

UPPER DELAWARE COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES

Oct. 7, 2010

The UDC held its monthly meeting on Thursday, Oct. 7, 2010 at the Council office in Narrowsburg, NY. Chairperson Harold Roeder Jr. called the meeting to order at 7:30 p.m. A motion by Niflot seconded by Boyar to approve the Sept. 2 meeting minutes was carried. There was no public comment on the agenda.

In attendance: Town of Hancock-Fred Peckham, Town of Fremont-Jack Niflot, Town of Delaware-Harold Roeder Jr., Damascus Township-Jeff Dexter, Town of Cohecton-Larry Richardson, Town of Tusten-Sue Sullivan, Berlin Township-Lillian Russell, Town of Highland-Andy Boyar, Town of Lumberland-Jay Shafer, Town of Deerpark-Phil Chase, Shohola Township-Scott Rando, and Westfall Township-Peter P. Kenny. Absent: Lackawaxen Township, State of New York, Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, Delaware River Basin Commission, National Park Service. Also in attendance: Jim Serio-Town of Hancock Alternate; John C. Sundholm-Town of Highland Alternate; Tony Ritter-Town of Tusten Alternate; Jim Rodgers-Town of Fremont Alternate.

Committee Reports: The committee reports were provided based on the meeting minutes. They included: Sept. 21 Water Use/Resource Management by Jim Serio; Sept. 16 and Sept. 28 Operations by Harold Roeder Jr.; and Sept. 28 Project Review by Fred Peckham.

Status Reports

Delaware River Basin Commission (DRBC): No one from DRBC could attend but informational handouts were provided. Douglass referenced the Delaware River Flow and Storage Data charts. On Oct. 1, the flow at Montague was 20,800 cfs due to precipitation from the tropical storm. The New York City Delaware River Basin combined reservoir storage was 60.1%, with Cannonsville at 41.6%. For the month of September, the combined storage was 55.7%. Also handed out was the DRBC Hydrologic Conditions Report of Sept. 14. The observed precipitation for the Delaware River Basin above Montague for the period Jan. 1 through Sept. 13, 2010 was 29.86 inches or .68 inches below normal. Two news releases were handed out both indicating drought situations. The DRBC on Sept. 24 issued a lower basin drought warning for the portion of the watershed downstream from Montague, NJ. The PA DEP news release of Sept. 16 noted 24 counties in PA were in drought warning while the remainder of the state was in drought watch. In the upper basin, relative to the river corridor counties, Pike County is under a drought warning while Wayne County is under a drought watch.

NYS Dept. of Environmental Conservation (NYS DEC): Bill Rudge sent along a news release of interest for the members that was handed out. The news release indicated that the DEC Commissioner added 16 counties to existing state quarantines that restrict the movement of ash trees, ash products, and firewood from all wood species to limit the potential spread of the invasive Emerald Ash Borer. The quarantines are in response to new findings of EAB in the State. Please go to the DEC website (www.dec.ny.gov) for more detailed information.

PA Dept. of Conservation and Natural Resources (PA DCNR): No report at this time

National Park Service (NPS): In the absence of Supt. Sean McGuinness, Coney provided his report.

McGuinness has informed the UDC that the Dept. of Interior appropriations bill is under a continuing resolution. This means that only a percentage of the funds for FY 2011 can be accessed. McGuinness contacted the comptroller general at the NPS regional office to discuss getting funds to the UDC. As a result, that process has started. However, advance funds for FY11 can only total 17.53% of FY 2010 funds. This allows UDC to request advance funds to cover October and November only. McGuinness noted that an update on the status of the appropriation bill might be provided to the federal agencies before Thanksgiving. It's also conceivable that the continuing resolution might carry on into January.

UDC Executive Director's Report: Douglass said he had nothing to add to what was being reported and therefore had no report at this time.

Old Business None

New Business

UDC Resolution 2010-10 Awarding TAGs for FY 2011: The Council members had been provided with copy of the resolution prior to the meeting. This resolution came through the Project Review Committee following their work on reviewing the grant applications for the Council's fiscal year 2011 Technical Assistance Grants Program funding at a special meeting on Aug. 10. The committee advanced funding recommendations to the full Council for action at this meeting. A motion by Richardson seconded by Rando to approve the funding recommendations as provided in the resolution was carried. The following grant requests were approved for a total of \$16,700:

- ~TAG 2011-01 Town of **Lumberland**, police/court needs assessment - \$2,800.
- ~TAG 2011-02 Town of **Delaware**, indexing zoning law; placement on website - \$2,400.
- ~TAG 2011-03 Town of **Tusten**, creation of road use agreement permits process and road preservation local law - \$2,520.
- ~TAG 2011-04 **Shohola** Township, research laws and court decisions in PA toward producing a brochure outlining positions and actions for PA township supervisors regarding natural gas projects in their townships - \$2,500.
- ~TAG 2011-05 Town of **Deerpark**, update/print town brochure/map - \$2,600.
- ~TAG 2011-06 Town of **Cochecton**, develop town website including law and ordinances and other information for residents and visitors - \$3,880.

