

Upper Delaware Council
WATER USE/RESOURCE MANAGEMENT COMM. MEETING MINUTES
January 17, 2012

Committee Members Present: Tony Ritter, Debra Conway (for Andy Boyar), Jay Shafer, Al Henry
Committee Members Absent: John McKay
NPS Partner: Don Hamilton
Staff: Laurie Ramie, Dave Soete, Cindy Odell
Guests: Anne Willard, Pat Jeffer (7:32 p.m.)

The UDC's Water Use/Resource Management Committee held its monthly meeting on Tuesday, January 17, 2012 at the Council office in Narrowsburg, NY. Chairperson Ritter called the meeting to order at 7:04 p.m.

Election of Committee Chairperson and Vice-Chairperson for 2012: Conway made a motion to nominate Tony Ritter for Chairperson of the Water Use/Resource Management Committee for 2012. The motion was seconded by Henry. Ritter was elected by voice vote. Conway made a motion to nominate Andy Boyar for Vice-Chairperson for 2012 and Henry seconded the motion. Boyar was elected by voice vote.

A motion by Conway seconded by Shafer to approve the December 20 meeting minutes was carried. There was no public comment on the agenda.

Old Business:

Upper Delaware Scenic Byway Update: Ramie reported that the Scenic Byway skipped its December meeting because of the holiday schedule, but the Visitors Center Subcommittee had met on December 21st. Ramie displayed the advanced schematic design as well as other drawings and views of the proposed visitor center and pointed out where it is proposed to be located in respect to Fort Delaware. The location is meant to complement the fort and the windows will look out at it. Ramie noted the building is to have a walkable roof that slopes from 14' on one end to 11' on the other. There are steps leading up to the roof, which is usable space that would be covered with recycled rubber pavers. Ritter questioned if there is a use planned for the roof. Ramie told him it is to be a viewing area over the whole site as well as the Delaware River, campground and railroad tracks. She noted the railing is to be constructed of rough hemlock. Inside the center, which is to be constructed primarily of steel and locally harvested hemlock, the floors are to be of polished concrete. Ritter wondered what the total square footage of the building is to be. Ramie told him it is a 2,400 square foot L-shaped building. She explained the UDSB had received a \$25,000 grant to conduct a feasibility study and develop a concept design. Studio d'ARC, a team of architects, engineers, and consultants, was hired and came up with five different proposals. Ramie said the scheme she had displayed, known as scheme V, was the one that was chosen as it seemed to work best for the needs of both the Scenic Byway organization and Sullivan County's Fort Delaware. This scheme combines building and landscape elements, uses regional materials such as crushed bluestone for the walkways, meets all the ADA compliant requirements, and that Fort Delaware remains the focus. Ramie said there are certain requirements that have to be met to be a public building. The signage on the front of the building that will be viewable from Route 97 will be aluminum cut out letters. Inside the building there will be passive air conditioning and radiant heat. Visitors would enter into a reception area, move into gallery space of about 600 square feet, then into a multi-use space that could be used for a classroom, a theatre, and public presentation meeting room, of 323 square feet. Two roll down doors have been figured into the scheme in order to isolate the restrooms if they were to be left open for the public without access to the rest of the building. In addition the building will house two offices and storage space for both the Upper Delaware Scenic Byway and Fort Delaware, a warming kitchen, and janitor and mechanical rooms. Ramie added that all water will be managed on-site. She reported the estimated construction cost of the building itself without contingency, appliances, furniture or exhibit materials, and taking prevailing wages into account, is \$1,446,216. Unfortunately, the UDSB has only received pledges of \$760,000 of federal and state capital construction money. She noted the federal money is actually not available at the moment as a new Congressional bill will have to be introduced to change the site from Cohecton to Fort Delaware. Sullivan

County's contribution will be the value of the property. Because of the disparity between what is available to build it and the projection of the cost, fund raising will be necessary. Sullivan County has already committed to apply for this project in the next NYS regional consolidated funding round. A brief discussion about staffing, hours of operation, and electronic kiosks took place. Ritter questioned if there were interior blueprints for the center available. Ramie told him there were other schematics that were a lot more detailed and members were welcome to take a look at them. Ritter questioned if local government officials have been notified of how far this project has progressed. Ramie said they have not as the schematics have not even been presented to the Byway committee yet, but felt that would be a logical step for them to take. Henry wondered if the Park Service was involved with the project and Ramie told him that Loren Goering, NPS Chief of Interpretation, serves on the committee and has provided valuable input. Ramie noted that January 23rd is the next UDSB meeting. Discussion took place about the prior Cocheton site for the center. Soete questioned the deadline for the \$25,000 feasibility study. Ramie said it is completed with the production of these advanced schematics as the design concept. Ritter talked about his vision of possibly having train excursions along the river valley similar to those on the Stourbridge Line in Honesdale, PA.

