

**Upper Delaware Council
OPERATIONS COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES
August 25, 2020**

Committee Members Present: Larry Richardson, Aaron Robinson, Al Henry, Fred Peckham (via phone), Jeff Dexter, Jim Greier, David Dean.
Committee Members Absent: None
Staff : Laurie Ramie, Shannon Cilento, Ashley Hall-Bagdonas
NPS Partner: Acting Superintendent Darren Boch (via phone)
Guests: Roger Saumure- Shohola Township Alternate

Town of Tusten Rep. Sullivan said she's not staying for the meeting but has a comment regarding the first item the Five-Year Strategic Plan. She said Ramie provided the NPS with an outline for the Five-Year Cooperative Agreement that included the fundraising operation. She said please don't forget that a business plan, fundraising, and grant writing for has to be part of our future.

The UDC's Operations Committee held its monthly meeting on Tuesday, August 25th, 2020. Chairperson Richardson called the meeting to order at 7:35 p.m. There was no public comment on the agenda.

Approval of July 28 Meeting Minutes: A motion by Henry seconded Peckham to approve the July 28th, 2020 Meeting Minutes was carried. There was no public comment on the agenda.

Executive Director's Report and Monthly Calendar:

Ramie said Paparella decided to withdraw from this committee. He didn't feel like he had a lot to offer to this particular group. Ramie said she's not sure about the status of the Town of Delaware, which previously served through Harold Roeder on this committee. Tom Dent, his successor had audited a couple committees but hadn't committed necessarily to being on them. Right now, we have two fewer members for this committee just in terms of how we need to set a quorum for it. There are seven members of the Operations Committee at this stage. Ramie will reach out to Dent and see if any of the committees were of interest to him to to join.

Financial Status:

FY 2020 Federal Funding: On 8/24, Ramie applied to withdraw \$31,229.87 from the ASAP account to cover August's bills. The Federal funding balance is \$64,217.80 through 9/30. Ramie submitted UDC's Fiscal Year 2020 3rd Quarter Financial and Progress SF-425 Report for April-June to NPS on 7/30. We will be discussing under New Business on how to spend the funds that we have left. We need to make sure all of that funding is withdrawn from our Federal Account originally communicated with the date of 9/21 and then it changed to 9/25 to close out the books. Ramie said she's sticking with 9/21 because she doesn't want any snafu.

FY 2021 Federal Funding: Ramie provided revisions to the UDC's FY 21 1st Quarter SF-424 A, Section B budget attachment, Budget Narrative Report, and UDC FY21 Work Plan on 8/4 and 8/11 in response to various questions and comments made by the NPS Regional Contracting Officer, and the need to reallocate \$1,250 that had been earmarked in the 1st quarter for the Railroad Emergency Response Guide.

Administration:

Cooperative Agreement: The new DOI NPS-UDC Cooperative Agreement P20AC00940 was received for Ramie's signature on 8/24 and executed by NPS on 8/25. This action followed responses to a series of questions and comments made through a shared track-changes program with UDC staff review starting 7/30. Execution of this document authorizes the release of \$75,000 for the UDC's 1st quarter starting 10/1/20. The Period of Performance for the overall agreement is "from the date of Final Signature through December 31, 2024." Ramie provided the explanation for why that is not 9/30/2025: Federal policy limits the length of the agreement to five years from the date of Contracting Officer Patrick Reidy's signature and the 12/31/20 end date of the 1st quarter, rather than five

years from 10/1/20. Ramie had a copy of the Cooperative Agreement on hand. Henry asked if she will have to go through the same process for the other quarters? Ramie said she hopes not. She thinks every time it would have to be modified to add documents that are fresh for the time period. She imagines it will have to be modified each time, which is how it's been going, but the substance of it is there. Ramie said the fact that it's back in our hands means that we should not face any funding delay going into 10/1.

PA Alternate Appointment: The Commonwealth of Pennsylvania appointed Christine Dettore as its UDC alternate effective 8/13. A copy of the letter is provided in the meeting packet. UDC staff sent Dettore her welcome letter and orientation folder on 8/17. Staff added her to various directories. We're still waiting for NYS to make an alternate representative appointment, to replace Mike Flaherty, who retired.

MVP Health Insurance Rates: New York State has released health plan premium rates effective in 2021. MVP Health Care requested a 6.7% increase but was approved for 3.8%. The UDC's group plan contract renews on 12/1 with a 5.81% increase.

