

D&H Transportation Heritage Council

July 22, 2015 Quarterly Meeting Minutes

Hawley, PA

Attendance at business meeting:

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

George Fluhr, Pike County, PA Historian

Kenny Christianson, Lackawaxen River Conservancy

Rolf Moeller, Wallenpaupack Historical Society

Susie Kaspar, National Park Service Upper Delaware Scenic and Recreational River

Myra Snook, Morris Canal Commission, Warren County, NJ

Bill Bollinger, Bollinger & Rutter Video Production and Services

Call to Order: Following an optional morning tour of the D&H Canal Park at Lock 31 in Hawley given by Sally Talaga, Chairperson Robinson opened the business meeting at 1:05 p.m.

Acceptance of Minutes: On a motion by Powell, seconded by Talaga, the minutes of the April 22, 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 \$591.30 in the checking account; \$958.93 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 = \$3,463.39. There are 10 full voting members and 12 affiliated or individual members. Robinson asked if it's worthwhile to have these CDs with such nominal interest rates (0.15%) when the checking account is interest-bearing (0.5%). Varcoe said the CDs are only short-term periods. On a motion by Talaga, seconded by Powell, the Treasurer's Report was accepted, with an abstention from Varcoe.

New Business:

- a) **List Current Public Hiking Areas of the Canal by Mile Marker Points** – Robinson said that he's not aware whether Bill Merchant, Kristin Porter and Dave Hulse have progressed with listing the canal sections in their Ulster and Sullivan County jurisdictions. Fluhr said there are no public hiking areas in Pike County, PA other than on public roads. Robinson said that means those areas are already open to pedestrians and bicyclists as a canal trail. The road is the buried towpath from Lackawaxen to Lock 22. No special permission is required. When you cross the river, the first three locks a little north of Pond Eddy to the National Park Service area, the towpath is on New York State Route 97. Robinson said he wrote up a route from Eddyville to Honesdale that he doesn't think has changed much. He just wants to add mile markers to it. *Talaga said she has prepared the information for the Hawley to Honesdale and will email that to Robinson.* Christianson said it would be ideal to show people the experience of the canal route walk. Talaga said after passing Lock 22, you continue on that road but there's really nothing to see except for the basin in Hawley, then it picks up again from White Mills to Honesdale. Robinson said that PPL owns a section near John Frey's property along Towpath Road in Lackawaxen. They might be open to the idea of refurbishing it if we offered to clean up the towpath for free. He asked who would be willing to write a letter. Talaga noted that

PPL has transitioned to a new owner, Talen Energy. *Christianson offered to contact Frey on behalf of the Lackawaxen River Conservancy and find out about the ownership. Robinson said then we will draft a letter seeking permission to clear it and use it.* There appears to be a feeder dam or guard gate there. New York State has a General Obligations Law which exonerates property owners of liability if someone walking there gets hurt. He believes that there is a similar law for Pennsylvania. Kaspar asked whether Cora's Bistro in Hawley should be included on the list as a canal attraction. Talaga noted that the Wayne County Historical Society does include that property in its canal history posted on-line, as well as the fact that the PA Coal Company's telegraph office was behind Bingham Park in Hawley. *Robinson suggested putting on the agenda for the next meeting the topic of listing the visible sites for canal history along the towpath trail.* We can reference the mile markers in Dave Barber's guide book for the canal route. Robinson said he had asked Barber if he has any plans to update his book and found out that he is potentially interested in doing so.

