

Upper Delaware Scenic Byway, Inc.

January 25, 2021 Zoom Meeting Minutes

Attendance:

Voting members:

John Pizzolato, Town of Highland representative, Chairperson
Rosie DeCristofaro, Town of Delaware rep., Vice-Chair
Larry Richardson, Town of Cochection rep., Secretary/Treasurer
Valerie Sense, Village of Hancock rep.
Ginny Dudko, Town of Deerpark rep.
Teresa Spradling, City of Port Jervis rep.
Josh Felderstein, Town of Tusten rep. (joined at 7:09)
Bianca Velez, Town of Lumberland rep. (joined at 7:39)
Freda Eisenberg, Sullivan County alternate

Non-voting members:

Kris Gilbert, NYS DOT Region 9
Ingrid Peterec, National Park Service Upper Delaware Scenic and Recreational River
Amanda Subjin, Delaware Highlands Conservancy
Carmela Hugel, Sullivan Renaissance
Laurie Ramie, Upper Delaware Council

Guests:

none

Call to Order: Chairperson Pizzolato called the virtual meeting held by Zoom to order at 7:05 p.m.

Business Items:

a.) **Approval of December 7, 2020 Meeting Minutes:**

On a **motion** by Richardson, seconded by DeCristofaro, the 12/7/20 minutes were approved.

b.) **Secretary's Correspondence Report:**

Ramie handed out a written report of outgoing and incoming correspondence, a list of informational requests through the website and hotline, book sales, and voting membership status since the last meeting. Revenue from the sale of four history books from 12/8/20 through 1/2/21 totaled \$354.75. A letter to author William Klaber of Long Eddy expressing appreciation for his donation of 10 softcover copies of his book, "The Rebellion of Miss Lucy Ann Lobdell" to UDSB on 1/14 was included. Ramie noted that additional copies of "So Many Brave Men" by Peter Osborne and co-authors are being shipped since our supply of that book was also depleted. Pizzolato noted that Aaron from One Grand Books in Narrowsburg had offered assistance to obtain books at close to wholesale rates in the future if needed.

c.) **Treasurer's Financial Report:**

Richardson reviewed his written report. The current balance is \$43,530.46. Deductions were for clerk services, stamps, postal reimbursements for book sales, \$165.16 Phone.com annual bill, and \$10,000 to Thiele Landscaping for the Kate Project Vista Enhancement Grant. Deposits were for member support from Cochection, Delaware, and Lumberland (\$3,000 total) and book sales, with a transfer of PayPal revenue into the general fund. Ramie noted that she had recently mailed Richardson 2021 municipal contribution checks from the Town of Deerpark for \$1,000 and Village of Hancock for \$250. Richardson said as pending bills, he has \$100 annual dues from the Sullivan Catskills Visitors Association and \$956 from Mike Preis Inc. for the Directors & Officers insurance policy renewal. He said that we expect to receive the General Commercial Liability policy from Callicoon Cooperative Insurance Co. in February that is typically a \$429 premium. He requested authorization to pay that when it arrives. On a **motion** by

Dudko, seconded by Senese, the Treasurer's Report was approved with authorization to pay the current bills and pending insurance invoice, with all in favor. Ramie said she will send Pizzolato the forms for the Directors & Officers Liability insurance for his digital signature so she can return them by 2/10. Lastly, Richardson reported that CPA Terry Whitt of Hancock acknowledged receipt of the UDSB's financial statements for 2020, and will prepare the federal and state tax filings for electronic submission.

d.) Policies for Preventing Sexual Harassment and Conflict of Interest Disclosure:

Pizzolato noted that Richardson had asked to include this item on the agenda, while saying he's not sure these policies are necessary for this organization without employees or any financial compensation. Richardson said if you ask insurance carriers, they will tell us we do need them. Richardson suggested that the board could use the Upper Delaware Council's policies as a model. Pizzolato said he is aware of a 12-minute video on sexual harassment that perhaps we could show at the next meeting. Ramie noted that the free video trainings from the New York State Department of Labor and New York City Human Rights Commission that the UDC has utilized for training are over 45 minutes in length. Richardson said that training completion certificates are transferrable for anyone who has already taken the training through an employer or another board.

e.) Grant Applications:

Ramie reported that while no new applications were received for the byway's three grant programs, The Delaware Company had closed out its Vista Enhancement Grant associated with the path extension from the Roebling Bridge to the Eagle Observation Access in the Town of Highland. In submitting her final reports, Debra Conway suggested that her experience revealed that "selective viewshed clearing" as phrased in the UDSB grant application could be better articulated to outline specific requirements in advance of grant approval and the work. She said that leaves too much room for interpretation, and there should be no assumptions that UDSB and contractors will have the same definitions and level of sensibilities. She noted that the NYS DOT permit she received required identifying milepost markers, no clear-cutting, no stump removal from the river bank to prevent erosion, and nothing thicker than 6 inches be removed. Perhaps those type of directions could be added to future guidelines to outline specifics pertaining to the level of clean-up that is expected. She raised the idea of establishing a subcommittee to look into that. Richardson said he doesn't think we should get too specific. The guidelines state that the applicant must obtain all necessary permissions with property owners to assure that they comply with requirements. That could include the NYS DOT, National Park Service, or private landowners. Richardson said applicants describe their proposals, hopefully with photos provided, and this committee either agrees to it or not then oversees the project. Pizzolato said what Conway seemed to be asking was, what are UDSB's standards for vista clearing? Some regulations can be a guessing game. It was difficult for Conway to convey what was meant by selective clearing and there could be miscommunication about it that puts the project sponsor in a precarious position. Perhaps we could provide more resources. Gilbert said that this grant project site was DOT property and the agency needed to be involved to issue a work permit. She said she'd be happy to look at the language of the grant guidelines, while saying that descriptions may vary depending on the desired outcome for vistas and particular circumstances. DOT does consider the view from the state road as a factor as well. Pizzolato asked Hugel if she could join Gilbert to provide Sullivan Renaissance's perspective. We should give applicants some aesthetic consultation along with the money. Dudko suggested adding a sentence to the grant guidelines that says applicants should seek input from NYS DOT, NPS, and Sullivan Renaissance, if applicable. Hugel agreed that those contacts could be provided in the guidelines. DeCristofaro cited the past Town of Delaware tree trimming project that occurred on private property. That didn't require DOT consultation but it could be helpful to offer input from those agencies. Eisenberg said, based on her experience with Sullivan County grant programs, the results don't always match the expectations. If we want to make sure it's done right, a gentle nudge is the way to go. UDSB must stay engaged with the project. Gilbert and Hugel agreed to review the Vista Enhancement Grant guidelines and offer their suggestions. Eisenberg said she will inquire about which county representative would be most appropriate to help their subcommittee.

Discussion Items:

a) Hancock Access Improvements:

Pizzolato asked Senese to introduce her proposal which was the subject of a support letter request in the packets. Senese said that the Hancock Partners, Inc. would like to improve the Junction Pool River Access on Village of Hancock property, located off Rt. 97, down the street that leads to the Hancock Fireman's Park, and past the wastewater treatment plant. The goals are to create better signage leading people from the byway and the highway to the river, a larger parking area, knotweed remediation, bank stabilization, green space preservation, a hand-boat river launch, and a river trail to connect Junction Pool to Fireman's Park. Senese said this is in the very early stages of establishing partnerships. A federal grant through the National Park Service is due by 3/1 with documentation requested by 2/22. She noted that there is no ability to find the access through GPS and the signage is inadequate. They would like to make the site accessible to all demographics and abilities, while keeping it a low impact on resources. Since it can be very muddy, they want to improve safety by designating the most appropriate spot to hand launch a boat. A family-friendly pavilion is another possibility. The 1:1 match requirement of the grant will require a lot of in-kind work. Partnerships are being lined up with entities such as the Friends of the Upper Delaware River and the Delaware County Soil and Water Conservation District. The NYS Department of Environmental Conservation has a Memorandum of Understanding with the Village of Hancock to operate the access. Pizzolato said this project could be eligible for UDSB Vista Enhancement and Non-profit Signage grants. Richardson said that UDSB has provided support for numerous Hancock grant applications, including \$250,000 for the Town Square through the National Scenic Byway Program. DeCristofaro recalled that Jim Serio had previously received grants to purchase picnic tables for the Junction Pool Access. Senese confirmed there are still a few tables and benches there. On a **motion** by Richardson, seconded by DeCristofaro, UDSB, Inc. will provide a letter of support for the project and grant application by the 2/22 requested deadline, with all in favor.