Public Relations:

Publicity: Ramie agreed to an on-air interview by Jason Dole for WJFF Radio Catskill on 8/25 during a 4:45 p.m. live local break during NPR's "All Things Considered" on the topic of the river congestion this summer. Richardson said it was an excellent interview. Ramie said they must have been promoting it in advance because Wes Gillingham from the Catskill Mountainkeeper called today on a subject related to that for a presentation he is going to be giving at the Coalition for the Delaware River Watershed Forum that Cilento will be participating in and said he heard Ramie was going to be speaking on-air today.

Three news releases were issued: "The Upper Delaware Summer 2020 Newsletter Available On-line and by Mail", 8/3; "UDC Holds 32nd Annual Raft Trip", 8/4; and "Westfall and Shohola Townships Benefit from Upper Delaware Council Grants", 8/13; and Ramie submitted a Letter to the Editor of the *River Reporter* on 8/12 regarding the Narrowsburg Bridge Street parking ban. She responded to information requests on bridges from Annemarie Schuetz for a *River Reporter* article on 8/6, as well as meeting coverage follow-ups from Linda Drollinger for *River Reporter*, Isabel Braverman from *Sullivan County Democrat*, and Peter Becker from *Tri-County Independent*.

8/2 UDC Raft Trip: All staff participated in the on-site registration at Lander's Pond Eddy Base on 8/2. Total guest count was 40 after 52 weather-worried cancellations. Hall-Bagdonas finalized the attendance list and bookkeeping on 8/3. Ramie issued a news release on 8/4 with a photo by Cilento, who uploaded additional images to the UDC online photo gallery. Lander's River Trip invoice for \$1,060 is on the abstract for approval tonight, equal to revenue collected.

"The Upper Delaware": Courier Printing delivered the Summer 2020 issue on time on 8/3. The Fall/Winter issue has a 11/25 deadline for a 12/7 release. Ramie will be requesting printer bids after 10/1 for Fiscal Year 2021.

Grants/Fundraising:

UDC PA Grant: There has been no activity since Westfall's reimbursement. Ramie issued a news release on 8/13 with a photo citing that project's accomplishment. Ramie received questions from a few Towns; one was if the grant would be repeated. Ramie said that would be nice but there is no guarantee. We're hoping that this cycle goes well enough that they can see it was a positive investment for the Commonwealth. This grant program goes through the end of December 2021. We still have to accomplish the rest of the township projects, the UDC Fiscal Sustainability Plan, and the Litter Sweep is also part of that. We have already purchased our equipment.

Ramie said our September calendar is filling up. For those who are aware of or participated at the Water Use/Resource Management Committee forum we had for public safety associated with increased river visitation Rajs set up a walkthrough meeting with the DOT of the Eagle Creek site, which is formally the Tri-State Diesel property across from the Mongaup Access. Rajs arranged that on 9/3 at 9:00 a.m. That's more for the Town of Lumberland and the DOT to work out what possibilities there could be to create some overflow parking in that corner across from the access. We will be following up to see if it is at all feasible to get a lease from Eagle Creek to

do something with that site, which is a former brownfield property.

Ramie said keep in mind that we have our Special Meeting for annual Technical Assistance Grant review with the Project Review Committee on 9/8. That's a rare second Tuesday that we'll be asking folks to come in.

Henry asked if UDC heard back from JHA Companies. Ramie confirmed she did and that topic is coming up under New Business.

Old Business

UDC Strategic Plan Retreat Update: Ramie included a copy in the meeting packet describing what we had done back in July of developing a steering committee that will help our facilitator Buck Moorhead come up with the agenda and itinerary for our 10/3 Board Retreat for our Five-Year Plan. We have decided to hold an in-person meeting at the Narrowsburg Union. Ramie included the individuals that Moorhead requested work with him for 4-6 hours to be as productive as we can during that 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. schedule on Saturday 10/3. Moorhead was interested in getting a diverse representation on this committee, including somebody from the community. He was even looking for someone who's considered a detractor of the UDC. Ramie made a suggestion but that person declined. In terms of the NPS, normally it would be the Superintendent serving, but since we have the Acting role and Darren Boch will be leaving the day before this, Don Hamilton is the longest tenured person at the NPS and that seemed very logical because not only has he been there over 30 years, he knows us very well as an organization from working with us all these years. She feels Hamilton will be able to bring a lot to the process. The National Parks Conservation Association is helping us out with organizing this because of their interest in the Upper and Middle Delaware and supporting our activities here such as recently paying for the design services for the UDC Project Review Workbook, which was very appreciated. Moorhead and the committee asked Saumure to serve on the committee because Saumure had expressed some early ideas about what we should focus on and has a lot of experience in the business world. Richardson being a four-time Chairperson, will bring a lot to this project. The community member is Steve Schwartz who happens to be from one of our non-participating Townships. He ran for Supervisor and one of his platforms was to get the Township involved in the UDC. George Conklin from the Town of Fremont, who was the former supervisor and is currently a legislator, was asked to serve. Ramie said he probably just lacks the time. A first phone conference is scheduled for Thursday at 2:00 p.m.

