

D&H Transportation Heritage Council

April 22, 2015 Quarterly Meeting Minutes

Wurtsboro, NY

Attendance at business meeting:

Cliff Robinson, Jr. (chair), Delaware & Hudson Canal and Gravity Railroad Conservancy President
Bill Merchant (vice-chair), D&H Canal Historical Society and Museum President
Jane Varcoe (treasurer), Waymart Area Historical Society President
Laurie Ramie (secretary), Upper Delaware Council Executive Director
S. Robert Powell, Carbondale Historical Society Director
Sally Talaga, Wayne County Historical Society Volunteer
Lynn Burns, Town of Deerpark Historian
Norma Schadt, Town of Deerpark Assistant Historian
Kerron Barnes, Town of Mamakating Intergovernmental Coordinator
Kathy Land, Waymart Area Historical Society Volunteer
Kristin Porter, Sullivan County Parks, Recreation & Beautification Director
Dave Hulse, Sullivan County D&H Canal Linear Park, Lock 50 Interpretive Center, Summitville
George Fluhr, Pike County, PA Historian
Myra Snook, Morris Canal Commission, Warren County, NJ
Paul C. King, New York City College of Technology Associate Professor

Announcements of Member Accomplishments, Concerns, and Upcoming Events

Reports were given during lunch at La Piazzetta Restaurant in Wurtsboro, in advance of the business meeting:

Lynn Burns – Upcoming programs for the 1863 Schoolhouse Museum in Huguenot include 5/17, Frank Salvati on “The Iroquois Confederacy: America’s Original Power Brokers”; 6/20, Stephen Crane Day & Civil War Displays, 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. at Drew Methodist Church, Sussex Street, Port Jervis; 7/18, Joseph Brant Revolutionary War 1779 Raid Bus Tour, 8-11:30 a.m. departing from Sparrowbush, reservations required; 8/23, dedication of the Town of Deerpark’s latest historical marker on the Monticello & Port Jervis Railroad, accompanied by a 2 p.m. exhibit and 3 p.m. lecture by Joe Senese; 9/27, Open House celebrating the 325th anniversary of the first settlers to Deerpark, 11 a.m. to 4 p.m. at the Schoolhouse Museum and Neversink Valley Grange Hall; 10/11, one-act play, “Stand! Hold!” with drum & fife music, and plaque dedication, 3 p.m., Grange building. See www.1863schoolhouse.org for details.

Jane Varcoe – The Gravity Depot Museum will re-open in May. There will be a tour by 95 fourth graders. The Route 6 Heritage Commission will meet at St. Tikhon’s in Waymart in June.

Kristin Porter/Dave Hulse – The Summitville museum will reopen on Memorial Day weekend. Kristin has been representing Sullivan County at ongoing meetings with the Town of Mamakating Canal Group.

Laurie Ramie – The Upper Delaware Council’s 27th Annual Awards Ceremony will take place on April 26 at Central House Family Resort in Beach Lake. Sally Talaga is the recipient of this year’s Cultural Achievement Award. Norma Schadt will present a program on historic markers at the UDC’s monthly meeting on May 7. Laurie distributed copies of the Spring/Summer 2015 issue of “The Upper Delaware” newsletter.

Myra Snook – The Morris Canal Commission plans to have an author’s day this summer to discuss books about historic subjects. They built an exact replica of a 90-foot canal boat a few years ago. Only a portion of it is visible above the water line. The county recently added a pair of mules made from plywood to the display.

George Fluhr – Towpath Road in Lackawaxen Township is in bad shape, but a radio report stated that PennDOT has no immediate plans to repair it due to the low traffic count.

