

Upper Delaware Council
WATER USE/RESOURCE MANAGEMENT COMM. MEETING MINUTES
August 19, 2014

Committee Members Present: Al Henry, John McKay, Pat Jeffer
Committee Members Absent: Tony Ritter, Andy Boyar
NPS Partner: Don Hamilton, Carla Hahn
Staff: Laurie Ramie, Travis O'Dell, Cindy Odell
Guests: Heather Jacksy, Nick McKay

The UDC's Water Use/Resource Management Committee held its monthly meeting on Tuesday, August 19, 2014 at the Council office in Narrowsburg, NY. Vice-chairperson Henry called the meeting to order at 7:06 p.m. A motion by Jeffer seconded by Henry to approve the July 15 meeting minutes was carried. There was no public comment on the agenda.

Old Business:

D&H Transportation Heritage Council 7/23 Meeting Update: Ramie reported that this meeting took place in Hawley, PA at the D&H Canal Park at Lock 31 following a hike guided by Sally Talaga. The meeting was attended by 15 people including newly appointed Wayne County Historian, Peter Becker.

Ramie said that Council membership is now at ten voting members and three non-voting affiliated/individual members.

Ramie reported that disappointment was expressed when the videographer who had accepted a job to produce short educational video segments on the D&H and Gravity Railroad adjusted his original price proposal of \$200 total per day to \$600 per day for shooting plus \$600 per day for editing. Other proposals are to be sought, Ramie said.

Ramie said that the brochure that has long been in development for the Council was approved and there was an authorization to spend up to \$400 to print 1,000 brochures. The brochures should be available to hand out at the next quarterly meeting in October.

Work setting up the Council's Facebook page continues, Ramie reported. Research of some trivia facts about the D&H system will be conducted to enable the posting of "Did You Know?" interesting questions on the page.

Announcements of member accomplishments, concerns, and upcoming events took place. It was noted that the 2nd Annual Canal Festival at the D&H Canal Park at Lock 31 will take place on August 23rd. Also noted was that the Wayne County Historical Society is without an executive director for the second time since Sally Talaga retired a year and a half ago. Applications to fill the position are due by August 31st. George J. Fluhr spoke of a DVD history of Shohola Township being recently completed as part of Pike County's 200th anniversary. Ramie said the project was partially funded through a UDC Technical Assistance Grant and is available through the Shohola Railroad and Historical Society for \$10.

The next quarterly meeting of the Council is scheduled for Wednesday, October 22 at the D&H Canal Historical Society and Museum in High Falls. A new exhibit, "Plight of the Common Worker (on the D&H)," opened there in July and will be toured prior to the 1 p.m. business meeting. McKay noted that in the Union Cemetery in Lackawaxen, which holds the tomb of an unknown soldier killed in the Revolutionary War, there are bluestone markers that mark the graves of some of the workers from the canal building era.

Upper Delaware Scenic Byway 7/28 Meeting Update: Ramie stated that the good news at this meeting was that the grant money from the FHWA that had been pending since 2011 finally came through.

A \$1,000 contribution to the UDC has been agreed upon for 2014.

Freda Eisenberg, Sullivan County Division of Planning and Environmental Management's new Commissioner, was present and emphasized economic development in her report to the members, noting that the UDSB is an economic development mechanism. Some of her areas of focus are to encourage greater coordination of the various groups addressing economic development, and to develop a business resource guide to help businesses proceed through regulatory processes. She also recommends that the 2002 Byway Enhancement Plan be thoroughly reviewed. The members concurred and Ramie will make the

plan available to the members and will prepare a matrix of the recommendations, responsible parties, timeframes, and status for each topic.

The “Estimate of Tourism Visitation to the UDSB” study had been completed. This study is a UDC TAG funded project through the Town of Lumberland. A public presentation of the results will take place on September 22nd at 7 p.m. at the Tusten Town Hall sponsored jointly by UDC and the UDSB.

Ramie stated that trash removal in the river corridor was discussed at the meeting. She said Byway members acknowledged that there are trash issues along the Byway as well that should be looked at. As a result, they have formed a subcommittee to develop a strategic proposal with costs to address the trash issue along the Byway. Eisenberg mentioned that solar compactors are available, and that some will relay a message to service providers when they are filled. It was mentioned that a town could consider applying for a 2015 environmental grant through Sullivan Renaissance for solar compactors.

