

UPPER DELAWARE COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES August 4, 2016

The Upper Delaware Council held its monthly meeting on Thursday, August 4, 2016 at the Council office in Narrowsburg, NY. Chairperson Fred Peckham called the meeting to order at 7:01 p.m. The Pledge of Allegiance and roll call followed.

In attendance: Town of Hancock-Fred Peckham, Town of Delaware-Harold Roeder, Jr., Town of Cochection-Larry Richardson, Town of Tusten- Tony Ritter, Town of Highland-Jeff Haas, Town of Lumberland-Leigh Sherman, Town of Deerpark-David Dean, Damascus Township-Jeffrey Dexter, Shohola Township-Aaron Robinson, Commonwealth of Pennsylvania-Rhonda Manning, Delaware River Basin Commission-Ken Najjar, National Park Service-Kris Heister. Staff in attendance: Executive Director-Laurie Ramie, Resource Specialist-Pete Golod, Secretary-Cindy Odell. Also in attendance: Virginia Dudko, Deerpark alternate. Absent: Town of Fremont, Berlin Township, Lackawaxen Township, Westfall Township, State of New York. Media: Dave Hulse, Peter Becker. Guests: Tamara Porter (7:07 p.m.)

Approval of July 7 Meeting Minutes: A motion by Richardson seconded by Robinson to approve the July 7 meeting minutes was carried unanimously.

The July 19 Water Use/Resource Management Committee report was provided based on the meeting minutes by Ritter. He provided the current Delaware River storage report. Cannonsville is at 76% down from 83% on July 19th, he stated. Total normal storage for this date is 86.7% and actual storage is 85.9%. Ritter commented that we are not the only region that is experiencing the recent hot weather. He spoke of the hot weather and fishing restrictions that are in place in areas out west.

Presentation by Tamara Porter, Leadership Sullivan Class of 2016 member: Corwin Farm Canal Clean-up Project: Peckham introduced Tamara Porter. Porter said she is an academic advisor for S.U.N.Y. Sullivan who served as a NPS Ranger in the area in 1987. She explained that the Leadership Sullivan Program is a platform that expands leadership potential of participants through educational programs designed to broaden individuals' knowledge of the County, improve communication skills, and increase organizational and problem solving skills. Students are Sullivan County individuals with a variety of backgrounds that participate in the 10-month leadership training program, Porter added. The program is coordinated through the Sullivan County Chamber of Commerce Foundation. The annual leadership program chooses projects from applications submitted by not-for-profit organizations in Sullivan County. This year the class chose to work with Rutherford Elementary School to improve the playground as an additional learning experience for the children and to assist the UDC in helping clear NPS property to preserve the cultural resources of canal and stone walls at a site that was once part of the D&H Canal at the Corwin Farm. She stated it was the first time a class took on two community service projects in the same year. Porter suggested that the UDC could apply for the 2017 round to have the D&H project worked on further. Porter was unable to share the Leadership Sullivan project video at that time due to technical issues. The video, produced by Nuby DeLeon of ND Pro Media, Inc. can be accessed at www.sullivanchamberfoundation.org/community-impact-project.html. Before, during and after photos of the D&H Canal clean-up project were shown and narrated by Porter, Ramie and Heister. Ramie stated the UDC does have the opportunity to apply for another Leadership Sullivan Community

Impact/Service project. Heister thanked the UDC for submitting the application for the Corwin Farm project and noted the 2016 Leadership Sullivan class was a “hard working group.” The deadline for applications is September 6, Ramie added. She stated that the application could be for further work on the D&H Canal property at Corwin Farm. A motion to have the UDC submit a Leadership Sullivan Community Impact/Service Project application was made by Richardson, seconded by Dexter and carried.

Public Comment on the Agenda: None

Committee Reports: The remaining committee reports were provided based on the meeting minutes. They were: July 26 Project Review by Richardson and July 26 Operations by Peckham.

