

# U&D Corridor Advisory Committee

## Meeting Minutes

DATE & TIME: May 20, 2015 – 6:30

LOCATION: Karen L. Binder Library, 6<sup>th</sup> Floor, COB, Kingston, NY

PRESIDING OFFICER: Chairman Tracey Bartels

LEGISLATIVE STAFF: Fawn A. Tantillo, Sr. Legislative Employee

PRESENT: Legislators Lynn Archer, David Donaldson, Herbert Litts, III, James Maloney, Jeanette Provenzano and Kenneth Ronk, Jr.

ABSENT: Carl Belfiglio, Manna Jo Greene

QUORUM PRESENT: Yes

OTHER ATTENDEES: Cappy Weiner, Legislative Counsel, Chris White, Ulster County Planning; Tom Kadgen, League of Women Voters; John Grossbohlin, City of Kingston Complete Streets; Kathy Nolan, UCTAC, UC Tourism Advisory Board, Catskill Mountain Keeper; Ernie Hunt, Catskill Mountain Railroad; Nick Mercurio

Chairman Bartels called the meeting to order at 6:30.

Motion No 1: Approving the minutes of May 5, 2015 and May 14, 2015 as presented (with minor typographical corrections)

Motion Made By: Legislator Provenzano

Motion Seconded By: Legislator Ronk

Roll Call Vote: No

Voting In Favor: Legislators Bartels, Archer, Litts, Maloney, Provenzano and Ronk

Voting Against: None

No. of Votes in Favor: 6

No. of Votes Against: 0

Disposition: Approved

## **Corridor Walks**

Legislator Ronk reported that on Saturday, May 9, 2015 Legislator Archer, Belfiglio, Green and he walked approximately 6 miles along the U&D Corridor from the Woodstock Dike to Shokan.

Legislator Ronk described a 5 hour hike that included several beautiful views, how difficult it was to walk along the railroad ties, several “pinch points” where there are narrow rock cuts just wide enough for the railroad, some areas that are quite wide with two sets of rails, culvert issues and other landmarks like an active switch that could be left in place as an interesting landmark.

Legislator Provenzano asked if anyone took photos. Several people took photographs and Legislator Belfiglio had shared some on disk.

Legislator Litts reminded members that CMRR is making a video of the corridor and that could be very useful tool for the committee. (CMRR video of corridor from MP 6.3 to the Glenford Dike was distributed by email on 5/27/15)

Chairman Bartels suggested the committee could view that video at an upcoming meeting. She reported on the walks she took along the section of the corridor west of Shokan.

Several committee members discussed other ways to see key spots of the corridor. Mr. White suggested a weekday tour in a UCAT bus to key locations. The dates of June 12 and June 26 were discussed. Chairman Bartels said an email would be sent so committee members could check their availability.

## **Consultant Discussion**

Chairman Bartels reminded the committee that funds had been approved to hire a consultant and opened the floor for discussion about what type of consultant the committee wanted and what criteria they should establish for research.

There was discussion about the need for engineering expertise, cost breakdowns and economic benefits of different plans and how to build upon past research.

Legislator Litts suggested hiring a consultant to do a feasibility study for each segment of the corridor that could include “ball park” cost estimates and potential economic benefits for various options in these areas. He noted there are engineering firms with a background in planning that could provide the information the committee should have.

There was a discussion of past studies, the highest and best use of various segments of the corridor, what uses will be practical and affordable and the best way to determine the economic benefits of various stakeholders.

Chairman Bartels said she will be circulating the Adirondack Rail Corridor Economic Impact Study done in another area of New York for the committee to review. (Emailed 5/28/15) She noted that this is a valuable asset and she was mortified when she saw that sections of it have washed away and been lost forever. She feels steps need to be taken as soon as possible to preserve the corridor regardless of how it will be used.

There was a discussion about the best way to reach out to consulting firms, the differences in an RFP, RFQ, RFI and how to narrow down the information the committee needs. Chairman Bartels will invite the Director of Purchasing to an upcoming meeting to discuss the process.

Legislator Archer said the committee needs to take a critical look to determine what sections are advantageous to tourist trains, trails or both. She recommended the committee take a look at the 2006 Alta "Rail & Trail" Feasibility Study before the next meeting. She feels the U&D corridor is critical to a business plan that connects the entire Ulster County trail system. (2006 Alta "Rail & Trail" Feasibility Study was emailed and sent in hard copy on 5/22/15)

### **Recommendations for the End of the Lease with CMRR**

Legislator Donaldson felt that something should be put out to see if there is any interest from firms that want to operate a tourist train from Kingston to Hurley Mountain Road or beyond that to the Glenford Dike. If no one is interested in running a tourist train operation when the Catskill Mountain Railroad lease expires next year, the discussion will be very different.

Legislator Ronk felt this step was premature and said in all fairness there were many unanswered questions that would need to be addressed to determine what Ulster County can offer a firm.

Legislator Provenzano reminded the committee about the policy the Legislature adopted Resolution No. 275 last year for trail only from Kingston to Boiceville.

Chairman Bartels felt that the County Executive's proposal to keep a tourist train operation from Kingston to Hurley Mountain Road opened the door to the Legislature considering other options and that is the charge of this committee.

## **Jail Study recommendations and capital projects review**

Chairman Bartels briefly reviewed recommendations from the investigation of cost overruns of the Ulster County Jail construction. She felt as plans develop for the U&D Corridor, many of these recommendations should be more formally established for the project.

Legislator Litts said some of these recommendations were being considered in another contract review discussion in another committee. He reminded the committee that changes Proposed to the Charter that are scheduled for public hearing next month will make some of these recommendations a reality.

## **New Business**

Legislator Archer suggested creating a list of stakeholders. She also wanted clear answers to questions about Rail Banking and the ability to speak to Andrea Ferster, the attorney from Washington, DC with expertise in this area that the County has on retainer.

Chairman Bartels agreed saying she would like to set up a conference call with Ms. Ferster to discuss these issues.

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There being no further business before the Committee, a motion was made by Legislator Litts, seconded by Legislator Ronk and carried to adjourn the meeting at 8:05 PM.

Respectfully submitted this 28th day of May, 2015  
Fawn A. Tantillo, Senior Legislative Employee  
Minutes Approved on June 2, 2015.