Sally Talaga – D&H Canal Park at Lock 31 continued to have visitors this past winter until the snow was too deep to pull even a four-wheel drive truck into the entrance. If more visitors would like to use the park all winter, we will see if plowing is affordable. Due to another very cold winter, the Lackawaxen River froze over for most of the length of the towpath. Restoration architect John Bowie's drawings and specifications have yet to be submitted to the PA Historic and Museum Commission for approval. These are necessary to bid the final phase of exterior restoration of the house, which includes the porch on the lock side, making the building handicapped accessible, replacing four windows and three doors. Two time-sensitive grants cover all costs, so hopefully this work will be completed this year. The park's second trail along most of the length of the park's river shoreline was established as a local Boy Scout's Eagle project last fall. Signage is still needed prior to its official opening during this year's canal festival. Last year, Woodland Design Associates prepared preliminary drawings to re-grade the dirt/stone bridge just north of Lock 31, construct a wooden bridge over the sluiceway, dirt ramp into the canal bed, and a canal "boat" pavilion in the canal bed. All three 2014 grant applications to fund this project were denied, but two are being resubmitted with a larger local match, thanks to the Wayne County Commissioners. If we are awarded either of these grants, construction will begin in 2016. Sally distributed copies of the Wayne County Historical Society's 2015 programs brochure. Events at the D&H Canal Park at Lock 31 include: 4/18, 9 a.m., Annual Tree Harvest, with work concentrated directly south of Lock 31 where we can now see the stonework; 5/2, 9-1, Annual Spring Clean-up, to address litter along Rt. 6. (Anyone have an old, long-handled pool skimmer to fish litter out of the watered canal or a small kayak?) There are also branches to pick up, brush to cut with loppers, weeds whacked, flowerbeds trimmed, traction material needs spreading on the overflow parking lot entrance, and more. At 1 p.m., a hot dog and hamburger barbecue will be served. Please bring a side dish or dessert to share. Other events: 5/23, 9-3, Annual Yard Sale, fundraiser to benefit the park. You can help by bringing your gently used household items to the lock house on 4/18 from 10-1, 5/2 from 10-12, or 5/21 and 5/22 from 4-5. Please no magazines, clothing, or furniture too heavy for two ladies to move. If you can help set up or clean up, let Lisa Macchia-Ohlinger know at mac2188@ptd.net. The 3rd Annual Canal Festival will be 8/22 from 10-4. There will be live music, demonstrations, carriage rides on the towpath, commercial vendors and non-profit info tents, children's activities including a petting zoo, canal store, author signings, and delicious food. The Stourbridge Lion "cub" will again be there. Any DHTHC organizations are welcome to set up an information booth but you need to let Sally know ASAP.

Paul King – The Yankee Lake, NY resident introduced himself to those who weren't in attendance at the last meeting. There are two groups of students at the New York City College of Technology where he teaches who are working on graphic design and architectural elements to develop a master plan for the Town of Mamakating Trail System. A rebranding effort is underway to increase recreational tourism. The students made a recent field trip to gather information. A presentation on rebranding options is anticipated for next spring, since this is a multi-semester project. Architecture students are working on designing a visitor center which is envisioned to identify what can be seen along the entire length of the canal beyond the local area. They'd like it to be open year-round for activities as a gateway to Sullivan County. King said he welcomes suggestions for other project ideas. This is a valuable learning experience for the students to deal with real people and programs.

Bill Merchant – The D&H Canal Historical Society and Museum has \$1 million available through a \$500,000 New York State grant, matched by the Open Space Institute (OSI), to acquire the DePuy Canal House, the 1797 tavern in High Falls that was purchased by the canal company in 1830. Having negotiated down the acquisition price of the foreclosed property with the bank, the society will have funds to renovate the property also, including a new cedar shake roof. 2016 will mark the Society's 50th anniversary. The museum will re-open on May 2 with a new exhibit on Romeo Muller, who lives in High Falls and wrote famous animated movies including "Frosty the Snow Man" and "Rudolph the Red-Nosed Reindeer". The exhibit will be open through New Year's 2016. Additional events include a 6/12, 7 p.m. lecture by Vernon Benjamin on "Revolutionary Thinking: The Creation of D&H"; 6/21, 2 p.m., free Five Lock Walk tour for NYS Path Through History weekend; 7/12, 5 p.m., Opening Reception for "Remembering Romeo Muller"; 7/24, 7 p.m., film screening of "Lost Rondout, a Story of Urban Removal"; 9/6, 1-4 p.m., Wine Tasting on

the Five Lock Walk; 9/13 and 20, 2 p.m., free Five Lock Walk tours, Hudson Valley Ramble; 10/9, 7 p.m. lecture by Anthony Musso on “Hudson Valley Treasures”. See www.canalmuseum.org for details.

