

**Upper Delaware Council  
OPERATIONS COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES  
March 24, 2020**

Committee Members Present: Larry Richardson, Harold Roder Jr., Aaron Robinson, Al Henry, Fred Peckham, Jeff Dexter, Jim Greier, David Dean, Dan Paparella  
Committee Members Absent: None  
Staff : Laurie Ramie, Ashley Hall-Bagdonas  
NPS Partner: Acting Superintendent Jessica Weinman, Jennifer Cluster  
Guests: Roger Saumure (Shohola alternate); Sue Sullivan (Tusten Representative)

The UDC's Operations Committee held its monthly meeting on Tuesday, March 24, 2020 via teleconference. Chairperson Richardson called the meeting to order at 6:23 p.m. There was no public comment on the agenda.

**Approval of February 25<sup>th</sup> Meeting Minutes:** A motion by Greier seconded Robinson to approve the February 25<sup>th</sup>, 2020 Meeting Minutes was carried. There was no public comment on the agenda.

**Executive Director's Report and Monthly Calendar:**

***Financial Status:***

**FY 2020 Federal Funding:** Ramie said the balance of the \$262,500 federal allocation owed for FY 2020 was deposited into the ASAP account on 2/27 and she withdrew \$73,392.20 for reimbursement of late November 2019 through February 2020 expenses. On 3/20, she withdrew \$19,770.38 to cover March's bills. The balance is \$169,390.42 through 9/30. The UDC's Fiscal Year 2<sup>nd</sup> Quarter Financial and Progress Report for January-March will be due to NPS by 4/30. Ramie renewed the UDC's System for Award Management (SAM) registration on 3/10 for one year.

**Bank Balance:** The UDC had \$133,974.09 in its Jeff Bank accounts as of 3/20, minus encumbered funds and prior to the credit for the March expenditures.

**FY 2019 Federal Funding:** Ramie withdrew the encumbered \$1,700 balance for the Phase 2 Records Management Contract on 2/26, leaving a balance of \$5,000. When the Shohola TAG 2019-02 Zoning Ordinance's substantial conformance review is complete, \$5,000 will be drawn down. Ramie said Patrick Reidy, the Contracting Officer, included a performance end date of 5/1 for that account to be expended. If any additional time is needed UDC would need to request it.

**UDC PA Grant:** The UDC received the contract electronically on 2/25. Ramie enrolled in the PA Electronic Payment Program, completed and returned the \$100,000 invoice to the PA DCED, and opened up a dedicated bank account at Jeff Bank on 2/28. On 3/2 registration in the PA Supplier Portal Vendor ID system was attempted, with access stymied by a prior assignment of a UDC Vendor ID to Travis O'Dell who was unable to recall the reason or what username and password he had established. Ramie sought assistance to request a Change in Vendor Administrator which was accomplished on 3/3. Ramie submitted an IRS W-9 form to the PA Vendor Management Unit. A news release was issued on 3/5 and the PA townships were notified to be on standby for the receipt of funding to enable disbursement of funds for completed projects since 7/1/2019. Next Ramie will thoroughly review the payment system and record-keeping requirements, oversee projects for the UDC and townships, disburse funds, engage the auditors, and issue ongoing publicity. UDC also needs to draft a Scope of Services for the UDC Business Plan. The grant program runs until December 2021.

***Administration:***

**Coronavirus Response:** This will be discussed under New Business.

**Job Search:** There will be an update from the Personnel Subcommittee under Old Business.

**UDC Strategic Plan Retreat:** This will be discussed under New Business.

**Public Relations:**

**“The Upper Delaware”:** Ramie sent a letter on 3/19 to Courier Printing in response to their request for support in seeking an exemption from NYS to continue operations as an essential business (a copy was provided in meeting packet). Ramie invested 51.0 hours between 2/24-3/23 in planning contents, gathering information, doing interviews, research, taking and choosing photos, formatting, layout, and writing. Composition was finalized on 3/22, ahead of the 3/25 deadline, due to the COVID-19 closure of the UDC office required at 8 p.m. that day. Ramie sent Quark file and 19 images to Courier Printing by Dropbox and a mailed CD. She received and returned a blueline proof electronically on 3/23. Hall-Bagdonas expedited updates and submitted the mail program database to Courier on 3/23. Delivery is due on or by 4/6 and we will post online when we are able to.

**Awards Banquet:** Ramie started a summary list for the public nominations due by 3/16. She contacted Central House Family Resort and keynote speaker PA Rep. Jonathan Fritz twice to change the original 5/3 date based on the COVID-19 pandemic gathering guidance. She advised the Operations Committee on 3/16 of the available Sunday afternoon alternative dates for the venue: 5/31; 6/7; 8/30; and 9/27. Rep. Fritz confirmed for 6/7 after his personal plans that originally had a conflict changed. He was also available on 8/30 as of 3/17. Updates were made to the invitation/reservation form and Ramie issued a revised news release. The next steps are to select the 2020 honorees and assess the need to further reschedule or cancel the banquet based on public health requirements.

