

## **UPPER DELAWARE COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES**

### **September 5, 2013**

The Upper Delaware Council held its monthly meeting on Thursday, September 5, 2013 at the Council office in Narrowsburg, NY. Chairperson Jeffrey Dexter called the meeting to order at 7:02 p.m. The Pledge of Allegiance and roll call followed.

In attendance: Town of Hancock-Fred Peckham, Town of Fremont-Jim Greier, Town of Delaware-Harold Roeder, Town of Cochecton-Larry Richardson, Town of Tusten-Susan Sullivan, Town of Highland-Andy Boyar, Town of Lumberland-Nadia Rajs, Town of Deerpark-David Dean, Damascus Township-Jeffrey Dexter, Berlin Township-Al Henry, Lackawaxen Township-John McKay(7:04p.m.), Shohola Township-Pat Jeffer, National Park Service-Sean McGuinness. Staff in attendance: Executive Director-Laurie Ramie, Resource Specialist-Travis O'Dell, Secretary-Cindy Odell. Absent: Westfall Township, State of New York, Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, Delaware River Basin Commission. Also in attendance: Tony Ritter, Town of Tusten alternate, Debra Conway, Town of Tusten alternate, and Ginny Dudko, Town of Deerpark alternate.

**Approval of August 1 Meeting Minutes:** A motion by Rajs, seconded by Boyar to approve the August 1 meeting minutes was carried.

**Public Comment on the Agenda:** None

**Committee Reports:** Committee reports were provided based on the meeting minutes. They were: August 20 Water Use/Resource Management by Ritter; August 27 Operations by Dexter; and August 27 Project Review by Richardson.

### **Status Reports**

**Delaware River Basin Commission:** The DRBC was absent, however, the hydrologic report was provided. The NYC Delaware River Basin Storage as of August 28 was at a combined capacity of 84.1% with Cannonsville at 82.3%.

Ramie noted that the Delaware River Basin Commission will hold a public hearing on Wednesday, September 11, 2013. Hearing items will include draft dockets for withdrawals, discharges and other water-related projects. A conference session and business meeting will be held the following day on Thursday, September 12, 2013. The hearing, conference session and business meeting are open to the public and will be held at [The Enterprise Center at Burlington County College](#), 3331 Route 38, Mount Laurel, New Jersey. All information about the meeting including every docket is listed on the DRBC website.

**NYS Dept. of Environmental Conservation:** NYS DEC was absent, however, copies of a press release were provided at Bill Rudge's request. The press release, dated August 12, 2013 was titled "2013-14 Sporting Licenses Available Beginning August 12, 2013. Deer Management Permits, Hunting, Fishing and Trapping Licenses Will Be Available For Purchase."

**PA Dept. of Conservation & Natural Resources:** No report in the absence of Representative Dennis DeMara.

**National Park Service-Upper Delaware:** McGuinness reported that he attended a State Legislative Breakfast hosted by the Southern Wayne, Pike County, Pocono Lake Region and Wayne County Chambers of Commerce on August 9<sup>th</sup> at the Lake Wallenpaupack Visitor's Center. He had the opportunity to discuss the economics of the Upper Delaware. He noted that Carla Hahn participated in the Mid-Hudson Regional Economic Development Council meeting on August 14 at the Sullivan County Community College. It was an opportunity for her to discuss the branding issue of the Upper Delaware region. He said the Park Service is taking advantage of every opportunity they can to promote the area and its resources and opportunities.

McGuinness stated that plans are in the works for a "Zane Grey Hometown Fishing Tournament & Community Fair" to celebrate the 2014 Bicentennial of Pike County, Pennsylvania in honor of Zane Grey, the "Father of the Western Novel" and world record-holding angler. The tentative event is scheduled for July 2014 and will take place at the confluence of the Lackawaxen and Delaware Rivers, Pennsylvania Fish and Boat Commission's Lackawaxen Access and on the grounds of the Zane Grey Museum. McGuinness will provide more details as they become available.