Status Reports

Delaware River Basin Commission: Najjar reported that the FY 2017 budget and work plans were approved at the last commission meeting. He noted that on March 16, 2016, the Commissioners approved a Resolution Establishing Consistent Practices Relating to Membership, Record-Keeping and "Green" Meetings for DRBC Advisory Committees. Those committees are the Flood Advisory Committee, Monitoring Advisory and Coordination Committee, Toxics Advisory Committee, Water Management Advisory Committee, and Water Quality Advisory Committee. Najjar said that the DRBC is currently accepting applications from interested parties to fill the posted “non-reserved” positions on some of the advisory committees. More information is available on the DRBC website. The Commissioners use the input of the advisory committees to inform their policy decisions. The DRBC Flood Advisory Committee will meet on Wednesday, September 7, 2016 and the Water Management Advisory Committee will meet on Thursday, October 27, 2016, Najjar reported.

Najjar referred member to the hydrologic report provided in their packets. He stated the Delaware River Basin storage is at or near normal. He reviewed the data on the charts with members. Drought watches have been issued in New York, New Jersey, and Pennsylvania, he added. The DRBC website contains a map which depicts Delaware River Basin state drought status. Najjar shared a copy of the current map. The current precipitation shortfall was discussed.

Najjar reported that the DRBC just released its report entitled “Lower Delaware River Special Protection Waters Assessment of Measurable Changes to Existing Water Quality”. The Delaware River from Hancock down to Trenton is designated as Special Protection Waters. This report covers the 76-mile stretch of river from Portland, Pa. to Trenton, N.J. and compares water quality data initially collected from 2000-2004 to the assessment period of 2009-2011. The purpose of the report was to determine whether changes to existing water quality in this section of river have occurred. For most water quality parameters at most locations, there were no measurable changes to existing water quality, Najjar stated. More information is available on the DRBC website. Richardson questioned if the results of these tests show water quality better than what it was, does that result become the new standard. Najjar said no and explained his answer.

Najjar stated that in 2014 the U.S. Geological Survey, in cooperation with the Wayne Conservation District, conducted a study to assess baseline shallow groundwater quality in bedrock aquifers in Wayne County prior to potential extensive shale-gas development. That report was recently released and is available at <https://pubs.er.usgs.gov/publication/sir20165073>. Peckham noted there is a similar report available for Pike County as well. Ramie said she spoke with Jamie Knecht of the Wayne Conservation District about presenting the results of this study to the Council, which Knecht was enthusiastic to do in the fall.

NYS Dept. of Environmental Conservation: No report in the absence of Representative Bill Rudge. Two press releases were included in members’ packets at Rudge’s request. They were “DEC Seeks Participants for Summer Turkey Survey” dated July 28, 2016 and “DEC Announces New Deer and Bear Hunting Regulations” dated August 3, 2016. Additional information is available on the DEC website.

PA Dept. of Environmental Protection: Manning referred members to the Pennsylvania Department of Conservation and Natural Resources July 27th press release titled, “DCNR, DEP Offering Grants to Plant

Trees Along Streams to Improve Water Quality”. Pennsylvania has a goal of planting 95,000 acres of streamside buffers by 2025.

The DCNR Community Conservation Partnership Program grant round led by the DCNR Bureau of Recreation and Conservation opened on August 1 and will close September 15 for this year. These new grants are in addition to DEP’s Growing Greener grants, Manning noted.

Manning noted that DCNR Secretary Cindy Dunn recently met with members of the Geotourism Stewardship Council for the Scenic Wild Delaware River to talk about shared priorities and determine opportunities for collaboration on geotourism projects. More details will be released when they become available.

Manning reported that the Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) issued a drought watch declaration for 34 Pennsylvania counties and a drought warning declaration for Potter County.