Great American Outdoors Act Advocacy for UPDE Maintenance Projects: At the full Council meeting when Boch was announcing that President Trump had signed this legislation for the deferred maintenance backlog at NPS, Richardson had suggested that we write a support letter to make sure we get our piece of the pie. Boch told Ramie that he was thinking about that action item. His recommendation is since the list that every park and unit is preparing has to go to Congress for approval, that directing letters to Congress members would be the appropriate route because they're the ones ultimately that would be the decision-makers. Ramie said that presents a problem for us because we are not allowed to lobby, which includes asking for funding or providing any influence over votes or legislation. Ramie said that makes it rather difficult to say fund our projects here at the NPS even though it's not us, we are partners. Ramie said she's leery of it because she's the one that signs the anti-lobbying clause. Ramie and Boch thought writing a sample letter or resolution to present to our member Town/ships and ask if they are interested in supporting this was possible. They don't have the same prohibition on lobbying that UDC has. Ramie recommends that UDC steers clear of putting our signature on a letter to a Congress member, but she would be happy to write a sample letter for the NY and PA delegations addressed to proper individuals. Boch said they're basically going to put all their hopes and dreams into the rehabilitation of the Roebling Bridge. That's the project they felt would be the most attractive, has the most need of their maintenance, and certainly is the most iconic here. Ramie would also send it out to groups like the National Parks Conservation Association so they could write their own letter. NPS has 90-days to submit this list. Richardson said he thinks that's a good idea but he doesn't see that UDC would have a problem if UDC wrote an informational letter. We would be informing our representatives on what needs exist in the river corridor. We don't have to ask for a certain amount of money. Ramie said Boch is waiting for the guidelines to come down to show them how to present information. He started working on the document but they don't have the list yet. Henry said UDC's letter is going to be supporting what NPS is listing because it's competitive across the country. Ramie's other thought was UDC doing a sign on letter and asking the Town/ships and under our Chairperson's name for example we can also say "endorsed by". We would give them a

month deadline to bring it up at their meetings. Richardson said he would not be reluctant to sign a letter from the UDC. It could take a lot of time to hear back from municipalities and we do represent them.

Other: None.

New Business

FY 2020 Budget Surplus Status and Spending Proposals: Ramie said we started out back in June with \$42,000, then we whittled that down to \$24,000. Looking at the Budget Surplus Report, we are down to \$12,883 that is not allocated toward any particular project, yet. By the sheet our bookkeeper Mike Poska prepared, we know upcoming expenses. Ramie has to work with Poska on reassigning some of the categories. For example, she has the expenses for our facilitator and the second half of what we owe to Quiet Light Films. Anything that she can think of that is still pending is included. After that, we still have approximately \$12,000 left. That was pretty much the amount that we had in leftover salary and benefits from the six-month vacancy. Some ideas and new proposal have come forward since then. She said Henry informed Ramie that the Personnel subcommittee made recommendations for performance bonuses for Hall-Bagdonas and Ramie and we are thankful for that.

We have a request from W Design to update our website, which is under New Business but Ramie will mention it here. You will see her written proposal. The website was created in 2015 and in some respects, it's showing its age. There are some relatively simple ways for a \$1,800 fee that Dorene Warner could improve it by reconfiguring certain aspects of it to be more mobile friendly, installing a new media library because we have had some trouble with uploading photos and making it a more intuitive interface. When Cilento went through her website training with Warner, they identified that these were problem areas of our site. Being ADA compliant wasn't specifically discussed but in the training, she did teach Hall-Bagdonas and Cilento how to use photo captions and alternate text. We've been trying to review previous posts to be compliant. Cilento said she thinks it could also be positive if we applied for grant funding or certain funding streams if we are ADA compliant. Richardson said the Upper Delaware Scenic Byway is updating their website to make it ADA compliant and Town/ships are also taking steps to update their websites.

