

Upper Delaware Council  
**OPERATIONS COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES**  
**June 25, 2013**

Committee Present: Harold Roeder, Jr., Larry Richardson, Nadia Rajs (6:37 p.m.), George Fluhr, Fred Peckham  
Committee Absent: Jeffrey Dexter, Debra Conway  
NPS Partner: Sean McGuinness  
Staff: Laurie Ramie, Travis O'Dell, Cindy Odell  
Guests: None

The UDC's Operations Committee held its monthly meeting on Tuesday, June 25, 2013 at the Council office in Narrowsburg, NY. Vice-chairperson Roeder called the meeting to order at 6:36 p.m.

**Approval of May 28 Meeting Minutes:** A motion by Fluhr seconded by Richardson to approve the May 28 meeting minutes was carried. There was no public comment on the agenda.

**Executive Director's Report:** Ramie reported on the Council's federal funding situation noting our May payment was received on May 30 and that she applied for the June funding on June 24<sup>th</sup>. She provided members with the projected surplus for FY 2013 and said preliminary recommendations for relevant expenditures will be discussed under New Business. Ramie noted that the surplus is still the result of staff reduction.

Ramie said the "Application for Federal Assistance" package for FY 2014 was sent to NPS Administrative Officer Karen Henry on June 17<sup>th</sup>. She said she was verbally advised by Superintendent Sean McGuinness on June 19<sup>th</sup> that the \$300,000 full federal funding budget submitted by the UDC likely won't be accepted. Today a letter was received by McGuinness stating he is anticipating an additional 3% cut to the FY 2014 NPS budget in addition to the 5% cut we received in FY 2013. The UDC should therefore plan on an 8% reduction of funds from the \$300,000 which totals \$276,000. McGuinness said there is currently much uncertainty regarding funding. Ramie asked if we need to observe the same deadline of July 10<sup>th</sup> for the revised budget. McGuinness said that he will find out. Ramie said she was advised by the UDC auditor that each time there is an amendment made to our budget, we should have a resolution to that effect for accounting purposes.

Ramie highlighted the Administrative Issues from her written report. She noted we have had some communication with Westfall Township regarding their vacancy. Copies of the May 30<sup>th</sup> letter from the UDC and the June 18<sup>th</sup> response from Township Secretary Lisa Green were provided in members' packets. The UDC vacancy is just one of several the township is currently trying to fill.

Ramie said a copy of the letter sent to the China King Restaurant addressing our concerns over the safety of their children playing in our parking lot was provided. She added the letter requested the children be directed to play in a safer setting. Peckham asked if they have responded. Ramie said no, but believes by action, the letter has had a positive effect.

Ramie said in regards to 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary activities, she prepared and presented a UDC educational program at the Delaware River Sojourn kick-off luncheon on June 22<sup>nd</sup> in Lackawaxen. The first day was attended by 83 people and 106 were expected for the second day. She noted the presentation of Lord High Admiral to Kevin Reish, the NPS ranger who coordinated the Water Safety Campaign, took place and she was able to get pictures for the Upper Delaware newsletter. Ramie said staff will be attending several more festivals this summer as we have the motivation of t-shirts to sell and to promote awareness of the UDC during this 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary year. Scheduled festivals include the Zane Grey Festival in Lackawaxen on July 20<sup>th</sup>; the Callicoon Street Fair on July 27<sup>th</sup>; Narrowsburg RiverFest on July 28<sup>th</sup>; and CCC (Civilian Conservation Corps) Day at Ten Mile River Scout Camp on August 4<sup>th</sup>. An alumni/reunion theme is being promoted for the UDC's 25<sup>th</sup> Annual Raft Trip on August 4<sup>th</sup> which this year is from Ten Mile River to Barryville. Ramie said the t-shirt inventory has been replenished with 48 more shirts ordered.

Three new releases were issued in the last month: "UDC Seeks Sponsors for 5K Strides Across the Delaware" on May 31; "UDC Technical Assistance Grant Applications Due by Aug. 30" on June 3; and "UDC Opens Registration for Sept. 28 Strides Across the Delaware 5K Run/Walk" on June 12<sup>th</sup>.

Ramie referenced the July calendar of UDC meetings, activities, and deadlines and reminded members that the July UDC meeting will be postponed by a week due to the July 4<sup>th</sup> holiday.

### **New Business**

**Nominate a Secretary/Treasurer:** Roeder said, "We are all deeply saddened at the loss of Jack. He was a worthy member." A moment of silence was observed in memory of Town of Fremont Representative Jack Niflot, who died on June 22. Ramie reported on the schedule of his services. She said he leaves a void in so many different organizations and will be hard to replace. Rajs said, "John was an icon and every so often, we lose one of those icons." Ramie said the role of secretary/treasurer is such that there is payroll every two weeks and there are checks that need to be signed at that time, and once a month, the expense checks need to be signed. Ramie added that a key to the position is proximity and availability. The other two UDC officers are authorized to sign checks as well, Ramie said. Ramie read the procedure from the Bylaws which states, "If a vacancy shall occur in any office after the annual meeting shall have been held, the members of the Council may nominate one or more representatives for such office at a regular meeting or at a special meeting called for such purpose. The Council shall vote to fill the vacancy at its next regular meeting or at a special meeting called for such purpose provided at least ten days written notice of such election shall have been given to the members." After a brief discussion, it was decided to reactivate the Nominating Committee of Richardson, Jeffer, and for Roeder to join them to propose a candidate at the July 11<sup>th</sup> meeting to be voted on at the August 1<sup>st</sup> meeting. Niflot's keys to the Personnel file cabinet were transferred to Richardson intermittently.

