

UPPER DELAWARE COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES

January 3, 2013

(Annual Meeting)

The Upper Delaware Council held its monthly (annual) meeting on Thursday, January 3, 2013 at the Council office in Narrowsburg, NY. Chairperson Nadia Rajsz called the meeting to order at 7:06 p.m. The Pledge of Allegiance and roll call followed.

In attendance: Town of Hancock-Fred Peckham, Town of Fremont-Jack Niflot, Town of Delaware-Harold Roeder, Jr.(7:19p.m.), Town of Cohecton-Larry Richardson, Town of Tusten-Tony Ritter, Town of Highland-Debra Conway/Andrew Boyar, Town of Lumberland-Nadia Rajsz, Town of Deerpark-David Dean, Damascus Township-Jeffrey Dexter, Lackawaxen Township-John McKay, Shohola Township-Patricia Jeffer(7:21p.m.), State of New York-William Rudge, Commonwealth of Pennsylvania-Dennis DeMara, National Park Service-Sean McGuinness. Staff in attendance: Executive Director-Laurie Ramie, Resource Specialist-Travis O'Dell, Secretary-Cindy Odell. Absent: Berlin Township, Westfall Township, Delaware River Basin Commission.

Election of 2013 UDC Officers: Rajsz referenced the ballot in each members' packets. The Nominating Committee's slate of officers was presented. Candidates were: Chairperson – Jeffrey Dexter (Damascus Township); Vice-Chairperson – Andrew Boyar (Town of Highland); and Secretary/Treasurer – John B. Niflot (Town of Fremont). Rajsz noted that nominations from the floor were also welcome. Votes were cast and ballots were collected by Ramie for tallying. Ramie reported that eleven votes were cast and the result was unanimous for the slate of officers as recommended by the Nominating Committee. Rajsz congratulated the new officers and offered the following remarks: "I would just like to thank the members of the Council for giving me the opportunity to again be the Chair of the UDC. It was a pleasure to serve such a great group of people. The past few years we have seen a lot of changes; a lot of new members come on, a lot of old members have left, a lot of history left; Bill Douglass, Dave Soete, Carol Coney, but in their place we have Laurie Ramie who is really an outstanding Executive Director. She has proven herself to be an excellent leader, a multi-tasker and we are lucky to have you. Additionally we have two new faces, Cindy and Travis, who are outstanding additions to the UDC staff. They are quick learners, dedicated to our mission, and I'm very grateful for all their help during this past year. We have also seen a lot of polarization on the Council whether it is the gas-drilling issue or protecting private property rights or other issues. There's one thing that stands out in my mind, our primary goal is the jewel that we have among all of us, it is the river that runs through our corridor and that is our mission to protect it through the River Management Plan. So I do congratulate the newly elected officers. I wish them a successful and a peaceful year and may all the issues that we have confronting us, be resolved with respect for one another and tolerance. So again, I congratulate all of you and wish you great success. And thank you again for allowing me the opportunity to be Chair this year. Thank you." Dexter conducted the remainder of the meeting.

Approval of December 6 Meeting Minutes: Dexter asked for approval of the December 6th meeting minutes. He noted it is the corrected version that was sent out on December 17th. A motion by Richardson to accept those minutes was seconded by Rajsz and carried.

Public Comment on the Agenda: None.

Committee Reports: Committee reports were provided based on the meeting minutes. They were: December 18 Water Use/Resource Management by Ritter; December 18 Operations by Rajszy; and December 18 Project Review by Richardson.

Ritter referenced handouts concerning the Narrowsburg Esplanade Project in members' packets. He noted that storage in the New York City reservoirs is currently at 87.7%. He said that normal for this time of year is 78.1%.

Status Reports

Delaware River Basin Commission: The DRBC was absent, however, the hydrologic report was provided. Ramie said that also provided was a DRBC news release announcing the launch of an online reporting system for its Water Supply Charges Program (WSCP). Noted in the release was the fact that in May 2011, the commissioners gave the green light for DRBC staff to move ahead with efforts to enhance and update the agency's information technology capabilities.

Peckham asked Ritter if he knew what the current snowpack is. Ritter said that he did not, but he would provide a link that offers that information.

NYS Dept. of Environmental Conservation: Rudge emphasized that comments on the proposed regulations regarding high volume hydraulic fracturing will be accepted by the department until 5:00 p.m. on Friday, January 11, 2013. Comments can be addressed to the Department's Albany address. Rudge added that additional information pertaining to this issue, including the revised regulations, can be accessed on their website www.dec.ny.gov.