b) UDSB Enhancement Concept Plan Update:

Eisenberg said after the last meeting, NYS DOT Scenic Byways Coordinator Christine Colley had reached out to remind them that the state has requirements for byway corridor management plans (CMP). A lot of those can be met through the current Enhancement Concept, but the plan in its current format is unwieldy. She asked if we can reach out to the 2002 plan consultants to see if it's available in a Word document. Pizzolato said that he foresees the original CMP serving as our "bible" with updated and modernized information, while creating a new document that is more user-friendly. Eisenberg agreed with the need to make it more concise and in a workable format. She and Heather Jacksy are working on a summary of items discussed at the last meeting and preparing a survey that can be shared with a broader audience. Pizzolato said we should share the survey with our municipalities as a tool that they can use to tell us their vision for the byway and how it can be helpful to their communities. Eisenberg said the 2002 plan included resolutions from municipalities to show their buy-in with the state designation request. We could request resolutions again to reaffirm their support. We'll also need their help with updating some parts of the plan such as summarizing the signage regulations and conducting certain inventories. Pizzolato said that Colley had raised a red flag that we can't scrap the whole plan. He asked Gilbert for her reaction to the idea of developing a shorter companion document that is more engaging and electronic-based. Gilbert said she isn't sure of what Colley has communicated exactly but confirmed that the state has core elements that are required to appear in each CMP. She noted that the UDSB Enhancement Concept is posted on the NYS DOT website. She believes that it's likely an image scan that was converted into text and will check to see whether it includes the byway maps. She said it's certainly no problem to have an online document such as a list of actionable items; many byways do. Pizzolato said that if Eisenberg and Jacksy can weed through the current plan to see what no longer applies and what information needs updating, that will be a great start to creating a user guide that references the plan. That way, we won't have to find funding to do an expensive and time-consuming re-write. Eisenberg agreed

that an action plan would be useful for this organization. She said this remains a work in progress. Ramie said she will reach out to Carol Truppi from Heritage Resources Group and Tom Shepstone, a sub-consultant, to see if the 2002 plan is available as a Word document or in any program that can be manipulated easier.

c) Litter Clean-up Projects:

Pizzolato asked Subjin to discuss a Delaware Highlands Conservancy proposal for an in-person litter cleanup targeted for the Highland Access with the Barbara Yeaman Eagle Observation Blind associated with Earth Day in April. Pizzolato said that the Greater Barryville Chamber of Commerce replanted the garden there through a volunteer planting day. Since this will be a trailhead for The Kate Project, it would be great to beautify that area. Sullivan County is interested in putting some solar-powered garbage incinerators and recycling bins there. He noted that last year, UDSB was working with Upper Delaware Council Litter Sweep Coordinator Dan Paparella on a river valley clean-up with various educational events. When that had to be cancelled due to COVID-19, we ended up pursuing our anti-littering signage in the interim. Ramie reported that the UDC is pursuing the postponed Upper Delaware Litter Sweep this April, also as an in-person activity. The Council has sent letters to all 15 municipalities bordering the Upper Delaware River in NY and PA to request their support in naming "Litter Leaders". They will serve as community captains to round up volunteers for a land-based cleanup of debris on both sides of the river. The Litter Leaders will work with the UDC to coordinate the project, including seeking required permits, supplies, arranging for trash pick-ups and disposal, and organizing the clean-ups. She welcomed everyone to join forces. A planning meeting in February will be announced soon, most likely by Zoom.

d) Highland Waterway Project:

Pizzolato displayed by screen-share a sketch map showing the vicinity of property along River Road in the Town of Highland that was donated for use as a town beach. The gravel road leading to it however is now impassable because an adjoining property owner has built up a dike. Greater Barryville Chamber of Commerce President Roswell Hamrick and Pizzolato walked the site with that owner to see how this issue can be addressed. A suggestion was made to add a staircase and signage that would direct people appropriately to the open space. Future plans could include construction of an accessible ramp to provide better access for anglers and families. Hugel noted that the dike built this winter is being used as the property owner's driveway to get to the back of his property. Pizzolato said that Dorene Warner from W Design has also created a public art project concept for the traffic circle at the end of River Road which is envisioned to offer several color-coded trails that would lead to attractions at various lengths away such as the Roebling Bridge and the Highland Access. Sullivan Renaissance has suggested this could be a phased-in project. Pizzolato said it would entail more strategic vegetative clearing and clean-ups for which grants will be sought. He would like to see this Highland Waterway Project serve as a model for other river communities to pursue. It could help spread out public use so that certain river accesses aren't as overrun with people. Subjin commented that it's a beautiful idea and said DHC would be happy to participate. Gilbert confirmed that this area in question is the first north-bound pull-off area in Highland on Rt. 97 that has an older eagle watch sign.

e) Lumberland Parking Area Project:

Pizzolato said that another project the committee has discussed in the past is the Rt. 97 pull-off in Lumberland. Its intended use as a picnic area is not obvious due to the overgrowth of brush. The viewshed is completely obscured. He asked whether Velez and Spradling would be interested in taking that on to offer recommendations for improvements. Hugel suggested they reach out to Linda Hazen from the Lumberland Beautification Committee as a good first step. Pizzolato said that opening up three or four "windows" through the trees and brush as lookout points to the river would be a great improvement. It doesn't require clearing the entire expanse. Spradling said she would love to see the strip between the guiderail and paved area developed for butterfly habitat, as she and Velez agreed to the assignment. Ramie said that Town of Lumberland Historian Frank Schwarz chose that location for the town's UDSB

interpretive panel. Gilbert said she will check on the boundaries of DOT ownership of that property. She noted that work permits can be obtained from Ed Mall and Paul Hahn at the Sullivan County DOT office. She also warned that there is a lot of poison ivy in that area. Pizzolato said that the more we can ignite these types of projects and show the connectivity along the byway corridor, the more justification there is for the funds we receive and would like to request from Sullivan County and the byway municipalities. Vista enhancement is in the DNA of this group. He mentioned that we have also been approached by the owner of the old pump house property in the Town of Cocheton about site improvements.

Follow-up Actions and Committee Reports:

- a) **UDSB Website Update and Anti-Litter Signage Locations** – Using screen share, Pizzolato displayed the updated website prototype for the visitors' directory. All of the business and attraction photos taken by Moriah Wolfe are uploaded and divided into communities as follows (alphabetically): Barryville, Callicoon, Cocheton, Deerpark, Hancock, Hawk's Nest, Narrowsburg, Pond Eddy, and Port Jervis. Pizzolato said when you roll the cursor over each photo, it has only the name. He would like to get more information on there, including at least a website link or Facebook page for that place. He is going to work on that for the Barryville listings to serve as a sample, then request that UDSB representatives for those areas do the same. He will send around a template to accomplish that. They are also working on the Plan Your Trip section to offer directions from a starting point to a specific location along the byway. A number of side trips have been added to include off-byway locations such as the Kadampa Meditation Center, Zane Grey Museum, Minisink Battleground, Bethel Woods Center for the Arts, Neversink Valley Area Museum, YO1 Wellness Center, Kartrite Water Park, and Resort Worlds Catskills. All of this needs everybody's help, though Steve Franzken has been patiently making updates to the old site since August. Regarding the Anti-Littering signs, Pizzolato said the last location to nail down in order to submit the sites to the DOT is Callicoon. DeCristofaro said her idea is to have a UDASB route marker with an anti-litter placard on the post installed at the intersection of Rt. 97 and Upper Main Street. That's in the immediate vicinity of the butterfly garden and Callicoon welcome sign on Doug Doestch's property and across from Hospital Road leading up to Seminary Hill Cidery. She said she received a list from Ramie of where the original UDSB route markers were supposed to be in the Town of Delaware but they aren't in those spots. She said the UDSB sign at the Rt. 17B intersection has disappeared and wondered whether DOT removed a UDSB southbound sign when they did the slope stabilization and guiderail repair project. Gilbert said she would check on whether one was taken down and not replaced there. Pizzolato said the anti-litter placards are one-sided, so they need to go northbound and southbound, and they are pre-drilled to post on the pole with the existing markers. DeCristofaro said that she, Eisenberg, and Ramie would consult over the Callicoon anti-litter sign.