**Publicity:** Five news releases were issued (two in order to revise dates): “Upper Delaware Townships to Benefit from \$100,000 Grant through UDC”, 3/4; “PA Rep. Jonathan Fritz to Speak at May 3 Upper Delaware Council Awards Banquet” (with photo), 3/11; “Upper Delaware Litter Sweep Seeks Help, Meets March 31”, 3/13; “Upper Delaware Litter Sweep Planning Proceeds for April 22-25”, 3/18; and “PA Rep. Jonathan Fritz to Speak at June 7 Upper Delaware Council Awards Banquet”, 3/19. Ramie also invited media to the 3/8 Sen. Metzger Skinners Falls Bridge visit and assembled an informational packet.

**UDC Raft Trip:** Hall-Bagdonas made arrangements on 3/16 with Lander’s River Trips for the 32<sup>nd</sup> Annual UDC Family Raft Trip on 8/2 from Minisink to Pond Eddy. Reservations are due by 7/27 at \$29 for ages 13 and up, and \$19 for ages 5-12. A notice is included in the Spring newsletter since the Summer newsletter comes out the day after the event.

**NPS Site Bulletin Update:** Upper Delaware Scenic and Recreational River is updating its map brochure, expected to be ready by the end of May. UDC reviewed and provided suggested edits on 1/29. The new brochure will refer visitors to the UDC website for additional river valley information.

**FY 2019 Annual Report:** Ramie will compose the UDC’s Fiscal Year 2019 Annual Report for on-line posting and availability of hard copies upon request.

**Calendar:** A copy of the April Calendar was provided in the packet and noted that everything is subject to change. In terms of the Upper Delaware Litter Sweep, we are planning on moving forward with the litter sweep portion from 4/22-4/25. The event scheduled on 4/25 as of last night’s Upper Delaware Scenic Byway’s meeting is no longer happening in that same style that was planned. The litter sweep will be done by individuals in compliance with social distancing guidelines. On Monday Ramie was asked to participate in a project that is through the Delaware River Watershed Initiative. Stephanie Dalke, formerly of the Pinchot Institute for Conservation now with the University of Maryland, is doing an assessment of the River Basin’s watershed needs. Ramie said it is honing in on water quality in particular. Dalke has reached out to key stakeholders in the basin for research. Ramie noted the Executive Order that Governor Cuomo signed extends through 4/19.

Robinson asked if the 5/1 deadline for expenditure of the FY 2019 Funds Account relates to the completion of the Substantial Conformance Review or the submission? Ramie said from this point forward with Technical Assistance Grants (TAGs) you have to have the Substantial Conformance determination made before we would turn over the reimbursement. That hadn’t gone into effect in 2019 but ideally, 5/1 would be the deadline for all of that to occur. Robinson said the Planning Commission cancelled last Thursday’s meeting. They will be reviewing the Zoning

Ordinance changes further and hopefully will complete it at the next scheduled meeting which is the third Thursday of April. That may not provide enough time to complete a Substantial Conformance Review. Ramie said she believes the 5/1 date that Reidy set was relatively arbitrary and UDC could request an extension. Richardson said he would hope Reidy would understand the extreme circumstances. Ramie said another factor is that we have a continued vacancy in our Resource Specialist position. Weinman said she agrees and reaching out to Reidy would be a good idea, with the justification of the orders that PA and NY have put in place and the complications it's put on groups to meet. Weinman said she could assist with that if needed.

### New Business

**Procedures to Comply with COVID-19 Directives:** By New York State Executive Order, all non-essential businesses were ordered to close as of 3/22 at 8 p.m. through 4/18 (currently). Ramie logged 21.5 hours over the weekend of 3/21-22 to finalize the Spring newsletter which requires the Quark Xpress software only installed on the work desktop computer, prepare for future teleconference meetings to the extent possible, post a temporary closure notice on the UDC website, turn down the heat, and pack up folders to work from home, as will Hall-Bagdonas. The Committee agreed for Ramie and Hall-Bagdonas to work from home.