- b) **Status of Video Production** – Varcoe said that she invited Bill Bollinger to this meeting after she and Powell had met with him to discuss the Council's intentions for a video project. He is preparing a video for the Rails Trails Council in Uniondale, the Stourbridge Lion train, and has worked with the Honesdale Partnership. She asked him to share how he operates. Bollinger said that he collects raw footage then works with the client to put it together to meet their needs. Another approach is to sit down and write a script. Varcoe and Powell had speakers lined up to talk about the Gravity Railroad section but this will require visuals too. Robinson asked whether it would be possible to get footage from Carbondale to the Delaware River in one day of shooting, which would cover the first two sections. Bollinger said that may be optimistic since there are often weather issues or unexpected interruptions which can be time-consuming. Varcoe said that Powell has a definitive collection of all the historic images we would need of the Gravity Railroad. It's a matter of interspersing that with modern footage. Robinson said the original concept was to do videos of 5-7 minutes per canal section. Bollinger suggested keeping it under 2 minutes each to post on the website for viewers to get a taste of the canal history. Robinson said we're targeting people with longer attention spans. It's not meant to be an exhaustive history but there is a lot of material to cover. Talaga said what determines the length of the video is the price we can afford. There is no sense planning details until then. Varcoe said we could have a 5-minute overview of the entire canal system then develop more specialized, shorter videos on specific topics. That would be a good grant project. Help is available to find funding sources and help write grant proposals. Bollinger said once he commits to a price, he does not exceed it. He offered examples of costs and descriptions for various projects he has recently done. Varcoe said there should be 1 to 2 speakers per section, therefore not requiring a lot of interviews. Robinson offered to do the overall narration, either on or off camera, to tie the videos together. He envisions a couple interviews with footage of 4-5 sites to show what can be seen now to mix in with old still photos. The canal history is readily available but nobody else has out there that morphing of historic D&H images into the contemporary scene. Bollinger offered a price of \$2,500-\$3,000 for this first video of the Gravity Railroad. That rate would include filming, audio, photo cuts, music, and editing. He estimates 25 hours at \$75/hour for the editing process. He anticipates gathering the footage would take two days to account for lighting and technical issues, with a half-hour at each location for interviews, but is only charging for one. It will be the group's responsibility to choose the historic photos to use (the more, the better) and the locations or artifacts to film. Bollinger said he would give a reduced rate for doing all five segments. Talaga said if this Gravity Railroad section was done, that video could be used as a prototype for grant applications to subsidize future videos. After further discussion to refine the Council's

- ideas and state of readiness with speakers, photos, a script, and sites to film, Bollinger trimmed his quote to \$2,000. He said the video would cover Carbondale to Hawley, with a teaser at the end for the next section to Honesdale. He would need a reasonable amount of lead time to arrange the filming dates and a 50% advance payment. At that time, Bollinger left the room to allow the Council privacy to discuss his proposal. Robinson said that he had been talking to another videographer in Scranton whose base price was \$1,500 but he wanted to get a guarantee that he'd have the job for all of the segments. Robinson said they could ask for samples of their work and deliberate further, but he would love to see shooting done in August. Talaga said she was prepared to make a motion. She moved for *DHTHC to contract with Bollinger & Rutter to produce a video of the Gravity Railroad section of the canal at a maximum cost of \$2,000*. The motion was seconded by Christianson, with unanimous approval. Bollinger was advised of the decision. *Bollinger said he would e-mail Varcoe an invoice for this contract, including the 50% down-payment terms. He asked Robinson to send him the D&H logo file and for Powell to provide him with access to approximately 25 still photos in advance so he can start working on any editing required.*
- c) **DHTHC Records Inventory, Digitization and Administrative Website Set-up** – This issue was *tabled to the next meeting* due to Professor Paul King's absence.
- d) **DHTHC.org Website and Facebook Page** – Robinson said the problems with accessing a DHTHC Facebook page directly continue. *Lynn Burns had offered to set up a new, dedicated Facebook page* but he is unaware whether that has occurred yet. This was therefore also *tabled to the next meeting*.
- e) **D&H Maps and Company Records at Canadian Pacific Railroad in Montreal** – Robinson explained that when the canal closed, they started a railroad on their property which Canadian Pacific eventually used as a route. Historic records from the D&H Canal Co. were stored in a round barn for decades then transferred to archives in Montreal. He has visited them and requested that the Railroad donate the D&H Canal maps to this Council or the New York Historical Society. The D&H color maps from 1865 and 1899 in bound books of approximately 80-100 pages show some features we would never know about otherwise. If copies are available anywhere else, such as at the American Canal Museum in Easton, nobody has been able to find them. The Railroad has resisted letting them go but did turn over their records to Exporail, a repository of railroad history. Kerron Barnes has been corresponding about this. An inventory of the records which had been done by an archivist who has since retired can't be located and many of the documents are still wrapped up from having been moved. Barnes did get an offer that the new storage facility would allow the maps to be copied/digitized at the cost of \$40 per page. Varcoe said she vaguely recalled a D&H map project for which Gene Woock from the National Park Service had secured \$5,000 from the Northeast Regional Office in Philadelphia many years ago. She wondered what maps that included but no one else could recall the details. *Robinson said we would need to know how many pages are involved before we could potentially negotiate on the digitization price, as well as to work out copyright and usage issues.*
- f) **Other** – 1) Kerron Barnes had emailed Robinson with a request that DHTHC consider issuing a support letter for the Town of Mamakating's application to the New York Main Street Program for funding to assist with renovations and improvements of properties along the Village of Wurtsboro's Sullivan Street to enhance initiatives including the \$1.3 million project to construct a nearly 8,000-foot trail linking key sites in the village and the development of a Master Plan to re-brand the town by marketing its most noteworthy characteristics, including the D&H Canal significance. *On a motion by Varcoe, seconded by Powell, the Council directed the secretary to write and submit the requested support letter.* Robinson will forward Barnes' email to Ramie to provide the address and further

