

D&H Transportation Heritage Council

October 22, 2014 Quarterly Meeting Minutes

D&H Canal Historical Society and Museum, High Falls, NY

Attendance at business meeting:

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

Bill Merchant (vice-chair), D&H Canal Historical Society and Museum, High Falls

Jane Varcoe (treasurer), Waymart Area Historical Society

Laurie Ramie (secretary), Upper Delaware Council

S. Robert Powell, Carbondale Historical Society

Sally Talaga, Wayne County Historical Society Volunteer

George J. Fluhr, Pike County Historian

Kerron Barnes, Town of Mamakating Representative and Individual Member

Lynn Burns, Town of Deerpark Deputy Historian, 1863 School House Museum, Huguenot

Kristin Porter, Sullivan County Director of Parks, Recreation and Beautification

David Hulse, Sullivan Co. D&H Canal Linear Park, Lock 50 Interpretive Center, Summitville

Dave Kime, D&H Canal Historical Society and Museum Trustee

Call to Order: Chairperson Robinson opened the meeting at 1:08 p.m. following an optional 9:30 a.m. hike at the Kerhonkson Rail-Trail site guided by Merchant and lunch at the Egg's Nest in High Falls.

Acceptance of Minutes: On a motion by Varcoe, seconded by Powell, the minutes of the July 23, 2014 meeting of the D&H Transportation Heritage Council were accepted.

Additions to the Agenda: Fluhr suggested that the Council should designate a repository for the storage of its archival records and compiled minutes. Currently the records are in the possession of individual officers. Robinson added that everything should be digitized and scanned to assure that there are electronic back-up copies available. Curiosity was expressed about researching what year the Council was established.

Treasurer's Report and Membership Update: Varcoe summarized her written financial report, which had balances of \$426 in the checking account; \$1,105.56 in the savings account; a 94-day Certificate of Deposit (CD) valued at \$1,063.94; and a 59-day CD valued at \$821.99. Total D&H THC assets = \$3,417.49. One new bill was submitted for payment, \$374.70 to Bill Merchant as reimbursement for a credit card payment made to PS Print.com for production of the new Council brochures. There are 12 full voting members (Wayne County Historical Society, Town of Deerpark, Upper Delaware Council, Waymart Area Historical Society, D&H Canal & Gravity Railroad Conservancy, Carbondale Historical Society, Sullivan County Parks and Recreation, Town of Mamakating, Pike County Historical Society, D&H Canal Historical Society and Museum, City of Port Jervis, and Lackawaxen River Conservancy) and 4 non-voting affiliated/individual members (Kerron Barnes, Myra Snook of the Warren County Morris Canal Committee, Rail-Trail of NE PA, and Neversink Valley Museum of History & Innovation). This represents 2 new full members and 1 new individual member since the last quarterly meeting. Robinson said he would notify the webmaster to update the membership roster posted on www.dhthc.org. Varcoe noted that the City of Port Jervis had not submitted a form naming a representative and alternate with their dues. On a motion by Merchant, seconded by Barnes, the financial report for Oct. 22, 2014 was approved.

New Business:

- a) **Nominate and Elect Officers for Two-Year Terms Effective Jan. 1, 2015** – Robinson referenced the bylaws as revised on 4/23 which state that nominations and elections of officers take place at the last meeting of the year. The positions of chair and vice-chair will be elected in odd years, while secretary and treasurer elections will occur in even years. The chairperson is limited to serve three consecutive terms, or six years. Robinson has been the chair for two years. For 2015, on a motion by Hulse, seconded by Talaga, Cliff Robinson was nominated to serve as chairperson. The vote was approved with Robinson abstaining. On a motion by Talaga, seconded by Barnes, Bill Merchant was nominated to serve as vice-chairperson. The vote was approved with Merchant abstaining. The treasurer and secretary will continue their terms until the 2016 election.
- b) **Approve Annual Dues Rate** – It was noted that the current dues are \$40 for full voting membership and \$20 for affiliate/individual membership, payable in January. On a motion by Porter, seconded by Powell, the same rates were adopted for 2015, with all in favor. Ramie will issue membership renewal forms with these minutes.
- c) **D&H Transportation Heritage Council Brochure Distribution** – Merchant reported that the shipment of 4,000 brochures from the online printer PS Print.com was delivered the previous day. Members admired the paper weight and quality. Robinson offered thanks to Norma Schadt, Lynn Burns, and Vyvyan Perez for their assistance with the final design following the last quarterly meeting. The brochures are packaged 1,000 per box and 50 per bundle. Robinson suggested that the boxes are geographically distributed along the corridor so that they are accessible for re-stocking purposes.
- d) **Video Production Update** – Robinson said that he has not yet received a reply from Pocono Film to his request for a proposal by a videographer to produce what the Council ultimately hopes will be seven videos approximately five minutes each that tell the history of the D&H Canal and Gravity Railroad in segments. They would be posted on YouTube and available through websites. The scripts are ready but now footage with narration and professional sound and editing is needed. Filming in the fall season is preferred. Robinson said he believes that the Gravity Railroad and Honesdale to Delaware River section could be shot in one day. Members had ideas of other videographers and suggested requesting samples of their work with their quotes. The Council opted to set a price cap of \$500 per video. If the quote complies, Robinson has authorization to proceed.
- e) **DHTHC.org Website and Facebook Page Report** – Robinson said he will contact the webmaster to have him update the organization's membership list, which provides contact information and links to full members' individual websites. The Council's Facebook page still needs to be separated from the D&H Canal and Gravity Railroad Conservancy's page, which Robinson said he has been unable to do. He noted that Burns' granddaughter Perez had volunteered to help with that. Merchant said she will have to be added as an administrator. Ramie confirmed that she had emailed Perez the organization's mission statement to post. The National Park Service was working on "Did You Know" trivia items to post with photos. Robinson said an alert will be sent around once the page is ready to accept content, to which he hopes all members will contribute.
- f) **Other** – 1) Powell suggested reaching out to the Dunmore Historical Society for membership given their connection to the Gravity Railroad. He will provide a contact to Varcoe. 2) On the subject of videos, Powell reported that volunteer videographer and train enthusiast Cory Conway had produced "ALCo Thunder Returns to Carbondale, PA". This DVD has 15 video clips shot between January and May of 2014 of the American Locomotive Co., which uses D&H engines with their blue and gold color scheme. He said that the Delaware-Lackawanna Railroad Line was purchased between

Carbondale and Scranton for Marcellus Shale purposes. They produced 100 copies of the DVD for \$500 and are selling them for \$25. 3) Talaga thanked Merchant for finding in his archives “Specifications for Building Canal Boats for the D&H Canal” from post 1850 for which she had been searching. It details dimensions, decking, paint, materials and more. Merchant said this is excerpted from Leroy’s book and he would be happy to provide scanned copies to anyone upon request.

Announcements of Member Accomplishments, Concerns, and Upcoming Events:

Sally Talaga – The 2nd Annual Canal Festival held at D&H Canal Park at Lock 31 near Hawley, PA on Aug. 23 was very successful. She thanked Robinson for signing his “Coal Town” book as a vendor and the National Park Service for bringing their canal exhibit. The post and beam construction demonstration also proved very popular. There will be a 3rd annual festival on Aug. 22, 2015. Talaga reported that a Boy Scout from Troop 1 is helping to develop a riverside trail at the site. It is white-blazed but there’s no signage yet. She also announced that the Wayne County Historical Society has hired a new executive director, Carol Henry Dunn, who had chaired the Board of Trustees. She began the part-time position on Oct. 1.

George Fluhr – Pike County has completed its series of 200th anniversary events and Shohola marked the 250th anniversary of the Civil War Train Wreck with a re-enactment. “A History of Shohola” DVD has been produced that sells for \$10.