McGuinness said the second edition of the NPS Upper Delaware Scenic & Recreational River "Upper Delaware" e-newsletter was recently sent out. He said it is currently being sent to 200 recipients. He said the newsletter contains updates of recent activities, upcoming programs, and other information. Staff was asked to forward on to Council the most recent edition which contains information on signing up for this e-newsletter.

McGuinness noted that an "Arts A Fire!" program with writers Laura E.J. Moran and Tom Bosket took place this summer. Twenty four people joined Laura and Tom to learn, discuss and explore their art. The programs covered art history, art in your life and art around us. The programs, held outside the Zane Grey Museum, were held on Sundays throughout the summer. McGuinness said there have been a lot of participants for all the programs over the summer. Another success was the National Park Service Teacher-Ranger-Teacher (TRT) program which Paddy McCarthy from Port Jervis participated in. McCarthy worked at the Zane Grey Museum, floated the river, conducted programs, and will bring much of this information back to his students at Port Jervis.

McGuinness noted that 2016 marks the Park Service Centennial. He is looking for creative suggestions to have included in the NPS's promotions in 2016. He asked members that if they come up with any ideas that could be recognized for the 100 year anniversary, to please let him know.

McGuinness reported that the equipment has been purchased to convert the oral history cassette tapes to a digital format. He noted that once the conversion is completed, he will look into how to share these recordings with others. A brief discussion took place about the recordings that were done that do not have signed releases with them. Richardson suggested that if a list could be compiled of those without releases and shared with Council members, that could be helpful in connecting with these people or next of kin. McGuinness said he will be touring the area with four Cultural Resource Program specialists from the regional office on September 11 and 12. He will report back to the Council about any recommendations they may have.

McGuinness said the Park Service has acquired two new rafts for use primarily during high water events.

Ritter referred to an article in the September 5-11, 2013 edition of *The River Reporter* that contained information about a visitor center proposal. Rajs said the Town of Lumberland has applied for funding through a New York State Consolidated Funding Application (CFA) grant for the acquisition of property on Route 97 adjoining the National Park Service Ranger Station south of Barryville. If that acquisition happens, they will at that time discuss options with the NPS, she added. Ritter expressed his concern about the lack of a visitor's center now in the river valley as a result of the closing of the Park Service Bookstore on Main Street in Narrowsburg. Henry said that if a visitor's center is to be developed, it should be discussed by the Council and he recommended members consult the River Management Plan beginning at page 85 for information pertaining to such facilities. A very lengthy discussion about the proposed Upper Delaware Scenic Byway Visitor Center and the history behind it took place.

**UDC Executive Director's Report:** Ramie projected select slides from an August 29 meeting of the Pond Eddy Bridge Design Advisory Committee onto the screen. She reported that this was the fourth meeting of the DAC and took place in Shohola. Ramie provided a brief history on the bridge. Ramie noted that at the August 29<sup>th</sup> meeting, the DAC learned that the design being advanced (and which has been financed by both states) is a 2-span truss with a single travel lane of 15'8" featuring a raised sidewalk, on the same planned alignment approximately 35 feet upstream of the current footprint. A final design contractor, SAI Consulting Engineers of Lemoyne, PA has been hired. The bridge will be constructed to "handle legal loads", up to 40 tons, Ramie added. She said that negotiable aspects were the aesthetics of the bridge color, railing system, and the center pier. Examples of the options were projected on the screen for members to view. Ramie reviewed the timetable which is two years for final design, right-of-way negotiations, securing of state and federal permits, and SEQR process requiring an Environmental Assessment; and a 15 month season for construction targeted to start in 2016 and to be completed in 2018 at the earliest. A full-length causeway is required due to the lack of access on the Pennsylvania side for staging machinery. They do say it will not be in the river for the entire 15 months. The cost for the new bridge will be approximately \$11.5 million. A pre-application meeting with the permitting agencies may take place this fall as well as the issuance of a public newsletter.

Ramie referenced the September calendar of UDC meetings, deadlines, and activities in members' packets. She emphasized that the "Strides Across the Delaware" 5K Run/Walk is coming up on September 28<sup>th</sup> and we really do need all hands on deck.