- b) **Repair of Faded Byway Signs and NYS DOT Region 9 Report** – Richardson noted that the original route marker signs are not fully reflective. Ramie said that Sign Here Sign Co. in Port Jervis had been contracted to manufacture those logo signs back in 2002 and that wasn't noticed until they were already installed. The UDSB name and arrow signs are reflective. Pizzolato said we may want to dedicate some funding to address that mistake. DeCristofaro agreed. Pizzolato added that he has also noticed the route marker signs in the Pond Eddy area have bent corners. He speculated maybe they were hit by a plow. Senese said that the UDSB sign off the highway by the Town Square is faded. She offered to take a photo. Pizzolato said please do. We should catalog all of the signs that are in poor shape to present to the NYS DOT. Maybe we can find some grant money to refurbish or replace them. Gilbert said she would look into the issues of missing and damaged signs. On her DOT Region 9 Report that was in the packet, Gilbert highlighted that rehabilitation of the Cocheton Bridge is due to begin in March 2021 with staged construction planned. She provided mile markers and landmarks for the slope stabilization and

guiderail work that is pending in the Towns of Fremont (1/4 mile south of Delaware Valley Central School, 0.6 mile north of the Kellams Bridge Road and 3/4 mile north of that same road) and Delaware (1/4 mile north of Baer & Tower Roads). Core drilling will occur for the next week or so, with construction anticipated in late 2021 or 2022. Long-term restoration work in the Town of Tusten is anticipated in late 2021 or 2022 from north of Grassy Swamp Road to the bottom of the hill south of Lackawaxen Road where trees were removed over the last two spring seasons. A new job is a scour project in the Town of Cochection at the bridge over Mitchel Pond Brook, just north of the County Road 116 intersection, next to the old Standard Oil ruins. The DOT will place heavy stone protection at upstream and downstream bridge abutments. Expect daily shoulder closings with flaggers during stone delivery and equipment mobilization.

- c) **Solar-Powered, Self-Compacting Garbage Bins Research** – Sullivan County Legislature Chairperson Rob Doherty is working with Recycling Coordinator Bill Cutler to contact Waste Management, Inc. about the availability of these new products. Eisenberg said it would be great if these bins could be funded and debuted in time for the April Litter Sweep events.
- d) **Trust for Public Land Correspondence; Spotted Lanternfly ID Cards** – Ramie referenced two packet handouts: a 12/23/20 letter from The Trust for Public Land appreciating the \$990 UDSB donation via a Butterfly Habitat grant for the Callicoon Riverside Park Harvest Day event; and the joint UDSB/UDC memo that went out on 12/18 announcing the availability of Spotted Lanternfly Identification Cards provided through the NYS DOT Scenic Byways Program. Eisenberg updated the committee that Sullivan County authorized the county park to be developed at the TPL Callicoon site (former Upper Delaware Campgrounds) since the last UDSB meeting. Ramie noted that 10 SLF cards were mailed to each river valley municipality and the Town of Bethel due to a spotting of the invasive insect at Lake Superior Park, and that Deerpark Police Chief Richard Szyndor had requested 23 copies for each of his officers following a spotting in Port Jervis, among other recipients. Ramie said that she and Eisenberg through county channels have continued distributing multiple boxes of 400 cards. A suggestion was made to ask businesses when we reach out for their information for the website whether they would like to receive a stack of them to hand out. Eisenberg proposed offering them to Agway stores. Velez suggested that outdoor shops would be particularly interested. Ramie proposed issuing a news release to make that offer of distribution.
- e) **Other** – Senese provided a news brief also copied in the packets which states that the National Scenic Byways Program will receive \$16 million in dedicated funding as part of the FY 2021 omnibus spending package announced by Congress. This marks the first time in nine years that grant funds have been made available for the program established in 1991. The funding is available to 150 national byways and more than 1,000 state and tribal scenic byways throughout the country.

Next Meeting Date: 4th Monday, February 22, 2021

Adjourn: On a **motion** by Eisenberg, seconded by Velez, the January 25, 2021 UDSB meeting adjourned at 8:58 p.m.

Minutes prepared by Laurie Ramie, 01/30/21