Robert Powell – The Route 6 Association for the roadway between Hawley and Wellsboro will hold its annual meeting in Carbondale in a couple of weeks. An interpretive program on the Gravity Railroad and Canal will be given. An alliance of historical societies met at the Hawley Silk Mill last weekend. Robert missed the last DHTHC meeting because he was being interviewed by Pennsylvania Cable Network for a “PA Books” show that aired 2/15 on the release of his Delaware and Hudson Canal Company Gravity Railroad Vol. 1-5. Copies of the interview are available on DVD. Host Brian Lockman invited Robert to return when the next five volumes are released. He had to re-order the supply of DVDs. Volumes VI through X will publish on 10/9/15 covering the topics of Waterpower on the Gravity Railroad; Working Horses and Mules on the Gravity Railroad; Passenger Service on the Gravity Railroad; Farview Park; and The Steam Line from Carbondale to Scranton. Robert noted that the PCN has six million subscribers and he made sure to plug the DHTHC organization. He subsequently received an offer from a PCN producer to do a tour of canal and gravity railroad-related historic sites for their “It’s History!” show. Robert responded immediately that he would be happy to coordinate an itinerary. Lastly, Robert reported that the Carbondale Historical Society had to move its D&H caboose from the former location 100 yards away at a cost of \$2,800.

Cliff Robinson – He attended recent meetings sponsored by the Sullivan County Trail Committee as well as Western Orange County Trails Forum, and gave a joint presentation with Kerron Barnes at the Orange County Placemaking Forum, to discuss the D&H existing and potential trail system. Cliff recently met with Port Jervis Mayor Kelly Decker, who is interested in implementing a reward patch program for anyone who completes 6 trails throughout the city, similar to the National Park Service’s “Take a Hike” program. The city wants to water their section of the canal as part of the Port Jervis Whitewater Park. This will also involve re-doing the whole parking area near West End Beach and paving the towpath. They would like to have Professor King’s help with the design work.

Call to Order: After the group transitioned from the restaurant, Chairperson Robinson opened the business meeting at 2:10 p.m. Barnes welcomed everyone to 73 Sullivan St., a former Orange & Rockland building which he said the Town of Mamakating purchased in 2003. He thanked the Wurtsboro Arts Alliance for hosting us today.

Acceptance of Minutes: On a motion by Talaga, seconded by Merchant, the minutes of the rescheduled February 4, 2015 meeting of the D&H Transportation Heritage Council were accepted.

Treasurer’s Report and Membership Update: Varcoe summarized her written financial report. She reported balances of \$571.30 in the checking account; \$865.81 in the savings account; a 94-day Certificate of Deposit (CD) valued at \$1,063.37; and a 59-day CD valued at \$822.59. Total DHTHC assets = \$3,323.07. The report also included the names of seven full voting members and 12 affiliated or individual members. She attributed the uptick in affiliated members to the news release that the Council had issued after the last meeting. Varcoe sends every new member a thank you letter and a brochure. On a motion by Merchant, seconded by Burns, the Treasurer’s Report was approved. Hulse said he wished to reiterate that if DHTHC is going to solicit business members, he feels it would be good for organization to provide inexpensive plastic placards to them for display.