Rudge referenced a press release included in members' packets announcing changes to commercial black bass regulations. Rudge said the new regulations will ease the process for hatchery-raised largemouth bass to be sold for food in New York state by allowing those who purchase fish from a licensed hatchery, such as fish markets, to resell the fish in New York.

PA Dept. of Conservation & Natural Resources: DeMara referenced three news releases provided to members in their packets. He said the first provides a summary of a relatively targeted study done by ICF International for the Pennsylvania Legislative Budget and Finance Committee on four of the state's 21 water trails looking at the economic impact.

The second news release announces that the public is invited to again vote online for the 2013 Pennsylvania River of the Year, choosing from among six waterways nominated across the state including the Lackawanna River in the northeast. Individuals can visit www.pawatersheds.org/vote to read the nomination statement for each river and to vote. Voting ends Friday, January 18, 2013.

The third release talks about the many activities available in Pennsylvania's state parks and forests to winter visitors. DeMara said the Governor announced the Community Conservation Partnership grants back in November. He said that \$26.5 million was awarded for 190 projects. Locally, the Northeast PA Sno-Trails, Inc. received \$174,000 for a snowmobile trail groomer for their 230 miles of snowmobile trails. In Pike County, there was over \$800,000 awarded for a land acquisition and a \$30,000 planning grant to prepare a Greenway plan for the Lackawaxen/Upper Delaware River. DeMara added that Shohola Township received \$94,000 for a park development project.

DeMara said the next main Community Conservation Partnerships Program grant workshop for 2013 is going to be held on February 20th at Luzerne County Community College. More information can be accessed at www.dcnr.state.pa.us. He added that he and Lorne Possinger will come to the March 19th Water Use/Resource Management Committee meeting to provide a program overview and present a mini grant workshop. These grants are available to municipalities and non-profits.

DeMara said that the DCNR along with Delaware Highlands Conservancy and Beaver Run Hunting and Fishing Club on December 10 celebrated the protection of a 857-acre, natural resource-rich property in southern Pike County. The property is adjacent to state forestlands, so its protection creates a contiguous block of forest great for wildlife and biodiversity, and water quality. Protecting the Beaver Run property has been a model of cooperative effort between the private club, the nonprofit Delaware

Highlands Conservancy, county and state agencies, the Pike County Commissioners, the Scenic Rural Character Preservation Program, and the Department of Conservation and Natural Resources.

DeMara referred members to the department's website for additional information on the Green Park Award for 2013. The purpose of the Award is to recognize excellence in the public park community for those that demonstrate the integration of green and sustainable park practices based upon certain criteria.

National Park Service-Upper Delaware: McGuinness reported he had been contacted by the Pennsylvania Department of Transportation that the Pond Eddy Bridge is scheduled for emergency repairs. The scope of work entails the emergency replacement of 12 stringers. The work is anticipated to start on 2/7/13 and the timeframe for scheduled work is one week. The bridge will be closed to vehicular traffic during the day to allow repairs to be completed. It will open back up to traffic after work is completed each day and will remain open overnight. The hours of closure have not yet been determined, but are expected to be similar to those during the 2011 repair.

McGuinness said the winter field office in Lackawaxen, PA is made available to the Delaware Highlands Conservancy through an agreement with the National Park Service, an important supporter of the Eagle Institute project, and serves as a center of information for visitors looking to learn more about viewing and protecting eagles. He looks forward to working year round with the Conservancy on more education projects and conservation efforts in the river valley.

McGuinness stated that he and staff worked with other Park Service personnel for hours today on comments for New York State's natural gas regulations. He said the comments are very similar to those previously submitted. They hope to reinforce concerns that had not been addressed earlier.

UDC Executive Director's Report: Ramie referenced her letter to Sean McGuinness outlining the concerns over the UDC's still-missing October payment and unavailability of our FY 2013 funding. She noted that on our present course of monthly spending, we will run out of money by mid-April and be forced to shut down. McGuinness said he continues to work on the issue on behalf of the UDC. DeMara wondered if submitting the request for the October payment again would help. McGuinness said that he had talked with the National Park Service Associate Regional Director David Moore today and Moore assured him that he would look into the issue and see what he could find out for him. Ramie said she is optimistic that the funding will come into place. McGuinness stated that it is still not clear what will happen with the Park Service's funding when the continuing resolution expires at the end of February.