We also received a response back from JHA Companies about the 8/3 site visit to the Ten Mile River Access. Our intention there is to meet the challenge that the NPS gave us to come up with valid recommendations, to improve the trailered boat launching since they have said that it's not an appropriate facility for that. They reviewed the site with engineer, Eric Baird. The proposal is \$5,000 to do a sketch plan of the existing conditions and the features of the site, including a preliminary structural design for the proposed boat launch. At the site everyone identified an area that seemed appropriate and the type of technology that could be used. The second aspect is to prepare and submit a permit jurisdiction request to New York State DEC, to determine what would be necessary to permit the project. Then they will be able to come up with costs for a final design and installation implementation. We're not agreeing to build anything at this point, we're just studying what could be done to improve the site. It's something that the Boy Scouts Association would have to approve and agree with and the NPS would be involved too as a co-lease holder. We would need to obligate this project by 9/30. Saumure said the tough part would be getting the permit jurisdiction request back by the end of September. Ramie said as long as we obligate the money by then the project could extend beyond that time. Henry noted under the Ten Mile River (TMR) Access Boat Launch Design Improvement proposal number two, he thinks they need to do more than just contact NYS DEC. He thinks they need to contact NPS too. Henry referenced the Army Corps of Engineers and the Rivers and Harbors Act, saying it wouldn't hurt to let them know. A Motion by Richardson seconded by Henry to approve staff bonuses, the website update by W Design, and the Engineering Design by JHA carried.

Ramie said now that we are down to the amount of approximately \$3,000 we still need ideas. Ramie asked for the committee to think of ideas. Richardson suggested that the copier get maintenance. Henry suggested prepayment for fuel.

Website Update Agreement with W Design: Mentioned above.

Payment for Town of Delaware TAG 2020-01: \$1,104.67 (de-obligate \$22.33): A Motion by Robinson seconded by Henry to de-obligate \$22.33 from payment for Town of Delaware TAG 2020-01 carried for the Guide of Permits.

Payment for Town of Hancock TAG 2020-02: \$5,000: A Motion by Robinson seconded by Henry to approve the \$5,000 payment for Hancock TAG 2020-02 carried for the Recreational Access Study.

Introduction of UDC Social Media Proposal: Cilento said this is a conceptual proposal to develop a social media presence for UDC, which would complement this website upgrade and help launch us into the 21st century when it comes to digital communications. Cilento put together a one-page proposal; nothing would go live until the Operations Committee approve it. Cilento and Hall-Bagdonas think it would be beneficial to have accounts on Facebook, Instagram, and LinkedIn. NPS also uses these platforms; NPS has a lot of restrictions as far as what they can do. They primarily use it for public safety alerts, water quality, and things like that. She thinks UDC can really augment that and use this as a new way to promote what we do and show who we are and interact with the public. We can provide another space for homeowners, tourists, property owners, members and townships to see what we're up to. We could post things like press releases, meeting notices, and event promotion. We could post our events throughout the year. We could post photos from events. We could promote funding opportunities like Technical Assistance Grants or other local things that might benefit local members or communities. We could do project advocacy. We could post about the Callicoon Park project for example. It could also be easy to share and promote some of our partners' projects like Trailkeeper, Delaware Highlands Conservancy, Friends of the Upper Delaware River, and Upper Delaware Scenic Byway. Cilento said we also came up with a couple ideas for some predetermined thematic posts such as Marker Monday, which would feature a historical marker in the corridor to promote; TAG Tuesday to feature a current or past TAG recipient/project; Workbook Wednesday where we provide facts or features of the Project Review Workbook 2.0 and Substantial Conformance Review process; and Flashback Friday where we share a story or photo from the UDC's archives illustrating the history of the organization and the corridor. Cilento said the next step would be reserving the handles: Upper Delaware Council so we could use that for all the accounts and then we can build the pages. It would not take much time. After initial setup we could show everyone at the next Operations meeting. Saumure said he agrees getting the external community more involved with what's going on is important. It's a funding avenue for us as well. He suggests dovetailing what we do here into what come out of this strategic planning session as we develop some mission statement and start to analyze where we want to go. Cilento said she and Hall-Bagdonas would collaborate on this. Hall-Bagdonas said Ramie's newsletter is a great asset and she thinks that we can utilize some of her previous articles. Also, for the Litter Sweep Dan Paparella was able to setup a Facebook page swiftly and helped to get more people interested in the event. The committee discussed a social media policy to avoid political discussion on our public pages. Hall-Bagdonas and Cilento said other organizations have policies like those and they would look into it. A Motion by Henry seconded by Saumure to approve the Social Media Proposal carried.

Summary of Pending Bills 8-25-2020: A motion by Henry, seconded by Greier to approve the bills was carried.

Financial Statement 8-31-2020: Richardson said the Financial Statement is offered for individual review.

Other: Cilento said she registered for her sessions for the Delaware River forum September 14-17. If anyone would like to see the schedule, she can forward it to interested parties.

Public Comment: None.

Adjournment: A motion by Greier seconded by Henry to adjourn the meeting at 8:30 p.m. was carried.