**FY 2013 Proposed Expenditures:** Ramie referenced the audio visual equipment proposal in members' packets and noted it was based upon what we had applied to Norcross Wildlife Foundation for through a grant that was recently declined. The equipment would allow us to make PowerPoint presentations. Also included in the proposal are two printers with installation for the bookkeeper and Ramie's office. Ramie noted that the prices are approximate as the proposal was done on June 13<sup>th</sup>. She added this equipment would set the Council up well for Project Review meetings and for eventually taking information out to local towns and townships. A motion to purchase the proposed equipment was made by Richardson, seconded by Rajs and carried.

Ramie said the next proposal is for signs for our parking lot. She said the only sign we currently have to indicate that the lot is privately owned is a small paper one in the office window. She referenced the quote for six aluminum signs with cast iron stands and posts in members' packets. Many suggestions for marking the parking lot as private were offered. Richardson noted people need to be alerted to the fact that the lot is private before they pull in. After much discussion it was decided to start with a purchase of three signs with the wording "Upper Delaware Council Parking Only" and determine the effectiveness of them and then decide if more signs may be needed. A brief discussion about the enforcement of the signage message took place. A motion to purchase three signs was made by Rajs, seconded by Richardson and carried.

Ramie noted that T. O'Dell installed the new vertical blind in the small conference room earlier in the day. Fluhr mentioned that the exit door into the parking lot is in need of some repair.

Ramie reported that the phone system we currently use in the office is outdated and the quality is quite poor. She noted staff does participate in many more teleconferences as opposed to traveling to meetings. She said there are a minimum of four to five teleconferences each month. The quote provided in the packets is from the company that has provided the phone system currently used in the office. Richardson commented that he would like to obtain an estimate for installing an exit door in the conference before the surplus funding is whittled away. Peckham reviewed some of the specifications of the proposed system. Ramie offered the estimated balance of the anticipated surplus after the purchase of the audio visual equipment, the parking signs, and the phone system would still make a new door possible. A lengthy discussion about conference door possibilities took place. Members suggested getting some estimates from a few different contractors. A motion to purchase the proposed phone system was made by Rajs, seconded by Peckham and carried with a nay from Richardson.

Ramie noted the Council had deferred bids from last year when we had a surplus. Three projects deferred were interior painting of the office, upgrading the electrical service, and the removal of the air conditioner from the wall in the front office and filling it in. She said that the projects would need to be finished by the end of the fiscal year which is September 30<sup>th</sup>.

**“Strides Across the Delaware” 5K Run/Walk Update:** T. O’Dell noted that registration is open and there is a link on the Upper Delaware Council website to the race application. He reported on the committed sponsors to date that include the Wayne Bank, Café Devine, and the Scranton Wilkes Barre RailRiders. T. Odell referenced the pending bill for the 5K event insurance and noted it is required in order to secure the permits for the event. O’Dell said he has almost everyone in place for traffic control and he continues to work on that. Rajszyk asked if anyone has registered for the event yet. O’Dell told her yes and he asked the members to promote the event. He added he has had nothing but positive feedback about the event so far.

**Summary of Pending Bills 6-25-13/Financial Statements:** The committee was provided with an abstract of bills dated June 25 to review. A motion by Rajszyk, seconded by Peckham to pay the bills listed on the abstract was carried unanimously. Financial Statements as of May 31, 2013 were provided for individual review.