information. The application is due by July 31. 2) Robinson returned to the issue he raised during the last quarterly meeting about better defining membership categories now that individuals or organizations may join as affiliated, non-voting members for \$20 annual dues. Voting rights are limited to full-member organizations in good standing with their \$40 annual dues. Robinson suggested including in the bylaws that “An organization consists of at least three individuals with an interest in the same goals and objectives of the D&H Transportation Heritage Council”. He further suggested including as a clause, “The Council reserves the right to revoke membership through a majority vote to any organization whose actions are not consistent with the goals and objectives of the D&H Transportation Heritage Council”. Fluhr said that the bylaws already define organizations and who qualifies to become a voting member. He said a statement about agreeing with the goals and objectives of the Council could be added to the membership application. Talaga said this does not represent a major change of the bylaws, but more of a clarification. Varcoe said she does not see the need to make any such change to the bylaws while agreeing that a checkbox could be added to the membership form instead. *A motion was made by Talaga and seconded by Christianson to vote on the proposed amendment adding the above clauses to the bylaws at the October meeting.* The motion was approved, with Varcoe voting no.

Announcements of Member Accomplishments, Concerns, and Upcoming Events

Rolf Moeller – Moeller noted that this was his first DHTHC meeting and that he is a member of the Wayne County Historical Society and Shohola Railroad & Historical Society in addition to the Wallenpaupack Historical Society (WHS). Fellow WHS member Dick Briden had attended the morning tour of the Lock 31 Park and asked for a Council membership application.

Robert Powell – The Carbondale Historical Society (CHS) is re-programming since so much is done electronically now. They’re pushing harder to offer web-based research as opposed to on-site. It cost \$3,000 to move their caboose two blocks. They’ve acquired some lovely objects in the last two months but have run out of storage space. He still feels it’s good to continue accepting artifact donations though. In October, an 89-member choir from Wales will be staying in Carbondale for a week. CHS will provide programs. Powell explained that in the 1830s, 90 Welsh families were brought to Carbondale to work on the Gravity Railroad. He has sold out again of his CD collection of the Gravity Railroad history. *The next five volumes in the series, amounting to 1,400 pages, have been completed and are in production for their October 2015 release.* He whittles away every day on the next five volumes that will be issued in October 2016.

Jane Varcoe – The Waymart Area Historical Society has received donated scrapbooks with over 200 pages of celebrity autographs, movie memorabilia, and postcards. She sought advice for selling them to generate revenue. Suggestions were made to consult Bill Merchant who is a professional appraiser and to approach Barbara’s Books in Hawley for eBay sales. Varcoe reported that there will be an *excursion steam train running Sept. 12 and 13* from NPS Steamtown in Scranton to Binghamton to mark the 100th anniversary of the Nicholson Bridge. *She will circulate details if anyone is interested.*

Myra Snook – The Morris Canal Commission in Warren County, NJ has been active over the last 20 years buying back as much as possible of the canal and promoting it. They’re now at capacity of operations and maintenance because the county doesn’t have a parks program. There is a Board of Recreation Commissioners instead. Recently a Warren County Parks Foundation launched as a new 501(c)(3) group to do what the county can’t. Of the 8 inclined planes, all but one are on public property. Regarding signage, the Commission is phasing out the use of Quick Response (QR) codes after discovering that it can expose smart phone users to hacking when the QR codes are scanned out in public.

Kenny Christianson – Christianson said he met Robinson last year at the Zane Grey Festival and had encouraged the Lackawaxen River Conservancy (LRC) to join the Council. He reported that with PPL restructuring to Talen Energy, they don’t let LRC know any more about releases or aeration issues. A

public health specialist with LRC is trying to work with the new company. He noted that LRC runs a scholarship program for environmental science and recently awarded a scholarship to a Wayne Highlands District student. August 1 would be a Day on the River to celebrate the Lackawaxen in Rowland, open to the public.