New Business:

- a) **Voting and Non-Voting Memberships** – Robinson said that a question had come up as to whether individuals could be allowed to vote if they paid the \$40 dues for full membership as opposed to the \$20 dues for affiliated, non-voting member category. Robinson said that voting members represent organizations. Technically, the

representative should seek his or her board's approval before voting any certain way. Since business would grind to a halt if that happened though, representatives basically use their individual judgement to cast votes. Porter clarified that this discussion was predicated on a mistake by an individual who submitted a \$40 check without necessarily wanting or expecting to have voting privileges. She believes that voting should be reserved for those who have a stake in this group beyond an interest in the D&H Canal. Robinson put forth the idea of establishing a policy that an individual has to be a member of DHTHC for at least one year and attend five meetings before qualifying for voting membership. A committee could be set up to make that decision. Schadt asked what the bylaws say on this subject. Robinson replied that only full members have voting privileges currently. Merchant said he doesn't believe that individual members should have the right to vote but this discussion is theoretical anyway. Fluhr said the bylaws need to explain the various types of memberships available and to anticipate any problems. Robinson reiterated that individuals could be given a year's probation to determine their intent with the Council. Varcoe said she can't imagine that most of the individual members who recently joined want to be part of this group's governance; they just wanted to support the mission. She suggested addressing each issue as it may come up. King said he doesn't feel disenfranchised by not having a vote. It would be difficult to define what standard must be met, such as what level of association with the canal is required. Merchant said the definition for voting rights could require having a 501(c)3 designation. Talaga said that would eliminate the government entities on the Council. Robinson offered as a definition that an organization must either be chartered, a 501(c)3, or a government entity. It was pointed out that DHTHC is actually none of those things and therefore wouldn't qualify to be a member of its own organization. Robinson said we could clarify what constitutes an organization and vote on that at the next meeting. Until then, the bylaws prevail and one person per full member organization can vote.

- b) **Town of Mamakating D&H Canal Project** – Barnes reported that students from the NYC College of Technology made a field trip on April 10. They visited High Falls, Bova Road, Ferguson Lane and other sites, and met with community groups and the town supervisor, to assist with their project. A presentation is being arranged either in Brooklyn or locally to highlight their re-branding ideas. The town is able to promote that five trails converge in the Wurtsboro area, there are new assets being developed, it serves as the gateway to Sullivan County, and is located only 70 miles from Times Square for urban visitors.
- c) **Trail Committee Reports** – Robinson reported that at the Western Orange County Trails Forum on March 26, a representative of the NY-NJ Trail Conference said that one vision was to spend a day here without getting in a car. One could take the Metro North train from New York City to Otisville, shuttle by cab to Westbrookville, hike to Port Jervis for 12 miles, then catch the train there to return to the city. Robinson said City of Port Jervis Mayor Kelly Decker is interested in making their train stop a transportation hub to get one of the largest population centers in the world up here to enjoy a trail that represents what made their city great in the first place. Ramie mentioned that there is a pilot, commercial initiative called the Upper Delaware River Valley Eagle Express for a bus from the Rolling V company to pick up passengers in Manhattan on a Friday and make four stops along NYS Route 97, returning to the city on Sunday. The fare will be \$40 each way. Four experimental runs will begin the weekend of June 26. Asked about the progress of the newly-established Sullivan County Trail Committee which meets monthly, Ramie said the group initiated by the Sullivan County Legislature and supported by its Planning Division has discussed establishing a subcommittee specifically dedicated to the D&H Canal as a regional trails system.