National Park Service-Upper Delaware: Heister noted that this coming weekend is the last chance for people to participate in the NPS Centennial 100-mile paddle on the Upper Delaware section. Heister said a free birthday party event will be held on Saturday, August 13th from 10 a.m. until 2 p.m. at the Narrowsburg Firemen’s Field in Narrowsburg, NY. to celebrate the National Park Service’s 100th birthday. At 11AM the National Canoe Safety Patrol will form the number “100” with their canoes and kayaks in the Narrowsburg Pool, she reported. Heister provided other details of the day’s events.

Heister reported that staff from the Federal Highways Administration is in the area to inspect the Roebling Bridge. The cribbing, which are the beams underneath the icebreakers, have been inspected and are in great shape so they will not require replacement at this time, she noted. They are waiting for detailed designs for the causeway that will be required during construction. Permitting is on hold until the plans are complete.

Heister noted that \$126,000 of end of year funding has been committed for the five-year project with Shippensburg University to complete the GIS mapping tool for the Park Service, UDC, and local municipalities.

Heister said they conducted a second interview of an individual for the Park Planner position earlier in the day. She announced that two permanent subject-to-furlough positions are available and will be posted soon. Heister reported that NPS Biologist Jamie Myers is transferring to a part-time position with Interpretation effective September 4th. They will be looking to fill her position with a hydrologist or aquatic ecologist. She noted that the vacancy left from Larry Neal’s promotion to Chief of Law Enforcement will be filled by Sean McNeil on August 21st. She added that Law Enforcement Ranger Ron Babus has accepted a full-time position at Morristown National Historical Park resulting in a vacancy in Law Enforcement.

Roeder questioned if the Roebling Bridge cribbing gets wet. Heister said it does get wet, but is in really good shape. She added that the ice-breakers above the waterline are in good shape, but below the waterline are in need of replacement. Roeder spoke of a bridge in Douglas City, now Long Eddy, parts of which that can still be seen today. Dean asked when the causeway is to be built. Heister said it is scheduled to begin sometime in September, but may actually be later than that. Dean suggested that it would be cost efficient to use the material from the Pond Eddy Bridge project for the Roebling project if the timing were to work out. Heister said the contractor for the Roebling Bridge project was advised to talk with the contractor for the Pond Eddy Bridge project as local stone is a requirement.

UDC Executive Director’s Report: Ramie reported that the 28th Annual Family Raft Trip is scheduled for this Sunday. Odell said that 113 people have signed up to date. Ramie provided details of the trip and follow-ups.

Ramie noted that the deadline to submit for payment for the River Clean-up Grants is Monday, August 15th. She stated that we will be a little under-budget as the Town of Tusten spent less than it was awarded. Regarding river clean-ups, Ramie referred to the copy of the *New Jersey Herald* article provided in members’ packets about the results of the Kittatinny clean-up at which Pete represented the UDC on July 18th. The article titled “Delaware River cleanest it’s been in three decades” offers the tally of the amount of garbage that volunteers pulled out of the river.

Ramie said that 2016 Technical Assistance Grants must be completed by Monday, August 22nd. She added that project completion forms and supporting documentation to request payment are required.

Seven of the 10 awarded projects are outstanding. They are for the Towns of Tusten, Delaware, Lumberland, Highland (2 projects), and Berlin and Damascus Townships. 2017 TAG applications are due by August 29th. A copy of the June 30th news release titled, "UDC Technical Assistance Grant Applications Due by Aug. 29" was provided in members' packets for details.

Ramie referred to the handout titled, "Summary of Actions for the Upper Delaware Council's Proposal to Establish a Supplemental Public Notification System for Hazardous Incidents Involving New York City's Delaware River Basin Reservoir System." The handout provides a synopsis of our actions for this campaign up until now. To date, Ramie said Sullivan and Orange Counties have given us information on where sirens are in use along the river. She said we have not heard back from Delaware, Wayne, or Pike counties. Ramie noted that on July 22 memos with a sample letter were sent to Upper Delaware River Valley Counties, Towns and Townships seeking support of the request for a warning system. Included in members' packets was a copy of the Town of Delaware's letter of support. Peckham reported that the Hancock Town Board recently approved a letter of support and he said he spoke with Buckingham Township Supervisor Kurt Mueller who advised him that they will be sending a letter as well.

