laws	7,000.00
05	Lumberland (Town of)	Update Comprehensive Emergency Management Plan	5,000.00
06	Pike County	Reprint "Greetings From Pike County" brochure related to natural gas exploration	500.00
07	Sullivan County	Improve preservation & interpretation at Minisink Battleground Park	6,205.00
08	Delaware (Town of)	1) Tax Maps depicting topography & soil types and 2) Develop website for Town's cultural history	1,500.00
09	Fremont (Town of)	Purchase "Town Clerk Plus Software" program with training to help Town operate in a more efficient manner	<u>2,100.00</u>
TOTAL:			\$32,905.00

Draft Resolution 2012-11: Resolution to Hire a Resource Specialist: A motion to approve the resolution hiring Travis O'Dell as the Council's full-time Resource Specialist effective October 9, 2012 was made by Roeder, seconded by Niflot and carried unanimously.

Other

Public Comment: Hester Greene of Damascus, PA complimented the new "Take a Hike!" trail map produced by the National Park Service that she stumbled across in the Council office. She is very happy to see it and will be using it, she added.

Adjournment: A motion by Roeder, seconded by Niflot, to adjourn the meeting at 8:20 p.m. was carried unanimously.

Minutes prepared by Cindy Odell 10/11/12