Lynn Burns – Copies of the Sept. 2014 newsletter “Deerpark Diary” were provided. Burns reported that the Town of Deerpark Historian’s Office embarked on an oral history project this spring. They developed a protocol to interview community members about their home lives, jobs, memories, and topics of local interest. The interviews are recorded digitally on audio and video, and saved in the Historian’s Office so that future generations will be able to learn about life in the area during the 20th century. Burns handed out business cards with a (845) 856-2702 phone number for anyone to call who would like to participate. A Sept. 21 open house at the School House Museum offered the public a chance to see the new collection of World War I memorabilia that was donated, while at the adjacent Neversink Valley Grange Building, the exhibit theme was transportation in all forms. There was a great turnout for the event. Burns said that she and Norma Schadt are working on a Common Core program for the New York State Historians’ Association that will bring 500 7th graders on bus tours in December to learn about Joseph Brant. A new historic marker has been installed at Rose’s Point on Prospect Hill Road near the canal crossing. They dedicated a plaque for the 1863 School House as a historic site and are expecting a plaque shortly to install at the Grange. Burns concluded with an offer from Schadt to host the next Council meeting in Huguenot.

Kerron Barnes – The Town of Mamakating owns two miles of canal towpath from Ferguson Lane to Rt. 17, which is partially undeveloped. In June, they submitted an approximately \$1.25 million grant application to the Transportation Alternatives Program to develop 7,977 feet of an Americans with Disabilities Act-compliant trail to link the residential and business districts. Taking that canal route is shorter for pedestrians but it’s currently difficult to traverse. If the grant isn’t awarded, the town is already starting to work on some parts of the trail regardless. Barnes received an offer from registered architect and New York City College of Technology in Brooklyn Professor Paul King, who has a house in Yankee Lake, that he’d like to involve his college in canal projects. They have a program of emerging scholars that extends beyond one semester and students are eligible to receive college credit for outside projects. The ideas being pursued are to help design: ramps to ADA standards for the 50 foot height differential on that trail to the Town Hall complex; a brochure and promotional material; a trail website; signage; and plans for a canal interpretive center. He will ask the Biology Department to research Japanese Knotweed control. On Sept. 6, the Town of Mamakating Parks & Recreation Dept. held a ribbon-cutting ceremony at the Wilsey Brook Foot Bridge to officially open the center section of the canal towpath trail in Wurtsboro with approximately 60 in attendance.

Kristin Porter – The interpretive center in Summitville is closed for the season. She has been participating in the Town of Mamakating’s monthly D&H Canal meetings.

David Hulse – He is compiling a documentary exhibit using Wakefield’s drawings and Leroy’s maps for the Summitville facility to supplement the permanent exhibit. Space will need to be rearranged to accommodate the cut-away model of the Delaware Aqueduct they hope to receive from the National Park Service when feasible.

Dave Kime – Kime noted that he joined the Board of Trustees at the D&H Canal Historical Society and Museum three months ago. The Woodstock resident does a lot of walks along the canal and shares its history with interested people. He looks forward to continued involvement with the Council.

Laurie Ramie – Copies of “The Upper Delaware” Fall/Winter 2014 were distributed. Ramie noted that the newsletter is available in full color at www.upperdelawarecouncil.org. She also passed around a copy of Fall 2014 *Kaatskill Life* magazine that Norma Schadt had sent her for a couple Upper Delaware Scenic Byway references and called attention to the article “Rosendale Abuzz” by Lawrence C. Swayne that describes and has photos of the D&H Canal.

Bill Merchant – The museum’s exhibit on “The Plight of the Common Worker in the Canal Era” is wrapping up. Merchant gave an update on the society’s three year-long collaboration with the Open Space Institute to acquire the DePuy Canal House, a 1797 tavern that was purchased by the canal company in 1830. They expect to hear soon whether a grant application is successful. The property is in foreclosure and the bank is asking \$1 million for it. 2016 will be the 50th anniversary of the society, which he said has enjoyed good community support. Merchant has a painting by John McEntee that may or may not be of the D&H Canal in the 19th century. He asked for opinions after the meeting. Robinson reiterated his appreciation to Merchant for handling arrangements with the on-line printer for the new D&H brochures.