Other: None

New Business:

Delaware Riverkeeper 1/5/12 letter regarding Pennsylvania funding to DRBC: Ramie referenced the letter provided in members' packets and informed them that DRBC Executive Director Carol Collier had given us a copy of it at the January UDC meeting. She explained it is in response to rumors circulating that the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania may be considering withdrawing from the DRBC over objections to the DRBC's development process of its natural gas regulations. The letter is from the Delaware Riverkeeper to Pennsylvania Representative Harper expressing their opinion why this would be a bad idea. Collier suggested it may behoove the UDC to look at the letter in case members have interest in reaching out to their Pennsylvania legislators. Ramie pointed out there are a lot of statistics and information in the four-page letter concerning the value of the river resource and how the DRBC operates and why. A discussion took place about the procedure for withdrawing from the DRBC spelled out on the second page of the letter. Ritter suggested discussing the letter at the next meeting in order to give members time to review the letter.

Common Waters 1/12/12 Meeting Update: Ramie reported that she attended the Common Waters quarterly meeting and that the brochure handed out is in draft form and will be revised and distributed. The Commons Waters group has been meeting since September 2007. Bill Douglass was the UDC's prior representative. Ramie passed around the Atlas of the Upper Delaware Region which was one of the groups products. Common Waters also sponsored a forum in 2009 in which the Upper Delaware Council participated. Henry said that the Beach Lake Hunting and Fishing Group, of which he is a member, is having their Forest Stewardship Plan paid for by a Common Waters Fund grant. Ramie said about 25 people attended the meeting on January 12th or participated by speakerphone. The Common Waters Fund that Henry referenced is to produce Forest Stewardship Plans or implement Forest Stewardship Practices. Since this has started, which Ramie understands was February 2011, they have awarded \$427,000 to 72 applicants involving 40,000 acres of property. For more information on the grants available, the website is www.commonwatersfund.org. Ramie highlighted other items from the agenda including the assemblance of a Corporate Marketing Outreach packet. She noted there is a desire to hold another forum focused on decision makers and river program managers to tout the successes of Common Waters to date in its 5th year. She added they are a very action-oriented group. A potential date of September 2012 has been set and Ramie said she has volunteered to help on the committee. It is their hope to bring in additional partners in order to expand their network. Ramie pointed out that the Upper Delaware Council is not listed on the brochure as a project partner. She asked to be added and noted that it is a group that we want to be involved with as it is everything that we stand for. She added there is an effort to form an advocacy group that could speak on behalf of river basin issues. Another handout provided was a summary of the Delaware River Basin Conservation Act of 2011, legislation that is going through Congress. The legislation is now in the House Natural Resource Committee and working its way through the process. Also discussed at the

meeting was land use leadership training offered through Pace Law Center. Commons Waters has sponsored it twice and would like to do it again, but needs to raise funds to do so. Ramie noted that a January 31st deadline has been set to contribute to the Common Waters Annual Report that will be posted to their website and also used as an outreach tool. Ramie stated that much of the meeting was spent going over partner updates to see what everyone is up to and what kind of issues are being addressed. The next quarterly meeting of Common Waters will take place on April 12th.

Other: Hamilton reported that the Park Service has submitted their comments on the revised draft Supplemental Generic Environmental Impact Statement to New York State and they are available if anyone would like to review them. He said that now is the Park Service's grant writing season and they are writing applications to fund various studies. He noted they did get a grant awarded for a project that will start in 2013 called Developing Monitoring Protocols to Assess Sustainability of Delaware River American Shad Populations. It is to be a three year project and should help assess the spawning success of American Shad and do some netting of young American Shad.

Ritter reported there has been a news release issued from DEC on Commissioner Martens' statement on the closing of the comment period. He also spoke about Governor Cuomo who reportedly stated that he has not appropriated money for more personnel to handle hydro-fracking issues in his proposed 2012 budget as it is not known what direction the state is going with this issue. Ritter told Henry he could put him on his e-mail list because when there are topical or newsworthy articles, he sends them out and had e-mailed out the article pertaining to Governor Cuomo yesterday.

Henry questioned Hamilton if he has been following the Marine Fishing Registry. He added that Bill Rudge had mentioned it at the general meeting. Henry feels the information being presented between the two states is confusing and that it should be checked into so the public knows what they need to be doing. Hamilton said he will follow up on this issue and see if he can get Henry an answer.

Ritter presented the numbers taken today from the NYC DEP. He said the total New York City storage right now is about 94%. Normal for this date is around 80% so water in storage is 14% above normal. 90-day precipitation is below normal by a couple of inches. He added that none of the reservoirs are spilling except for Neversink. He said that two months ago, water in storage was 25% above normal. He noted that the releases out of Cannonsville have been cut down to 250 cfs the last two weeks. He said this is down from 1,000 which was being drawn down in order to create a void there. A discussion of water in storage at the different reservoirs and weather took place.

Ramie questioned Jeffer if she was interested in joining the committee. Jeffer answered that it is her intention to visit all of the committee meetings to see what they are about before making a decision. Ritter commented we have a great crew on the WU/RM committee and they would love to have her and feels it would be a benefit to have a mix of members from both states.

Public Comment: Anne Willard of *The River Reporter* asked Ramie if the state funding for the visitor center is tied to the Cochetcon site like the federal funding is. Ramie told her it is not.

Adjournment: A motion by Henry seconded by Conway to adjourn the meeting at 7:49 p.m. was carried.

Minutes prepared by Cindy Odell, 1/23/12