**UDC Five-Year Strategic Plan Facilitator Proposals:** Ramie provided the handout of the Upper Delaware Council, Inc. Scope of Strategic Planning Services in advance. The venue of the Damascus Manor Community Center was offered without charge by Linda Dexter on 2/27. Ramie sent a memo to the Operations Committee with available Saturday date options, settling on 5/30. Ramie met with Jessica Weinman on 2/28 to discuss the format for the retreat. Ramie sent messages to four potential facilitators to describe needs. One contact, Clay Smith, was given by the Friends of the Upper Delaware River (FUDR) who helped with their Strategic Planning. Unfortunately, he was not available at the time needed. Ramie also reached out to Helen Budrock, formerly with Sullivan Renaissance, but she responded too late after interviews had already been completed. Two facilitators who did express interest and were available to meet our timeframes of pre- and post-workshop activities were retired Orange County Planning Commissioner David Church and Callicoon architect Buck Moorhead. Ramie developed a Scope of Services in collaboration with Weinman on 3/10 that was shared with Church and Moorhead. Ramie set up and conducted phone interviews with Weinman on 3/13. Written proposals were submitted on 3/19 and 3/22 (handouts provided in meeting packet). The UDC's next Five-Year Operating Plan for Fiscal Years 2021-2025 is due to the National Park Service by 7/1, along with the SF-424 package for FY 2021 including an annual budget and work plan. Ramie read excerpts from her report to the Retreat Planning Team: Overall impressions that Weinman and I had were that we feel lucky to have two such competent, experienced people interested in working with us. They both inspire confidence. We found that while Moorhead demonstrated more knowledge of the UDC's operations and history, Church has done more direct planning work as his daily occupation for decades. Moorhead had put a lot of thought into his approach already because of his familiarity. Church asked more questions so he could formulate his approach. Church would be working solo and asked about UDC staff taking roles at the retreat such as making presentations and recording notes. Moorhead would provide one or two people to handle those tasks. They both expressed enthusiasm to be involved and came across as very personable. Ramie said we will await the proposals which may help us make the recommendation. This facilitator is more than what has been asked of in the past. Ramie has been responsible for writing the plan in the past. Church would be charging \$125 per hour, with a total proposal of \$3,003.70. Moorhead is \$150 per hour with his assistants at \$75 per hour, for a total fee of \$3,880. Moorhead said even with the 30% courtesy discount he had applied, he would be happy to work with us to adjust rates if there are financial constraints. Ramie said Moorhead understands the history of the RMP, asked great questions, and took an inspirational approach for the ideas for the interactive sessions. Church is very professional at what he does. Both expressed they have the time to do it and meet our schedule. Weinman agreed with Ramie and said it's great to know we have such great candidates out there. She said not being involved very long with the UDC it did seem Moorhead had great knowledge of the corridor, the UDC, and has worked on some really interesting projects such as the Long Eddy Access with the DEC. Weinman said Church was very knowledgeable, but more responsibility would be placed on the UDC. A Motion by Henry seconded by Richardson accept the proposal put forth by Buck Moorhead to serve as facilitator for UDC's Five-Year Strategic Plan carried. Richardson asked what funds are available for this project. Ramie said that remains to be determined after the budget analysis. Saumure said he thinks it's a real advantage to have someone from the outside taking notes so no one had to be distracted from what's going on in the meeting and he feels Moorhead is a good choice. Sullivan agreed he's a good person.

**Discussion of 2020 River Cleanup Grants Program:** Ramie said this is the time of the year that the UDC would solicit proposals for our River and Shoreline Clean-up Grants Program. When UDC put the budget together for 2020 we had only about \$2,300 left to allocate since that budget line is one of our few discretionary areas. She was hoping to have a budget analysis from the bookkeeper to show spending in our various categories but then the office closure occurred suddenly. Ramie feels the best way to proceed is to put the memos out and associate a deadline for proposals as we usually do and we can see where we are by then. Ramie thinks that's been a very valuable program for our municipal members since the National Park Service discontinued its trash removal subsidies in the river valley, it creates goodwill, and it's a great way to keep the river clean. Henry said we may need to adjust the scheduling of it due to current events. A Motion by Henry seconded by Roeder to follow Ramie's recommendation to send out memos to solicit proposals so we can make a decision based on what we get back carried.

**Summary of Pending Bills 3-24-2020:** A motion by Henry, seconded by Roeder to approve the bills was carried.

**Financial Statement 3-31-2020:** Richardson said the financial statement is offered for individual review.

**Other:** None.

### Old Business

**PA DCED Grant Update:** Discussed during Executive Director's Report.

**Personnel Subcommittee Update:** One additional application was received on 3/10 for the Resources and Land Use Specialist in response to the 2<sup>nd</sup> round of advertising which closed on 3/16. An interview was conducted by Henry, Dexter, and Ramie with a 1<sup>st</sup> round candidate on 3/17, with a synopsis provided to Personnel Subcommittee members who weren't present. References were sought, salary and benefits were shared with the Round 2 candidate, and an interview was requested on 3/19. Discussion continued. Henry feels we need to take action immediately. He can make himself available to meet with the applicant who provided a resume on 3/10 as well as another sit-down with the Round 1 candidate. He would like UDC to follow up with them and have them come in to speak with the Personnel Subcommittee on the same day. Several committee members agreed that it would be good to follow up with a phone call to ascertain their continued interest in the position as things have been very disruptive.

**Other:** Richardson suggested that staff provide a monthly total of what Shepstone Management Co. is charging for consulting services on Project Review and Substantial Conformance tasks. Ramie said she included that information in the meeting packet and that is the only bill we have received so far, with no additional reviews submitted as pending.

**Public Comment:** None.

**Adjournment:** A motion by Dean seconded by Sullivan to adjourn the meeting at 7:35 p.m. was carried.