S. Robert Powell – Plans remain underway to build a steel and glass pavilion in the shape of a 19th century train station to house the Carbondale Historical Society’s D&H cabooses. Powell noted that he invited 25 people to attend a D&H Commemorative Event on Oct. 9 without specifying the purpose. When the guests were assembled, Powell announced first that Oct. 9 was the exact date of the 185th anniversary of the opening of the Gravity Railroad. Secondly, he introduced Cory Conway and his train DVD project. Thirdly, Powell announced that he has published as of Oct. 9 the first five of what will be a 24-volume series on “A History of the Delaware and Hudson Canal Company Gravity Railroad”. Each book ranges from 267 to 601 pages and has been produced as a PDF file on individual CDs. The subjects of these volumes are: 1) 1829 Configuration; 2) 1845 Configuration; 3) 1859 Configuration; 4) 1868 Configuration; and 5) 1899 Configuration. Combined, they represent about 2000 pages with hundreds of photos and maps, and about 10 years of research. Powell has committed to release volumes 6-10 by Oct. 9, 2015 covering Waterpower; Working Horses and Mules; Passenger Service; Farview Park; and The Steam Line from Carbondale to Scranton. He offered a list of the subjects for all 24 volumes along with ordering information for the CDs, available for \$25 each. Sets may be sold in D&H site gift shops. Powell said he would consider offering a wholesale rate, as well as converting these books into digital download files to be sold through Amazon. The Council members congratulated him on this major accomplishment that offers the most comprehensive and detailed account of the Gravity Railroad history ever.

Jane Varcoe – The Waymart Historical Society earned \$900 from its flea market and bake sale. The last event for the season will be on Halloween Oct. 31 with costumed characters greeting folks at the Haunted Gravity Car. Varcoe said that if the society can’t attract more volunteers to help operate the Gravity Depot Museum, they may be forced to close. There are 200 life members and approximately 100 individual members, but very few are active. The problem is not with funding but with personnel to share the workload and keep the doors open. The borough owns the building where they are housed.

Cliff Robinson – A large tree fell on the foot bridge on the Port Orange Road trail but did not cause any damage. Robinson and Barnes had been asked to contribute articles to the Basha Kill Area Association’s newsletter about their respective D&H trail openings. He passed a few copies around. Varcoe suggested posting these type articles on the Council’s website and Facebook page. Robinson staffed booths at the Lock 31 Festival in Hawley and the Zane Grey Festival in Lackawaxen over the summer. He spoke at the annual meeting of the Lackawaxen River Conservancy, where participants showed a great deal of interest in trail development. On Sept. 14, his conservancy’s 501c3 status was finally reinstated after a long effort.

Next Council Meeting: The quarterly meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, **January 28**, 2015, at the 1863 Schoolhouse Museum in Huguenot, NY. Tentative plans are to order lunch from Try R Deli in advance of the 1 p.m. business meeting. Complete itinerary details will be announced.

Adjourn: The Oct. 22, 2014 D&H THC meeting adjourned at 3:27 p.m. on a motion by Hulse, seconded by Porter.

Minutes submitted by Laurie Ramie, 10/27/14

Summary of Action Items:

1. Council – Give further discussion to the designation of a repository for the storage of DHTHC records and assure that there is a digital back-up of all documents.
2. Ramie – Issue 2015 DHTHC Membership Renewal forms. Dues are payable to Treasurer Varcoe by January.
3. Council – Begin stocking and distributing the new DHTHC brochure, which replaces the outdated rack card. Publicize its availability.
4. Robinson – Follow up with request for quotes from videographers based on contact information provided by members and proceed if the \$500 cap is not exceeded.
5. Robinson – Instruct the www.dhthc.org webmaster to update the membership list.
6. Perez – Work on establishing a separate Facebook page for the Council and advise when it's available for adding content.
7. Powell – Provide a contact for the Dunmore Historical Society for a membership application to be sent by Varcoe.
8. Schadt/Burns – Confirm plans for the Jan. 28 DHTHC quarterly meeting in Huguenot with Ramie approximately 10 days in advance for issuance of a meeting notice.