Ramie reported that the timeline for the capital bridge projects that was provided at the July 13 interstate bridges informational meeting, along with her notes, were posted to the UDC website. She stated this is our "baby step" into the offer that was made for the UDC to serve as a clearinghouse for current information on bridges as a public service. She said it has been pledged for the timeline to be updated every six months. A copy of a thank you letter to David MacEwan of NYS DOT and Gary Borgacci of Penn DOT expressing appreciation for their convening of the July 13th meeting and reiterating the UDC's offer to publish the project timeline every six months was included in members' packets. Ramie reported that the Pond Eddy Bridge replacement project has started and is expected to last two years. Work on the New York side began two weeks ago by D.A. Collins Construction. Emergency repairs to the Skinners Falls Bridge by Leeward Constructions began on August 1st, Ramie stated. A newspaper notice says they hope to finish by the end of September; however, we've heard November because the stringers have not yet arrived.

Ramie noted that our Pennsylvania Department of Natural Resources representative, Delaware State Forester Tim Dugan, was featured in PA WNEP Channel 16's "Pennsylvania Outdoor Life" television show which aired on July 31. Dugan visited Pecks Pond in Pike County with students from the University of Scranton's Extreme Physiology class to investigate why that State Forest land pond is in need of help. This video segment can be viewed at <http://wnep.com/2016/07/31/university-of-scranton-extreme-physiology-at-pecks-pond/>.

Ramie said that staff had been asked to identify office needs that could be handled through the FY 2016 surplus. One proposal is to replace the conference room table and chairs, she stated. She provided the cost to purchase 5 new tables and 20 chairs from Kristt Company. A motion to purchase new tables and chairs was made by Peckham and seconded by Dean. Ramie provided the projected surplus noting much of it is due to the vacancy in the Resource Specialist position. She listed the proposed expenditures and other ideas for spending down the surplus. After a lengthy discussion, a vote was taken and the motion failed with 2 ayes, 6 nays, and 2 abstentions. Dean suggested seeking proposals to re-tile the floor. Robinson noted that he is overwhelmed with the amount of paper he receives as a member of the full Council and of two of the standing committees. He feels it would serve the Council well to invest in tablets that members could use to pull up documents electronically. A lengthy discussion about digitizing records and means for accessing those records took place. It was decided to explore options and considerations and to discuss policies in consultation with our IT consultant Jeff Chorba and National Park Service IT Specialist JoAnne Merrit for presentation to the Operations Committee at the August 23rd meeting.

Ramie referred members to the August 2016 calendar of UDC Meetings, Activities and Deadlines provided in members' packets. She noted that options for a publicly accessible communication system along the Upper Delaware River will be the topic of a presentation at the September 1 full Council meeting. She thanked Robinson for his efforts lining up presenters.

Old Business: None

New Business:

Approval of Environmental Planning & Design Bid: Project Review Workbook Reformatting: Ramie referred to the bid and a sample of the current text that would need to be re-typed as part of the project provided in members' packets. This step is the one required prior to turning the files over to W Design for the graphic re-design, she added. Ramie reviewed the quote with members. A motion to approve the estimated cost of Environmental Planning & Design to incorporate the approved recommendations from the March 2016 report and to complete the conversion of the 1988 Project Review Workbook into Word files by the end of August was made by Robinson, seconded by Roeder and carried.

Other: None

Public Comment:

Adjournment: A motion by Roeder seconded by Haas, to adjourn the meeting at 8:48 p.m. was carried unanimously.

Minutes prepared by Cindy Odell 8/17/16