Ramie congratulated the new officers and announced that the swearing-in ceremony, reception, and group photo will take place on February 7th. She noted that C. Odell has sent out the municipal appointment forms to all the member governments to verify our 2013 roster. Ramie advised the three officers that they all are required to go in person to the Bank of America to show ID for 2013 check-signing privileges. Ramie said that all representatives and alternates are welcome to join any of the UDC's three standing committees: Operations; Project Review; and Water Use/Resource Management. If anyone is interested, they only need to let staff know to be added to the list. Members of the committees will elect chairs and vice-chairs this month.

Ramie noted that Dennis DeMara will offer his Community Conservations Partnership mini grant workshop presentation at the WU/RM Committee meeting on March 19th in time for the application deadline of April 10th and that it has been confirmed that Dr. Peter Kolesar and Jim Serio will present at the February 19th WU/RM Committee meeting. They will discuss alleviating thermal stress through the reservoir system.

Ramie reported that this year's Annual Awards Ceremony will be the UDC's 25th. She noted that it is typically held on the 4th Sunday of April, which this year would be the 28th. She asked members if they had any conflicts with this date. Hearing no objections, she said this would be the date and said the ceremony is to be held on the Pennsylvania side of the river this year. She will obtain a quote for a venue. She asked members to think of suggestions for the keynote speaker and noted that a decision on whether to seek event sponsors would be discussed at this month's Operations Committee meeting. Ramie said that Richardson came up with the idea of having a UDC tribute in photos of the past 25 years that could run in a loop during the ceremony. She said that we may need to call upon Dave Soete for assistance with this project.

Ramie reported that we are applying to the Norcross Wildlife Foundation for a grant of \$2,500 for the purchase of audiovisual presentation equipment and two needed printers. This request will be sent after January 11th as that is the one year expiration of when our application was sent last year. She said that she and T. O'Dell collaborated on the project budget and narrative request. She hopes that we are successful in securing this grant in order to purchase the equipment and have it ready for the Awards Ceremony and T. O'Dell would like to start using the equipment for Project Review meetings so that he can project maps and show site plans. The intention is to become more technologically updated in how we share projects and developments with the Council.

Ramie noted that the second round of NYS Mid-Hudson Regional Economic Development grants was announced on December 20th. River valley regional projects funded were: \$243,142 to Sullivan County and Orange County jointly for the Pond Eddy Parking Access Study and Sparrowbush River Access Acquisition; \$106,400 for Construction of the Narrowsburg Big Eddy Esplanade; and \$49,045 for the Port Jervis Whitewater Kayak Park.

Ramie referenced the January calendar in packets which includes dates of meeting, activities and deadlines.

Old Business: None

New Business:

UDC Resolution 2013-01: Award Printing of "The Upper Delaware": A resolution awarding the printing of *The Upper Delaware* newsletter for FY 2013 to Courier Printing Corp. of Deposit, New York was presented. A motion by Rajs, seconded by Boyar to approve the resolution was carried unanimously.

UDC Resolution 2013-02: Authorizing Agreement with Eckersley & Ostrowski for Audit/Accounting Services FY 2013: A resolution to contract with the firm of Eckersley and Ostrowski, LLP of Scranton, PA to provide auditing and accounting services for Fiscal Year 2013 was presented. A motion by Rajs seconded by Roeder to approve the resolution was carried unanimously.

Resolution 2013-03: Authorizing Annual Signature of Corporate Resolution and Bank Cards: A resolution to allow the UDC 2013 officers and Executive Director to sign the corporate resolutions and signature cards for the accounts in various banking institutions was presented. A motion by Dean seconded by Rajs to approve the resolution was carried unanimously.

Resolution 2013-04: UDC Supporting Pace LULA Training Program: A resolution for the UDC to offer its official endorsement for the continuation and expansion of the Land Use Leadership Alliance Training Program was offered. A motion by Rajs seconded by Boyar to approve the resolution was carried unanimously.

Resolution 2013-05: UDC Approving Adoption of Updated Bylaws: A resolution to approve the revised "Upper Delaware Council, Inc. Bylaws" that will bear an adoption date of January 3, 2013 to coincide with this adoption action was presented. A motion by Rajs seconded by Richardson to approve the resolution was carried unanimously.

Other: None

Public Comment: None

Adjournment: A motion by Rajs, seconded by Richardson, to adjourn the meeting at 8:04 p.m. was carried unanimously.