

D&H Transportation Heritage Council

January 22, 2014 Quarterly Meeting Minutes

Westfall Township Municipal Building, Matamoras, PA

Attendance at business meeting:

Cliff Robinson, Jr. (chair), Delaware & Hudson Canal and Gravity Railroad Conservancy

Jane Varcoe (treasurer), Waymart Area Historical Society

Laurie Ramie (secretary), Upper Delaware Council

Kristin Porter, Sullivan County Department of Parks, Recreation & Beautification

George J. Fluhr, Pike County Historian

S. Robert Powell, Carbondale Historical Society

Tammy Satter, Wayne County Historical Society executive director

Sally Talaga, Wayne County Historical Society volunteer

David Hulse, Sullivan County Linear Park, Summitville

Myra Snook, Morris Canal Commission, Warren County, NJ, individual member

Kerron Barnes, Town of Mamakating, individual member

William Clark, Matamoras-Westfall Historical Society president

Call to Order: Chairperson Robinson opened the meeting at 1:40 p.m. following a morning tour of the Mill Rift Museum guided by Chuck Dowd and lunch at Perkins Restaurant in Matamoras.

Acceptance of Minutes: Talaga clarified under the Minutes report from the Oct. 23 meeting that she had turned over a disk with all of the organization's *digital* minutes to Ramie as part of the secretary files. Robinson corrected from his report of member accomplishments that their latest trail in Orange County was half-way done when they reached a breach at *Deerpark* Manor. On a motion by Talaga, seconded by Powell, the minutes of the Oct. 23, 2013 meeting of the D&H Transportation Heritage Council were accepted with those two corrections.

Treasurer's Report and Membership Update: Varcoe summarized her written financial report, which had balances of \$606 in the checking account; \$765.19 in the savings account; a 94-day Certificate of Deposit (CD) valued at \$1,061.45; and a 59-day CD valued at \$820.78. Total D&H THC assets = \$3,253.42. She wrote two checks since the last meeting, one to Hillside Application for \$240 and the other \$20 to herself as reimbursement for the membership mailing campaign. Fourteen letters were sent out with application forms. Varcoe shared a copy of that letter and asked if anyone knows of any other potential members; please provide her with contact information. Annual dues are payable now at \$40 for full voting members and \$20 for affiliated or individual members. Robinson reported that his organization finally secured its 501(c) 3 renewal and he was able to get the fee reduced from \$850 to \$400. The Council had previously agreed to pay that fee to utilize the Delaware & Hudson Canal and Gravity Railroad Conservancy's fiduciary services when needed. He requested that Varcoe issue payment of \$360 with the \$40 balance applied to the Conservancy's 2014 dues. On a motion by Porter, seconded by Robinson, the financial report for Jan. 22, 2014 was approved.

New Business:

- a) **Review of D&H THC Bylaws** – Members reviewed the organizational bylaws as adopted on July 18, 2001 line-by-line to discuss potential amendments. These proposed changes will be reflected on a draft copy to be sent electronically. Article IX By-laws Revision states "With at least 30 day written notice, the by-laws may be revised by a two-thirds majority of full membership in good standing, provided the requirements for a

quorum are met, at a regular or special Council meeting, or by mail vote under direction of the Secretary.” It was determined by consensus that e-mailing the bylaws constitutes written notice. A vote will be taken at the next quarterly meeting.