- d) **DHTHC Records and Archives** – King suggested starting a Word Press site to post digitized records of the Council. It's not very searchable but allows one to scan, upload, and access documents from a single source. Some of the older records from the secretary and treasurer are on floppy disks so a reader will be necessary. The first key is to clarify what types of documents there are along with formats and sizes. Maps may require large format printers. There may be databases out there to research. Start with converting meeting minute files to PDFs and develop a simple file naming structure. Consider what is critical about every document. They must be properly named and sorted first. Merchant said minutes, financial reports and agendas have highest priority to him. King said that historians want other artifacts too. It would be good to share this system with your individual organizations when it's developed. One way to name files is by date: four digit year-two digit month-two digit day. King suggested that we could have a morning session before the July business meeting to discuss the file naming system. Schadt said that records must be cross-referenced. There are companies that do indexing. Ramie said she has collected the quarterly minutes and has all iterations of the bylaws on her computer. Robinson said our interest now is preserving these records digitally. King said when records are converted, they need database fields for searchability. He suggested setting up a system to move forward with continued, ongoing archives. Find a good way to organize the database so information can be found in a timely fashion. Varcoe provided Ramie with a box and binder of DHTHC documents to sort.
- e) **DHTHC.org Website, Facebook Page**– The new memberships have been posted on the website. Robinson said he still can't access the Council's Facebook page for administrative purposes. It comes up as a sub-folder under his Conservancy's page. Burns volunteered to work on creating a new Facebook page to start fresh. She will advise everyone when it is active.
- f) **Brochure Supply and Distribution Status** – Merchant brought in a box of the new brochures to provide to anyone needing an additional supply. The old rack cards should be recycled since the listings are out of date.
- g) **Video Production Update** – Robinson said he still can't find a videographer for this project. They don't call back. The Gravity Railroad to Honesdale section is ready to be produced. Varcoe said she would contact her source who takes video and does editing. Talaga said to make sure there is a written agreement to provide permission for unrestricted Council use of the video.
- h) **D&H Maps Update** – Barnes reported that he has a new contact at Canadian Pacific Railroad in Calgary due to the retirement of the individual who was in charge of the map collection. They are moving their entire archives to another facility in Montreal. The records have been packed up and shipped. Once they are unboxed at the new location, the contact said he could make arrangements for the Council to view and photograph the material. That could take place in the fall. He asked for a copy of the former inventory that was done. There are three map books. Robinson noted that the Council wanted the maps to go to the New York State Library where they could be digitized. Barnes replied that Canadian Pacific hasn't decided where to send them.
- i) **Other** – Merchant said it would be great to have a list of all hike-able sections of the canal that are accessible and currently available to explore. The list could be posted on the Council website and printed as a handout to distribute through the museum sites. Porter suggested pulling that list from Dave Barber's book and highlighting the ones that are public. Merchant said he was thinking of something more general than Barber's book and believes we have the collective knowledge to compile that list. Robinson agreed that it's a good idea and would show the progress of trail development. He suggested starting with Barber's book, using mile markers as a common reference point, and assigning the

sections by county as follows: Orange County, Robinson; Sullivan County, Porter and Hulse; Ulster County, Merchant; Wayne County, Talaga; and Pike County, Fluhr.

Next Council Meeting: The quarterly meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, **July 22**, 2015, with an offer by Talaga to host it at the D&H Canal Park at Lock 31 site in Hawley, PA. The itinerary will be announced in advance. Merchant volunteered to host the October 28, 2015 meeting in High Falls, NY.

Adjourn: The April 22, 2015 DHTHC meeting adjourned at 3:43 p.m. on a motion by Barnes, seconded by Merchant.

Minutes submitted by Laurie Ramie, 5/19/15

Summary of Action Items:

1. Cliff: Propose a definition of what constitutes an organization to receive full voting privileges as a DHTHC member and consider whether this should be added to the bylaws.
2. Laurie/Paul: Sort through DHTHC records to create an inventory and start converting documents into PDF files. Work with Professor Paul King to develop a file naming system, set up a searchable database, and start a Word Press site potentially to access the documents. Meet on the morning of July 22 on this subject?
3. Lynn: Create a new Facebook page for the Council and notify everyone when it's active.
4. Jane: Provide videographer contact to Cliff to get production of the Gravity Railroad to Honesdale section video in the works.
5. Kerron: Continue communications with Canadian Pacific Railroad to gain access to the D&H map books in their archival inventory.
6. Bill, Cliff, Kristin, Dave, Sally, and George: Compile a list by county of all hike-able sections of the canal that have public access, using mile markers as reference points.
7. Laurie/Sally: Confirm logistics for the July 22 DHTHC quarterly meeting in Hawley. Issue an advance meeting notice and agenda.