

Upper Delaware Council
PROJECT REVIEW COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES
Sept. 22, 2009

Committee Members Present: Roeder, Carr, Richardson, Keesler, Peckham, Fluhr, Bowers
NPS Partner: Schultz
Staff: Douglass, Soete, Coney, Ramie
Guests: W. Pammer, B. Johnson, P. Hindes, N. Rajasz, H. Green, E. Jackson

The Committee Chairperson Harold Roeder Jr. called the meeting to order at 7:40 p.m. A motion by Bowers seconded by Peckham to approve the Aug. 25 meeting minutes was carried. There was no public comment on the agenda.

Agenda order changed: Roeder requested and the committee approved to move agenda item 6. c. under New Business to the beginning of the meeting since it involved a presentation to the committee.

New Business

TAG 2008-07 Town of Tusten lead agency, Multi-Municipal Gas Drilling Task Force project: Dr. William Pammer presented the committee with the products from the grant project that was led by the Town of Tusten and included multiple municipalities working together to address "Managing Natural Gas Development Impacts: Strategies to Protect Town Infrastructure & Land Use." The project has been completed and they were requesting payment. Dr. Pammer noted that this was the largest multi-municipal project in the county that he's worked with and he thanked all the towns (UDC members Tusten-Cochecton-Delaware-Highland-Lumberland-Fremont) and Town of Callicoon under separate agreement involved for their participation and dedication to the project. He also thanked the Council for providing some funding toward the project that enabled this unique cooperation on the project.

Pammer handed out a synopsis of the material that was included in three binders provided to the Council as required and reviewed it with the committee. As a summary, Pammer noted that the report provided an action plan for towns in the western portion of Sullivan County to address the potential impacts of natural gas development within the region. The project offers municipalities practical steps in the following areas. Strategies and examples to help towns participate in the SEQR of the forthcoming supplement to the State Generic Environmental Impact Statement to influence new regulations on natural gas exploration and emphasize coordinated review between municipalities and the NYS DEC after the regulations are finalized. A municipal highway plan is offered complete with a model Road Use Agreement framework to help town supervisors, their boards, and town highway superintendents implement approaches under Article 23, Section 23-0303 of the NYS Environmental Conservation Law and the Highway Law to protect public assets, mainly roads and bridges. The study concludes with a tool box for action.

Some action steps recommended to be taken before the end of 2009 included: Draft, review and approve a local law for a Road Use Agreement; Retain structural engineer and legal representative to handle the implementation of the RUA for all towns; Develop a multi-municipal comment letter on the forthcoming draft Supplemental GEIS to underscore the regional issues of development and promote more regulations that will be consistent across towns in the same region; Form study groups to review the forthcoming dSGEIS to offer specific comments on items and issues not covered in sample letters; and that the towns submit their comment letters to DEC within the time frame allowed. It was noted that the consortium of towns was talking about continuing its alliance. Richardson added that the towns were fortunate to have Dr. Pammer and Planner Ethan Cohen from the Sullivan County Planning Division provide invaluable assistance with this important project. They helped tremendously.

Pammer answered questions from the committee. The committee felt it was a worthwhile and timely project and wanted the UDC to publicize the project. A motion by Bowers seconded by Fluhr to approve payment on this TAG reimbursement request was carried.

Regular Agenda continued.

Discussion Items Report: Soete reviewed the Discussion Items Report with the committee. Some highlights included here.

Tennessee Gas Pipeline 300 Line Expansion Project (in various Pike and Wayne County, PA townships) Update: The Pipeline is still pursuing wooded wetlands locations to protect as part of the mitigation process. Upgrades to the Pipeline are also being proposed in New Jersey.

New York Regional Interconnect (NYRI) power line, NYS withdrawn project: It appears that all references to “NYRI” have been removed from the FERC website. Soete said he regularly searches the FERC website for new NYRI-related documents, but now the old documents don’t even appear online.

Natural Gas Drilling/Exploration in the Region Update: On Sept. 16, the Delaware River Basin Commission announced that the public hearing previously scheduled for Sept. 23 on the revised proposed Docket No. D-2009-20-1 for Chesapeake’s water withdrawal from the West Branch Delaware will be re-scheduled to a later date at the request of Chesapeake. Chesapeake requested additional time to review the revised Docket. The comment deadline of Sept. 30 on this Docket will remain open.

Upper DelAWARE River Roundtable Update: The next Upper DelAWARE River Roundtable meeting is scheduled for Oct. 1 at the Tusten Town Hall in Narrowsburg from 1 to 4 p.m. Prior to that meeting, at 11 a.m. to 12:30 p.m., there will be a short workshop regarding the SEQRA process at the UDC office.

Pond Eddy Bridge Update: Ramie reported that there was a teleconference with the Pond Eddy Bridge Project Committee on Sept. 8. There has been progress. They’ve circulated a draft memorandum of agreement with the agencies. There’s no disagreement so they may move into the design phase of the project. Another newsletter about the project will be circulated this fall. The next teleconference meeting is Oct. 13.

Proposed Hydroelectric Plant on the Neversink Reservoir/Sullivan County comments: It was reported in the Sept. 11 *Times Herald-Record* that Sullivan County officials were saying New York City isn’t giving them a place at the table over the licensing process for a proposed hydroelectric plant on the Neversink Reservoir. The City has filed a preliminary permit application with FERC to study building hydroelectric plants at four of its Catskill region reservoirs. Sullivan County officials have asked FERC to use the more open “integrated” application process, rather than the City requested “traditional” process so there will be more open interaction between the license applicant and stakeholders.

Old Business None

New Business

TAG 2007-06 Town of Lumberland: The Town of Lumberland completed its TAG project, prepare written and pictorial history of Eldred School District, and was requesting its TAG reimbursement of \$2,500. The committee reviewed the request. A motion by Fluhr seconded by Bowers to approve payment was carried.

TAG 2008-04 Pike Co., Matamoras-Westfall Regional Comp Plan: Pike County provided a quarterly report to the Council as to its progress on its TAG project of a regional comp plan for Matamoras and Westfall and an Open Space, Greenways and Recreation Plan. They were requesting a first, six-month extension on the project. The committee discussed the request. A motion by Bowers seconded by Fluhr to approve the extension was carried.

***New Technology* article: “FRACforward”:** At the request of the committee chair, copies of an article dated September 2008 from *New Technology* that Peckham had provided to the Council was copied and handed out to the Committee. The “FRACforward” article mentions a new gas fracturing technology to enter the market recently by GASFRAC Energy Services. The proprietary new fracturing system uses liquefied petroleum gas, consisting of mostly propane, rather than water- or oil-based fracturing fluids.

Public Comment None

Adjournment A motion by Bowers seconded by Peckham to adjourn the meeting at 9:10 p.m. was carried.

Carol Coney, Office Manager