- b) **Website Changes and Facebook Page Status** – Robinson reported that he set up a Facebook page for the Council and it is active. Search for “Delaware & Hudson Transportation Heritage Council” and like it as a friend. Robinson said anyone on Facebook can post to that page and he encourages members to do so regularly with photos, announcements or observations. We must all monitor it as well to block any spam or inappropriate posts. Access can be password-protected if necessary. Robinson noted that this is the networking tool for the current generation. Since Facebook changed its format to a timeline, everything now appears in order, which is why it is particularly important to add new items to keep it active and relevant. He asked whether the names of affiliated and individual members should be added to the listing of full voting member organizations. The idea of adding a box to the membership application which requests permission to use name only (no other contact information) of affiliated and individual members on the www.dhthc.org website and Facebook page was discussed, with no conclusion reached. Fluhr wondered about including the individual representative names for each voting member; however it was decided that the direct links that go to each organization’s website are sufficient.
- c) **D&H Heritage Corridor Brochure** – Robinson handed out copies of a draft tri-fold brochure he designed and wrote using a Print Shop graphics program. [See black and white PDF attachment to these minutes.] He also developed a Quick Response (QR) code for the Council that leads people who scan it with their smartphones to the dhthc.org website. The map came from Wikipedia and all of the photos used are in the public domain. Robinson asked everybody to proofread it thoroughly and propose any changes to the entire group by e-mail. He acknowledged that the text is quite wordy. A suggestion was made to print the QR code smaller and leave space on the back where member organizations can put a sticker for their sites.
- d) **Video Production Update** – Robinson spoke with the videographer and they determined that outdoor winter scenes are too depressing to shoot for the D&H Canal and Gravity Railroad informational video series. This would be a good time to arrange interior shots at museums however. Robinson hopes to line up one day’s worth of filming at various sites. Fluhr said he likes the idea of showing historic photos then a comparison of that location today. Some of those views are actually more apparent in winter. Powell noted he has some beautiful color photos of the gravity railroad bed that would make for interesting still shots.
- e) **Status of Developing and Extending D&H Trails** – Robinson questioned the ownership of the Tuthill Road canal site in the Town of Lumberland that this group formerly visited since he would like to seek an easement. That would be helpful for connecting trail sections in the area. The owner of the Hawk’s Nest property which features one mile of canal is open to signing an easement. Robinson said trails which develop along the corridor could be marked with posts that offer a historic photo of that site and the Council’s QR code for more information.

Announcements of Member Accomplishments, Concerns, and Upcoming Events:

Kerron Barnes, Town of Mamakating – Barnes reported that there are four new members on the Mamakating Town Board and that newly-elected Town Supervisor William Herrmann is very interested in the D&H canal. He has discussed making the canal a major tourist attraction. Barnes, who has been re-hired by the town as Interagency Coordinator, provided an update to the towpath intersection issue at Ferguson Lane in Wurtsboro. The town’s highway department will help clear a two-mile section and

Barnes would like to put up the D&H decals to mark the route. Barnes said he would try to facilitate the Town of Mamakating re-joining DHTHC as a full voting member.

Sullivan County Parks, Recreation and Beautification – Porter said that the Summitville site has closed for the season. They are interested in housing the National Park Service’s aqueduct model but unfortunately discovered that it won’t currently fit through the doors of the building. They are working to prepare exhibits for a spring reopening, then will stay open through Columbus Day. Dave Hulse added that the new exhibit uses maps from Wayne County of the lock schematics, and gravity railroad and canal system that were enlarged to 36 by 50 inches.

Pike County Historian – Fluhr reported that Pike County is beginning its 200th anniversary celebration and that Shohola will observe the 150th anniversary of the Civil War Train Wreck in July.

Morris Canal Commission – Snook reported that her organization is getting a pathway around a large waste weir to continue a trail. She found an article about the Basha Kill Area Association sponsoring a snow-shoe outing along the canal route and considers that a good idea to raise awareness of the corridor. Snook also mentioned a digital driving guide along a byway which is another marketing idea that could be adapted for canal interpretation.

Wayne County Historical Society – Talaga introduced Tammy Satter, Interim Director until Feb. 1, 2014 at which time, she will continue as Executive Director. Her written report continued: Main Street, Honesdale museum’s winter hours are Friday & Saturday, 10:00 AM to 4:00 PM, weather permitting. Clinton Leet, former trustee who in 1995, encouraged our organization to develop a canal park, and who was center stage at the park’s grant opening last summer, died eight days after being honored at our fall dinner. Canal Park at Lock 31 continues to have a steady stream of visitors who walk themselves and/or their dogs, show shoe, or cross country ski when enough snow permits it. The winter birding has been good with many types of ducks and several Bald Eagles.

Canal Park’s 2014 calendar of events:

April 19th – Annual Tree Harvest

May 3rd – Annual Spring clean-up

May 31st – Annual Yard Sale

August 23rd – Annual Canal Festival, 10 to 4

October 18th – Annual Thank You Party for the Friends of the Canal Park

Completing the exterior restoration of the lock house – Weather permitting, next month, the historical architect will visit the site to prepare the drawings and specification necessary to bid the final phase of the exterior restoration of the lock house, which includes the lock side porch, five windows, and three doors, thereby making the building handicapped accessible. It is hoped this work will be done by this year’s canal festival.