Sullivan Renaissance is sponsoring a symposium on scenic viewshed analysis at the Cohecton Town Hall in Lake Huntington on September 3rd at 7 p.m.

Ramie said she handed out the NPS press release quantifying the 2013 economic benefits of tourism to the Upper Delaware Scenic and Recreational River and that she reported that the National Parks Conservation Association is conducting a business survey on how to quantify the effect of NPS locations on a business.

The representatives of the Port Jervis Whitewater Park will be asked to give a presentation at the October Byway meeting to provide an update on the status of the project.

Orange County Tourism Director Susan Hawvermale has been invited to attend the August Byway meeting to discuss ideas about promoting the Byway area.

The next Byway meeting is scheduled for Monday, August 25th at 7 p.m.

National Parks Conservation Association 7/31 and 8/14 Meetings Update: Ramie noted that the National Parks Conservation Association (NPCA) is a non-profit, membership-based organization dedicated to supporting and enhancing national parks. Business owners and others in the Upper and Middle Delaware area were asked to participate in a survey to share with the NPCA their perspective on the region’s economy, its challenges and its opportunities, and their connections with the national parks along the Delaware River. Many invitations were sent out by NPCA inviting individuals to participate in a local focus group meeting. That meeting took place on July 31st at the UDC office. Ramie said that although it was not well attended, very candid conversations took place. Jacksy said she felt low attendance could be attributed to the short notice people received. Ramie shared details of the meeting. A couple of follow ups have happened since July 31st. Seventy responses have been received to the survey and a decision is pending on how to present the results of the survey, Ramie said.

Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission (ASMFC) American Eel Decision: Ramie reiterated that the UDC did support the eel fisheries continuance through a letter sent in July. The ASMFC American Eel Management Board met to consider final approval of Draft Addendum IV to the Interstate Fishery Management Plan (FMP) on August 7th. A copy of a news release dated August 7th provided in members’ packets states that the Board decided to postpone final action. The Board will convene a subcommittee of its members to identify preferred management measures to be considered by the Board for final action at the Commission’s Annual Meeting in Mystic, Connecticut the week of October 27, 2014. Ramie noted that the fishery is currently still open, but the issue remains unresolved. A brief discussion about eel harvesting on the Delaware took place.

Other: T. O’Dell said he followed up with NYS DEC regarding the report made at the August 7 UDC meeting that Eagle Creek LLC, operators of the Mongaup River Hydro Electric Generation Project requested and received approval to reduce the required minimum flow at their Swinging Bridge and Rio facilities from 100cfs to 82cfs while leaving the Mongaup Reservoir minimum flow at 70 cfs. O’Dell said Eagle Creek’s permit allows them to decrease their outflow when their inflow decreases. This reduction is temporary and will increase as their inflow increases. Their outflow, however, is never to go below 60 cfs, O’Dell added.

Henry reiterated his suggestion that mandatory wear of personal floatation devices should be required for the UDC’s Annual Raft Trip. Hamilton noted they make that a condition of the Delaware River Sojourn. After a brief discussion, it was decided that Odell would edit the current registration form to include this information and it will be presented at the next WU/RM meeting for members’ approval.

Henry questioned if an invitation has been extended to Congressman Gibson (NYS District 19) to spend some time on the river. Ramie said the UDC and Park Service met with the Congressman on August 13th and NPS Superintendent Heister did extend an invitation to him and his family for a river trip

Henry stated that a photo of his knotweed eradication efforts appeared in the “Our Country Home” insert in the August 14 – 20 edition of *The River Reporter*.