**Other:** Fluhr said he wanted to make some comments on the National Park Service Draft Foundation Document. He said he felt the document was not sensitive to the feelings of the people of the Upper Delaware valley. Fluhr reflected on the early days of the writing of the River Management Plan (RMP) and noted that as a result, “anything out of Denver conjures up bad feelings and memories.” Fluhr had requested that a copy of page 15 of the RMP be included in members’ packets and read the area that he had marked which stated “Congressionally designated areas such as the Upper Delaware are established for specific purposes as described in the enacting legislation. Therefore, the Upper Delaware Scenic and Recreational River is not a national park.” McGuinness said that overview continues to talk about all the units that are not national parks, but are managed similarly with these kinds of documents. Fluhr said that there are many references to “park” throughout the Draft Foundation Document and read many examples. Fluhr referenced page 48 of the Document and read “The National Park Service is authorized to acquire land (up to 450 acres)...”. He said that offers no explanation and no reference to the RMP. Fluhr referenced page 10 of the Document where it refers to the RMP as outdated and he suggested that the use of the word “park” was inappropriate in the statement “Improving relationships with landowners and the townships along the Upper Delaware and their perception of the National Park Service is an important management goal for the park” under *Improving Community Relationships*. He added that in the Document under laws and policies, nowhere does it reference the River Management Plan. Rajszyk asked who wrote this document. McGuinness said it was the result of the three-day workshop that was held April 29, 30, and May 1 of which Ramie, O’Dell and Chairperson Dexter were a part of on behalf of the Council. Rajszyk questioned where the misinformation came from. McGuinness said it is not misinformation, but it is being interpreted as misinformation. Fluhr questioned if the Document will be approved before the public has a chance to see it or comment on it. McGuinness explained it is an internal document and that zero action is happening with it. He added it is an outline of ideas to make the whole river valley better. Roeder suggested using a word other than “park” in the Document. McGuinness said that they could consider “park unit”. McGuinness said the Document is not about managing the river; it is about managing the unit. He said during the workshop, the significant statement was changed a number of times to make sure it included landowners and private property rights. Fluhr said he did not feel the Council was given enough time to make comments regarding the Draft Document. Ramie said the Document does not require Council approval. She said McGuinness shared it with us as a courtesy, noting it is a Park Service document. McGuinness said he will see if more time can be allowed. Ramie said the point about this being a unique area was emphasized over and over again at the workshop. Peckham said he felt the Document read as if this was “just another park” and he thinks that is the problem with it. Ramie said that Dexter was very vocal during the workshop to ensure that property owners were properly represented. McGuinness said that as a result of the Council participation at the workshop, the facilitators were able to get a sense of how things work here. Roeder said he feels “we should strive to have something positive, instead of lighting flames again” and that may be accomplished just by changing some wording. Richardson said we do have to get out of the past and that we can’t forever keep dragging up the past. McGuinness asked Fluhr to provide him with his comments on the Document and they’ll work on incorporating them. Fluhr commented this document has never been brought up at a meeting before tonight. Ramie said that it had. They reported on it after participating in the three-day workshop. O’Dell noted that the two workshop facilitators from Denver were at the May full Council meeting. McGuinness explained that the Document is not about managing the park unit, it is about managing the Park Service. Richardson said he looks at this document as a chance for

this unit of the Park Service to get noticed. Fluhr expressed his concern about the Document not being made available to the public. McGuinness reiterated that it is an internal document and added that negative comments do not help to move this place forward. Rajszyk said that she feels the Foundation Document is important and suggested that it needs to be accurate; some of the wording needs to be changed. McGuinness asked Rajszyk to go through the Document and provide her comments. Fluhr said we need to be sensitive to the ill feelings that exist if we are going to accomplish things. He added that many good things have come out of this partnership. McGuinness said the National Park Service has been mandated by Congress to protect the values of the river. McGuinness said this Document will help the Park Service prioritize some planning efforts for them to start addressing some of the issues. McGuinness hopes that Council members can help to explain what the Park Service's role is when people start to get upset. He added we need to keep moving forward and not stay in the past. Fluhr reiterated that we need to be sensitive to people and don't want to be perceived as having a secret agenda. McGuinness said the Foundation Document will not be a secret document and the intent of it isn't to make things worse in this valley, it's to make it better. Richardson said he would not refer to the document as secret, that it has been talked about many times in public and the Council was involved with the workshop. He added that his concern would be that some of the concerns that were brought up at the workshop, weren't addressed. McGuinness said that throughout the document, things were changed to reflect the UDC's comments. Fluhr asked Ramie and O'Dell if the comments they made at the workshop were incorporated into the Document. O'Dell said that he had not finished reading it, but could see that some were. McGuinness said that the UDC's input did change the tone of draft Document. O'Dell agreed that it helped and Ramie added that it could have been a "boilerplate" Park Service document otherwise. Peckham said his problem with the Document is that it is not unique enough to this area. McGuinness said there are statements throughout that talk about the richness of the people, the cultural areas, and the partnership model which is unique to this area. A brief discussion about how this document could be perceived took place. Peckham talked about his family's history with the River Management Plan. Ramie said she had submitted 46 comments, many of which echoed Fluhr's concerns, and would circulate those to the UDC members for their information. The current review deadline is July 5<sup>th</sup>.

### **Old Business**

**Parking Lot Update: June 17 Planning Board Hearing Report:** Ramie reported that she and O'Dell attended the Town of Tusten Planning Board public hearing on June 17<sup>th</sup>. O'Dell noted the proposed business located adjacent to the UDC office was approved and reviewed some of the conditions concerning our private parking lot, including required signage to direct customers to the rear of the property at 225 Bridge St. and keeping the fire lane open at all times. Ramie said that enforcement will be the key.

**Other:** None

**Public Comment:** None

**Adjournment:** A motion by Peckham, seconded by Rajszyk to adjourn the meeting at 8:35 p.m. was carried unanimously.

*Minutes submitted by Cindy Odell, 7/2/13*