

Upper Delaware Council  
**OPERATIONS COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES**  
**June 26, 2012**

Committee Present: Nadia Rajs, Larry Richardson, Harold Roeder, Jr., Jack Niflot, George J. Fluhr, Fred Peckham  
Committee Absent: None  
NPS Partner: Sean McGuinness  
Staff: Laurie Ramie, Dave Soete, Cindy Odell  
Guests: Debra Conway (6:59 p.m.)

The UDC's Operations Committee held its monthly meeting on June 26, 2012 at the Council office in Narrowsburg, NY. Chairperson Rajs called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m.

**Approval of May 22 Meeting Minutes:** A motion by Richardson seconded by Peckham to approve the corrected May 22 meeting minutes was carried. Odell noted there had been corrections made to three dates and the corrected minutes had been e-mailed out to members. There was no public comment on the agenda.

**Executive Director's Report & UDC Calendar:** Ramie noted that she has consolidated her reports and as a result, the public relations activities have been incorporated into the Executive Director's report. She reported there were eighteen people in attendance at the June 23<sup>rd</sup> Strategic Planning Workshop. The workshop was held in order to initiate the development of the UDC's new Five-Year Plan which has to be adopted by October 1<sup>st</sup>. Ramie will do a report on the workshop itself and that information will be incorporated into the Five-Year Plan. A draft of the plan should be ready by mid-July in order to circulate it to the UDC municipalities for review and input. An opportunity at the August 2<sup>nd</sup> UDC meeting to consider the plan for a vote is possible with the September 6<sup>th</sup> meeting as a fallback. Ramie referenced a handout that represented the voting results from the workshop. She noted the number one issue was protecting private property rights to do with trespass. She feels this is an issue that might have been of contention 25 years ago with the lawlessness on the river and wondered if it is still of priority relevance. Rajs suggested using the word "respect" private property rights. Peckham said to keep the word "protect" in there as well. Fluhr feels there is more trespassing happening recently. Peckham agrees there has been an increase in the last 10 years. Fluhr added that 25 years ago private property rights were violated consistently and was a major problem. He noted that the Park Service presence back then settling people down on the river was a good job. Rajs asked McGuinness if the Park Service rangers go out on the water at all. McGuinness said they are going out on the river more now. He noted the rangers do not have any authority on private property and that is an issue for the Park Service. They do have authority at public accesses only if there is an agreement in place with the landowner. The rangers do have the right to stop and deal with an illegal act if they see it happening, but then they have to turn it over to the local police. Fluhr said that if this is a top issue, perhaps we should think about in the next year or so having a conference with the Park Service, local police agencies, and property owners and see if some resolutions could be figured out. Niflot asked if there could be some kind of an initiative started where the property owners could sign an agreement giving the Park Service authority on their property. McGuinness said the authority has to come from the state or the county. Fluhr feels that proposing to give Park Service personnel law enforcement authority on land may be cause for controversy. McGuinness feels that working together on some intensive education and notifications and working with the liveries to get the word out about respecting private property should be done. Discussion about issue #18, "Protect private property rights – land use restrictions" took place. It was determined that could be consolidated with the number one issue. Peckham feels that by saying "Protect and respect private property rights", both issues are covered. Ramie noted that 17a and 17b could be combined. She said she will try and work with the list a little more to pare it down. Normally, a top 10 list is produced, she added, but she did want to let members see the whole scope of it.

Ramie reported we have been advertising since June 12<sup>th</sup> for the Resource Specialist vacancy and have received three applications. Rajs said she is surprised by the minimal response. Ramie noted it is a specialized job with requirements that not many people possess. Peckham asked what papers the position has been advertised in. Ramie referenced the report in the packets which lists the newspapers, the dates the ad was in, and the costs. Peckham suggested targeting heavier populated areas to advertise for the job.

Ramie said our focus initially was that we wanted familiarity with the river valley. Roeder spoke about being approached by a recent college graduate inquiring about the job. Ramie told him the application deadline is July 13<sup>th</sup> and suggested he pass along the information provided in his packet. Fluhr suggested sending notices to placement offices of some of the colleges that offer planning degrees. Ramie noted that the notice was also sent out by e-mail to Soete's various interest groups which include conservation-minded people. She said she is not giving up yet that we will not receive any further applications, but wanted to be prepared as to what steps to take next if any are required. Peckham said he thought Soete would agree that the person would have to have some aptitude in planning whether it is experience or a degree. Many ideas were discussed including reaching out to the American Planning Association, state planning associations, career planning centers, and to search for colleges that offer planning degrees. Peckham reiterated we may need to cover a larger area than the local papers.

Ramie said we have a new lighting fixture outside. Schwatz & Mall Electric of Youngsville, NY, installed one dawn-to-dusk light by the UDC's back door to better illuminate the parking lot. There is a second fixture on the other side of the door that is not currently working. Ramie said the estimated cost for a second fixture would be \$50. It was agreed the second fixture could be installed.