New Business:

Common Waters Technical Assistance Request for National Water Trail Designation: Hahn stated that the Common Waters Partnership application to the National Park Service Rivers, Trails and Conservation Assistance Program is for assistance by professional planners to engage the Upper Delaware community in facilitated conversation about the economy and the natural and cultural future of the Upper Delaware valley, corridor, and people for the next 25 years; bring together and compare multiple plans for initiatives involving the Upper Delaware River Corridor, identify common goals and help to identify means to collaborate on those common goals and initiatives; and work together to polish the message of the river corridor through aesthetics, signage and management concepts. Sullivan County Associate Planner Heather Jacksy spoke of her efforts to create consistent signage through the Local Waterfront Revitalization Plan project and how this assistance would be beneficial to this effort. Hahn passed out a handout on the “Key Findings and Next Steps from the Breakout Groups” from the Natural Economies conference held last October and shared details of that conference. She noted that she and Jacksy are present to seek a letter of support for the assistance and she understands that the full Council has authorized this committee to do so if they see fit. Henry stated that he feels the designation is a duplicative effort as the Park Service already exists in sections of the Delaware River and he believes that the terminology “water trail” confuses people as they think it is a trail along water. Hahn said she would like to see the Upper Delaware benefit from some of the technical assistance funding that is available. She said the promotion of the economy is getting lost in the discussion of the water trail. For the moment, we are asking for professional planners to come and work with us to join many existing plans together to make the best use of what we have and move forward with them for the benefit of the economy. McKay asked about the economic impact of a water trail impact for business owners. Jacksy stated that there are people in the recreating community that are drawn to water trails and that designation would also benefit the economy. Jacksy said that the requested letter of support is to have someone come here to assist in the process of applying for the designation and not an endorsement of a National Water Trail in itself. She feels the process is important as it will bring parties together to talk about issues on both sides of the river in each political jurisdiction. Jacksy stated that the deadline for letters of support for the application, which has already been filed, is August 31st. After more brief discussion, a motion to send a letter of support for the Application for Community Assistance was made by Jeffer, seconded by McKay and carried. Ramie questioned whose signature the letter should go out under. Henry said that he could sign the letter as the vice-chairman of the committee if Chairperson Tony Ritter would prefer.

Enjoy The View: September 3rd Seminar: T. O’Dell said that on September 3rd, Sullivan Renaissance will be holding a seminar in which planning and zoning board members, local officials and community volunteers are invited to attend and learn about preserving scenic views. The seminar will be held at the Cohecton Town Hall in Lake Huntington and begins at 7 p.m. O’Dell said he will be presenting on the UDC design guidelines. Jacksy noted that continuing education credits may be available to planning and zoning board members. A flyer was provided with additional details.

Delaware River Flow and Storage Data Report: Henry reported that current NYC Water Supply System total storage is currently at 90.5% and normal for this date is 80.9%. He said that actual average precipitation was above normal for June and July and is currently below historical for August.

Other: Ramie referred to the additional handouts in members’ packets. An article titled “Cellular Attack: Zoning Ordinances Can Help Townships Fight Invasion of Small Cell Towers” from the August 2014 edition of *PA Township News* was provided for information. A discussion about current technology took place.

The Damascus Citizens for Sustainability asked that a press release dated August 10th be distributed. A public meeting will be held on Sunday, August 24 from noon until 2 p.m. at the Delaware Youth Center in Callicoon at which the results of baseline methane testing in the Town of Delaware, NY will be reported and reviewed.

Ramie noted we have embarked on our document review of the River Management Plan. Members should have received a letter inviting them to participate in stakeholders meetings. They will take place on August 27th and 28th at the UDC office. The consultants would like to hear from as many board members as they can to gain their insights. Interested members are asked to reply to the consultants by Friday, August 22nd to set up a meeting time.

Henry questioned the deadline for submitting FY 2015 TAG applications and what priority funding is going to. Ramie said that the deadline is August 29th and digitizing zoning maps with the river corridor boundary overlay on them is the priority project. Henry cautioned that the boundary is a broad mark on a map and there may be concern of where the line is on a piece of property. Hahn said if there is a dispute, a survey may be done. He questioned the accuracy of the overlay on the zoning map and commented that surveys are very expensive. A lengthy discussion took place. Ramie said the adequacy of the maps and the definition of the boundary in the River Management Plan document would be good topics to bring up with the consultants for the review.

Public Comment: None

Adjournment: A motion by Jeffer seconded by McKay to adjourn the meeting at 8:19 p.m. was carried.

Minutes prepared by Cindy Odell, 8/22/14