NYS DOT Clean Fuel Car: Roeder passed around photos and such of a prototype natural gas car (NGC) which he saw in Suffern, NY while attending a meeting there. The car being used was a Honda.

Local System for Flood Warnings/Flood Watches in River Corridor Towns/Townships: Boyar brought up his concerns that with the recent flood warnings, due to his duties as the emergency management person in his town, he came to realize that standard uniform information was needed as to the status of the flood situation and when the town could expect flooding. He wondered if anyone had given any thought to posting such information on the internet or providing an email blast, and posting what damage would occur at what river height. Boyar also queried how would we know if the reservoirs and/or Lake Wallenpaupack or Mongaup system are releasing or in spill. As river towns, we need to let our residents and visitors know in a timely manner if we have a flood watch or warning. He wondered if the bridge abutments could be color-coded or something that would indicate at what height there would be a dangerous situation.

Coney explained that on the DRBC website, www.drbc.net, there are links to the National Weather Service Flood Information Web that includes the Advanced Hydrologic Prediction Service gauge graphs relative to river flow and river stage both observed and forecast for the entire Delaware River as well as some tribs. These graphs give real time information and also highlight forecasted river levels and at what stage there should be action, moderate flooding, major flooding, etc. and what areas would be flooded at what stage shown on a map. It's an invaluable resource and should be used by all.

Richardson offered that while the gauges are important, the average homeowner doesn't know what gauge height means in relation to river levels and what level will flood what. We need a better system. Rando explained that the gauges are accurate and what happens at what stage is on the website, but not everyone has a computer. NPS has a traveler's radio station that broadcasts river levels and such and

maybe something like that could be used. Peckham mentioned that the best thing the town could have is a siren system for flooding events so people would know what's happening, especially if the power is out. Niflot thought maybe every bridge across the Delaware River should have some type of reflective paint gauging to show how high the river is rising. Roeder suggested asking the towns for input on the matter.

Boyar said he wanted to mention that the reservoir levels were down enough to create the voids everyone talks about and it helped with this past storm. If the reservoirs had been spilling, it would have been a disaster.

Sullivan offered her appreciation to staff for keeping on top of things. Issues are growing all the time and staff continues to remain on top of them.

Disclosure Statement: Sullivan announced that she would also like to provide the UDC with her disclosure statement as mentioned and provided by Boyar at the Sept. 2, 2010 Council meeting in relation to future gas drilling issue voting. She would be submitting the information shortly.

UDC Letter to DRBC regarding 100 cfs excess release credit: Chase inquired if the Council had received a response from Carol Collier, Executive Director of the Delaware River Basin Commission, to the UDC's Sept. 2 letter inquiring about the status of the 100 cfs excess release credit. Staff replied, no.

Public Comment (13 guests)

~ Jim Serio reported that regarding the flood emergency discussion earlier, the Upper Delaware Scenic Byway, Inc. had a potential grant to put AM radio substations along the river corridor containing information about the NYS Rt. 97 Byway. At the time, no positive response on the project was received from the towns so the funding went to another project. But in times of emergency, something like that could be used. The technology is there and we need to use it for getting emergency warnings out.

~ Barbara Arrindell handed out to the members the Damascus Citizens' "Analysis of leased land in Damascus Township, Wayne County, PA" relative to gas drilling leases. Arrindell noted the report shows a majority of people who are residents in the township are not under a lease. A minority of people own a majority of the land. Any member wishing an electronic copy of the document to forward should contact Coney as Arrindell was forwarding same to her. Arrindell added that the river towns will not benefit from gas unless the parcels leased go to an industrial use.

~ Allan Rubin mentioned that in relation to the natural gas car mentioned earlier, studies show natural gas is just as dirty as other fuels. Studies show gas is no cleaner than oil and possibly not cleaner than coal. Gas is another fossil fuel. He said the way to prevent any Delaware River impact is not to allow heavy industry in the first place.

~ Heidi Schneider mentioned that all radio stations are in the Emergency Broadcast System and she would find out what has to be done to be notified of flooding.

~ Jim Rodgers added he had a NOAA radio at home he listens to in emergencies and NOAA will tell you the gauge levels at Cooks Falls and Callicoon, and they'll tell you what type of things flood at what level. The radio was not expensive.

Adjournment A motion by Boyar seconded by Kenny to adjourn the meeting at 8:34 p.m. was carried.

Carol Coney, Office Manager