Susie Kaspar – The National Park Service held its annual Canal Days programs in May and was able to add the Port Jervis Central School District this year thanks to a grant. The Upper Delaware's Roebling Bridge model will be moved to the D&H Museum outside Wurtsboro. A work detail from the Olmstead NPS Tree Trimmers was at the park unit for one week to get training in working around historic structures. The Towpath Trail under the Roebling Bridge has been re-opened. NPS recently met with The Delaware Company to discuss undertaking some new interpretive programs. NPS staff has been contributing photos to the Upper Delaware Scenic Byway initiative called "This Place Matters" to encourage stewardship of historic or favorite local sites.

George Fluhr – Shohola Township has almost completed creation of historic panels under a Technical Assistance Grant from the Upper Delaware Council. They will be installed at Rohman's Park. Fluhr handed out an excerpt from an 1832 publication by Thomas F. Gordon, *Internal Improvements, Gazetteer of the State of Pennsylvania*, headlined "A Proposed Canal That Was Never Built From the Port Jervis Area". It read, "Commencing then, at Carpenters point on the Delaware, or rather at Dunning's ferry, 2 ½ miles above the point where the River is 415 feet wide. It is proposed here to erect a dam 10 feet high upon a foundation of smooth slate rock within 15 chains of the Hudson canal with which the Delaware Canal may be readily connected; thence to follow the valley of the river a distance of 70 miles to Easton. This route attended with much labor and many difficulties. Bluff rocky mountains run close to the shore, rendering expensive embankments in the river necessary; and the bottom land is very undulating, requiring also heavy embankments and frequent and deep excavation. The descent in the whole line is 268 ½ feet and the whole expense is estimated at \$1,430,669.17. No portion of this line has yet been commenced, but the line has been located with the view of a connection with the next described line."

Sally Talaga – The book "Images of America: Honesdale" was recently completed by Kim Erickson and includes canal history. Erickson and fellow authors S. Robert Powell and Cliff Robinson will be featured at the 3rd Annual Canal Festival at the D&H Canal Park at Lock 31 in Hawley on August 22. The Wayne County Historical Society needs volunteer helpers for many jobs at the festival. Two Eagle Scout projects led to the creation of "The Riverside Trail" and installation of three benches and six birdhouses at lookout points over the river on the existing trail which will now form a loop. A ribbon-cutting ceremony will take place on Aug. 22. With assistance from the Wayne County Prison Work Release Program, WCHS has started to demolish the stone outbuildings and use those materials elsewhere on site. They solved a safety issue by improving the driveway from Route 6 to the back parking area with all donated labor and materials, including millings from PennDOT that were compiled after a spring road project. The grade of the driveway has also been adjusted. They are still working on the burnt porch area of the house. Bid documents for restoration are ready but there is a hold-up with the grant administration. That project must be finished before interior house work can happen. Talaga handed out the 2015 events brochure for WCHS and said that she is searching for a fiberglass mule if anyone knows where one could be obtained.

Laurie Ramie – Ramie noted that the Town of Lumberland is submitting a New York State grant application for funding to develop an Upper Delaware Heritage Trail at the Dry Dock Boat Basin at Mongaup at the intersection of NYS Route 97 and County Route 31. She shared details of the proposal, which states that the primary focus will be the creation of a Heritage Walking Path along the Historic D&H Canal Boat Basin Site and Birdsall Road constructed by volunteers, with signage including Canal History and Boat Building Site, cleaning of the area, landscaping, and installation of park features. Applications were due by July 31 and award announcements are expected in December 2015. She also handed out flyers for the Upper Delaware Council's 27th Annual Raft Trip on August 2 from Barryville to Pond Eddy.

Cliff Robinson – The Delaware & Hudson Canal and Gravity Railroad Conservancy has been having financial issues to complete its trail development grant project due to the expiration of a line of credit necessary to advance costs for the 80/20% reimbursement split. That puts them at a standstill unless additional funds can be raised. Seed money is needed to match the \$60,000 balance of the grant or they will

have to give that up. They had plans in place to bypass two breaches next. The DPW characterizes these footpaths as bridges and requires a bridge engineer to inspect them. Robinson said that the Sullivan County Trails Committee that formed in the spring appears more focused on the O&W Railroad than the D&H corridor.

Next Council Meeting: The quarterly meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, **October 28**, 2015, at the D&H Canal and Historical Society and Museum in High Falls, NY. The itinerary, with a morning exhibit tour and optional lunch reservations in advance of the 1:00-3:30 p.m. business meeting, will be announced in advance.

Adjourn: The July 22, 2015 DHTHC meeting adjourned at 3:41 p.m. on a motion by Robinson, seconded by Powell.

Minutes submitted by Laurie Ramie, 8/13/15