Ramie reported that newly posted items to the UDC website include the FY 2011 Annual Report and the 2013 Technical Assistance Grants (TAG) program solicitation notice. All the TAG forms are there and applications are due by August 31, 2012. Ramie added that in addition to the website, that information will be sent out to all of the participating municipalities and she will issue a news release to announce that program is open as well. Soete also placed a reminder on the UDC website homepage that July 24<sup>th</sup> is the deadline for this year's TAG projects. Niflot asked how much money will be available for the 2013 TAG program. Ramie said the UDC budgeted \$30,000, which is more than is typically available.

Ramie highlighted expenses for the June 23<sup>rd</sup> workshop. She asked committee members if the UDC should provide mileage reimbursement for the board members who attended the special workshop. She has not been asked, but was being proactive should the question arise. After a brief discussion, Richardson made a motion that board members who attended the Strategic Planning Workshop on June 23<sup>rd</sup> be reimbursed for their mileage for that day. The motion was seconded by Peckham and carried with Roeder abstaining. Other financial issues covered included NPS funding, legal fees, and the status of the FY 2012 budget. She reported the FY 2013 Application for Federal Assistance package was compiled and delivered to NPS Agreements Technical Representative Karen Henry on June 11<sup>th</sup>, we received our June funding advance, and she gave the bank account balance. She noted we will need our cash on hand for the three to four months we are not expected to receive payment from the Park Service in the fall. McGuinness said they are working on the possible payment delay situation. Ramie added Karen Henry indicated there would be letters of intent issued for each of those months. She said she hopes that doesn't happen as floating the organization for months based on our savings will be tough. Ramie reported that legal services for the Lackawaxen Township land use appeal were officially terminated on May 3<sup>rd</sup>. She said we have not received a final invoice from one attorney and she is holding final payment for the other. Rajsiz recommended sending that check. Roeder agreed.

Ramie said she will report at or by the July 5<sup>th</sup> meeting on the status of the FY 2012 budget and make recommendations for obligating any surplus funds by the end of the fiscal year on September 30<sup>th</sup>. This may be affected by the outstanding bill for legal services. The committee advised her to set a deadline for submission of that bill to compel action.

Ramie reported the UDC has been invited to set up exhibits for two different festivals in July. The first is the Park Service's Zane Grey Festival on July 14<sup>th</sup> and the second is RiverFest in Narrowsburg on July 22. Both events run from 10:00 a.m. until 4 p.m. She asked members if we are interested in participating and if there are any board members who would like to take a turn in the booth or more importantly, help her set up the canopy which she can not do by herself. McGuinness said that the Zane Grey Festival is a really great event with lots going on that day. Ramie asked if members wanted to authorize the time for her to be at the events. Rajsiz said it is her opinion the UDC should be present. McGuinness noted it is number five in the Five-Year Plan voting results to improve public relations.

Ramie said the remainder of her report contains a list of upcoming news releases, a status report on grants administration, special meetings and events for the period, and a list of documents produced by her. She referenced the UDC calendar which lists upcoming July meetings, activities, and deadlines plus the last week of June. Ramie noted that some dates do not include times and locations as the formal notices have not been received. An additional date she thought might be of interest to members including the July 15<sup>th</sup> Civil War Train Wreck Commemoration in Shohola. Fluhr said the event will begin at 1:30 at the

Shohola Caboose and include a visit to the gravesite of two Confederate soldiers who died as a result of the accident, and a walk to the site of impact. Peckham said there is a Confederate soldier buried in the Hancock cemetery. He added it is an unmarked grave, but is recorded in the cemetery's records. Ramie said another point of interest is the Battle of Minisink Commemoration to be held on July 21<sup>st</sup> at 2:00p.m. at the Sullivan County Battleground Park in Minisink Ford. Conway provided details of the event. She added that Fort Delaware will be represented this year at the event by some of the costumed interpreters. Ramie noted that on July 22<sup>nd</sup>, the annual ceremony at the Grave of the Unknown Soldier in Lackawaxen will take place. Ramie reported that in the beginning of July we will be doing our publicity for the raft trip which takes place August 5<sup>th</sup>. Reservations will be due by July 27<sup>th</sup>. She noted that Soete will be on vacation from July 5<sup>th</sup> until July 17<sup>th</sup> and that a Local Waterfront Revitalization Plan Charrette is being planned. Roeder asked who the lead is on this project. Ramie told him it is the Sullivan County Division of Planning and Environmental Management as they are the ones who received the Department of State grant to put the plan together, but it involves all three counties on the New York side of the river valley, from Hancock to Port Jervis.

### **New Business**

**Computer Quotes:** Ramie said two quotes for new computers were provided in the packets. She reminded members the amount of the Norcross grant the Council received is \$2,500. Both quotes were reviewed and after some discussion it was decided to clarify memory storage from one vendor that the staff recommends and determine if the quote is firm before moving forward.