Riverside Trail - The park’s 2nd trail will be developed as a local boy scout’s Eagle project this year. The owner of a 0.8 acre parcel along the river has been approached RE its donation for a tax write off, so this trail can go the entire length of the park’s shore line. If we are awarded our 2nd PA Environmental Council grant, two additional interpretive signs will added to the park’s existing three. These will be placed on the riverside trail and will be about the Lackawaxen River and a second about its wildlife. It is hoped the official opening of this trail, with appropriate ceremony, will be during this year’s canal festival.

Earth & wooden bridge - We have met with a local landscape architect RE improving the earth bridge just north of lock 31 and constructing a wooden bridge over the sluiceway. He will give cost estimates for another DCNR grant application due in April. If awarded this grant, the actual construction will probably not be until 2015.

Carbondale Historical Society – Powell reported that fundraising efforts continue to build a pavilion to house the early 20th century caboose his organization owns. The caboose had to be moved out of the building where it had been stored and is presently shrink-wrapped. They need at least another \$100,000, which a friends group is helping to raise. The museum continues to add to its collections, recently obtaining

a dinner program from the 100th anniversary of the founding of the D&H Canal. The dinner took place at the Hotel Astor in New York City in 1923. They were also given a historical booklet titled “Deerpark: The Delaware & Hudson Canal.”

Waymart Area Historical Society – Varcoe deferred on offering a report in the interest of time.

Upper Delaware Council – Ramie reported that National Park Service (NPS) Upper Delaware Scenic and Recreational River Superintendent Sean McGuinness will retire on Jan. 24 and no advertising has taken place as yet for a permanent replacement. The acting superintendent as of Jan. 27 will be Malcolm Wilbur of Milford. Ramie said that the local leadership of NPS is critically important as it sets the tone for the whole river valley. The UDC has outlined the special qualities required for the partnership-managed Upper Delaware and its concerns over maintaining administration as an autonomous NPS unit in a letter to the NPS Northeast Region. The cultural resources position filled by Dot Moon is also vacant based on her retirement. McGuinness was working to restructure this division before his departure. Ramie noted that the UDC will hold a swearing-in ceremony for its 2014 officers on Feb. 6 and that its 26th Annual Awards Ceremony will take place on April 27. Nominations will be solicited next month for the honors that include a Cultural Achievement Award category.

D&H Canal and Gravity Railroad Conservancy – Robinson reported that he intends to set up a meeting with newly-elected Orange County Executive Steve Neuhaus to request support for canal trail development efforts in the county. The Conservancy has used \$61,000 of its grant, with \$79,000 to go. The grant requires the organization to actually spend 20% over to count toward the match. Robinson discussed running into a gentleman who had purchased the rights to all of the snubbing posts that the Erie Railroad had been using as mile markers. He broke off the stones at ground level, meaning that there would still be about 6 feet of granite buried underground along one-mile intervals. He has offered to assist the Conservancy to locate and retrieve the posts. Robinson concluded by saying that his group has two more bridges to build over canal breeches.

Bill Clark, Matamoras-Westfall Historical Society – Clark reported that Frank Salvati will give a lecture on the Unknown Incident of the Battle of Minisink on Feb. 9. On April 12 and 13, a Tri-State Historical Exhibition will take place at the Riverview Inn in Matamoras. It will include representation from numerous local groups in New York, Pennsylvania, and New Jersey. Pike County Historical Society’s Hiawatha stage coach will be on display as one exhibit.

Next Meeting: The next quarterly meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, **April 23**, 2014, which was coincidentally noted as the day that the D&H Canal Company was incorporated. Robinson suggested meeting at the D&H Canal Park in Cuddebackville with a one-mile morning hike in Westbrookville, including a walk over the new trail bridge over the Neversink River. Itinerary details will be announced.

Adjourn: The Jan. 22, 2014 D&H THC meeting adjourned at 4:14 p.m. on a motion by Hulse, seconded by Powell.

Minutes submitted by Laurie Ramie, 2/12/14