#### **Old Business:**

#### **New Business:**

**Draft Resolution 2013-14: Adopting Changes to UDC Meeting Practices:** Dexter noted that everyone should have received a summary of the proposed meeting changes via e-mail for review. The recommendations offered by the Operations Committee are: (1) When an educational presentation is scheduled at monthly (7 p.m. first Thursday) UDC meetings, limit the presentation to approximately 30 minutes with any question-and-answer session held to the end; (2) Expedite the presentation of verbal committee reports at UDC monthly meetings to approximately five minutes each by focusing on issues and actions taken. Allow no verbatim reading of minutes; (3) Condense the Executive Director's verbal report on the UDC monthly meeting agenda and focus on new topics to supplement the monthly calendar handout of activities, meetings and deadlines. Make no changes to the status reports from the Delaware River Basin Commission, State of New York, Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, and National Park Service; and (4) Alternate the order of the Operations Committee and Project Review Committee held on the 4<sup>th</sup> Tuesdays of the month for a six-month trial basis starting in September 2013. A motion to pass Resolution 2013-14 was made by Boyar and seconded by Roeder. A brief discussion about the presentation of the verbal committee reports took place with different opinions and ideas expressed. A vote was taken. The motion carried with McKay voting no.

**Other:** Greier asked who the consultants are for the Local Waterfront Revitalization Plan Sullivan County River Access Site Design are. Ramie said the firm that was selected was Environmental Planning and Design (EP&D) of Pittsburgh, PA. Greier wondered if the site he had put in when he was the Supervisor of the Town of Fremont was one that would be studied. Ramie believes that it is. Sullivan asked who the Towns would direct questions to about this program. Ramie told her that Heather Jacksy of Sullivan County Planning is the lead on the project. Ramie added that each town is supposed to have its own committee to work on these river access designs.

Sullivan asked where the cell tower issue stands. Ramie told her staff was tasked with finding potential speakers to put a workshop together. They are in the process of researching who would be appropriate to bring in and will report findings to the Project Review Committee this month. Ramie said the structure for the workshop will also be discussed.

Sullivan asked what happens next with the William Penn Foundation. Ramie said we did request a speaker for tonight's meeting to come and present on the issue, but the individual was not available. He did say that he would try for the October 3<sup>rd</sup> meeting. Dean questioned if he heard correctly that their funding is

going to focus on the Delaware River. Ramie said the Foundation is directing all of their environmental grants to the Delaware River Basin. There will be a speaker at the September 12<sup>th</sup> DRBC meeting to discuss the Watershed Protection Program by William Penn Foundation, Ramie said.

Boyar noted that T. O'Dell will be speaking at the "Water, Water Everywhere" conference. The 4<sup>th</sup> Annual "Water, Water Everywhere – Future of the Upper Delaware River" conference is scheduled for October 15<sup>th</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup> at Hale Eddy. He said a lot of expert speakers are lined up for the two days to speak on a number of river-related topics. He encourages anyone that wants to learn about the river to attend. Ramie said the conference is \$30 for one day or \$50 for the two days. McGuinness said he has been asked to be on a panel that will discuss natural gas issues at this conference.

Boyar suggested that the question about the tax implications of putting lands into conservation easements could be posed to the Sullivan County Assessors Association. T. O'Dell said he has been researching the issue and it is a complicated one. A brief discussion about the issue took place.

Ritter said that his wife has suggested that possibly in the future, there could be an Upper Delaware River mobile visitor center that could be in operation from May through October. It could be open Friday through Sunday. It could be at the Callicoon Farmer's Market one day, the Bluestone Festival in Hancock another, and the Narrowsburg RiverFest on yet another day. The information could be brought to the people, as opposed to the people coming to it, he added.

Peckham reported on a new business that is supposed to be opening in Hancock at the former Becton-Dickinson plant.

**Public Comment:** None

**Adjournment:** A motion by Greier, seconded by Boyar to adjourn the meeting at 8:29 p.m. was carried unanimously.

*Minutes prepared by Cindy Odell 9/11/13*