**Update on Resource Specialist Search:** The topic was covered during the Executive Director's report.

**Coalition for the Delaware River Watershed Steering Committee Invitation:** Ramie noted that she sent the draft Governance Document for this committee by e-mail in advance for review. The UDC has been invited to join the steering committee of this organization. There is no financial obligation whatsoever. It is funded by two sources of grants from the William Penn Foundation and the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation. She listed some of the member organizations that the UDC is familiar with including Friends of the Upper Delaware River, Delaware Highlands Conservancy, American Rivers, Common Waters, and Pinchot Institute. One of the chief issues they are following is the Delaware River Basin Conservation Act. That Congressional act would provide \$500,000 a year for restoration in the basin. Discussion about what part of the Delaware River basin would benefit from the funding took place. Ramie said the meetings are conference calls and that she sat in on one of them on May 30<sup>th</sup> to obtain some basic information. She said that Bill Douglass had been speaking with the committee initially and they have now come back to us and reiterated their invitation. Richardson feels that because it covers our geographical area, we should be part of it. He said it is a great way to hear what is being said. Ramie feels it would raise the UDC's profile and it doesn't oblige us to do anything we don't want to do. Any letters that may be put forth would be brought before the Council for their review and a decision of whether to sign on or not. Roeder asked if they were aware of our River Management Plan and our association with the Park Service as far as being a scenic and recreation area. McGuinness said they are. Ramie added this coalition involves only non-governmental organizations. Fluhr said he is opposed to it as are the supervisors in Shohola Township. It is his opinion that by joining it gives the steering committee a letterhead that says Upper Delaware Council is a member of their organization. He fears that they may make a decision and if the Council disagrees with it, we would be affiliated with it. Ramie assured him not if we don't sign onto the issue. Fluhr's second reason for being opposed to joining is the steering committee's key function is protecting the Upper Delaware watershed. He feels the watershed is not our business. A lot of the watershed is outside the corridor. He suggested we could still send a delegate to an occasional meeting and make our thoughts known to them, but he does not feel they should be the "mother" organization and we're one of the "kids in the club". Rajsz does not see this as a "mother" organization, it is a coalition of organizations and she feels the UDC should be a part of the organization just to be at the table to see what they can bring. Peckham said the UDC is a very unique organization and there are political considerations. Rajsz said she feels some members are making the gas drilling issue the main reason that this coalition exists and that is not the main reason. Roeder said it appears to go beyond gas drilling when they talk about overall protection for the whole basin. Rajsz remarked "Don't we want to protect our area?" Roeder said that is exactly what we are doing here and we don't need them to do that. He questioned why do we need to be involved with this group. Rajsz says there

is information we can gather from them and there may be the potential to obtain some funding. Rajsz feels the UDC should join and after time if there is information that Ramie brings back to the Council that they do not approve of, we could always pull out. Peckham said he has been to some water resource conferences and noted that everything he hears is "How do you stop development up here for the benefit of down there?" He does not feel any consideration is given to landowners up here. Rajsz looks at joining the steering committee as a flow of information through Ramie. Richardson feels the scope of the steering committee's mission is much greater than ours, but that does not mean we have to get involved with anything that is out of our domain. He added that if the organization becomes strong enough and has funding in place, he would like to know what they are proposing. He said he might not agree with what they are proposing that might affect our area, but he would hate to find out after the "horse left the barn". Conway said there is power in information. Rajsz recommended bringing the issue before the full Council. She feels more members need to have some input. Richardson agreed. Fluhr suggested taking a vote on it at the committee level. Roeder noted it will be brought to Council regardless how the vote goes. Roeder made a motion to not be associated with the Delaware River Watershed Steering Committee. Peckham seconded the motion and it was carried with a vote of four to two. Roeder said to bring it up at the main meeting. Rajsz said we will.

**Summary of Pending Bills 6-26-12/Financial Statements:** A motion to approve the bills as listed on the abstract was made by Richardson, seconded by Fluhr and carried. Financial statements as of May 31, 2012 were provided for individual review.

**Other:** None

#### **Old Business**

**Proposed UDC Bylaws Changes:** In the interest of time, Rajsz suggested tabling discussion of Bylaws until the next meeting. All were in agreement.

**Other:** Richardson said the Upper Delaware Scenic Byway (UDSB) recognizes the issues the Council is having with Ramie spending some time on Scenic Byway issues. They are trying to address the issue. He said it was discussed to relocate their meetings to a different site. He does not know if that is the sentiment of the Council if they have someone besides Ramie perform the secretarial duties. In addition to it being discussed about finding a different site to meet, it was discussed trying to find someone to replace Ramie. Rajsz noted she has too much on her plate right now. Richardson said he feels the UDSB is a sister organization to the UDC and that their missions are so parallel in a lot of ways. He added he feels the UDC needs to support the Byway. Richardson wanted the Council to recognize that the Byway is working on this issue and they hope to get something resolved in the next few months. Many ideas were discussed. Ramie pointed out the UDSB did provide a \$3,000 donation to cover the services of the facility. Fluhr questioned if there is a policy for letting other organizations use the UDC conference room. Ramie said it has always been entertained on a case by case basis

**Public Comment:** None

**Adjournment:** A motion by Peckham, seconded by Roeder to adjourn the meeting at 8:13 p.m. was carried unanimously.

*Minutes submitted by Cindy Odell, 7/2/12*