

# **D&H Transportation Heritage Council**

## **January 27, 2016 Quarterly Meeting Minutes**

### **Narrowsburg, 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

**Sally Talaga**, Wayne County Historical Society Volunteer

**George J. Fluhr**, Pike County, PA Historian

**Lynn Burns**, Town of Deerpark, NY Historian

**Kathy Land**, Waymart Area Historical Society

**Ingrid Peterec**, National Park Service Upper Delaware Scenic and Recreational River

**Dick Briden**, Wallenpaupack Historical Society

**Myra Snook**, Morris Canal Commission, Warren County, NJ

**Rolf Moeller**, Wallenpaupack Historical Society

**William Clark**, Matamoras-Westfall Historical Society

**Bill and Christine Bollinger**, Bollinger & Rutter Video Production and Services

Call to Order: Chairperson Robinson called the business meeting held at the Upper Delaware Council office in Narrowsburg to order at 1:04 p.m.

Treasurer's Report and Membership Update: Varcoe summarized her financial report handout. Three checks were written: \$500 to Bollinger & Rutter Video Production on Nov. 20; \$240 to Hillside Application Services on Jan. 2; and \$250 to Bollinger & Rutter on Jan. 6. Current balances are \$305.08 in the checking account; \$156.17 in the savings account; and a 59-day CD valued at \$823.59. Total DHTHC assets = \$1,284.84. She said another \$250 is owed for the video. Robinson pointed out that the Certificate of Deposit is only earning 0.15%. He suggested closing that when it matures on March 13 and depositing it into the checking account, which Varcoe agreed to do. She noted that Mike Harelick at Hillside had placed a flashing banner on the website to call attention to the 2016 membership dues being due, but there hasn't been much response to date. She listed 3 full voting members and 1 individual member on her report. Numerous attendees provided her with dues payments then that she will process to update the membership list. On a motion by Merchant, seconded by Ramie, the Treasurer's Report was accepted, with all in favor.

Acceptance of Minutes: Merchant clarified in the Member Accomplishments section of the last meeting minutes that the \$150,000 figure that he had cited as needing to be raised is only to meet the Open Space Institute match related to the acquisition of the DePuy Canal House. The Society will actually be responsible for raising an estimated half-million dollars for renovations. On a motion by Burns, seconded by Merchant, the minutes of the October 28, 2015 meeting of the D&H Transportation Heritage Council were accepted, with that clarification noted.

#### New Business:

- a) **Election of Secretary and Treasurer** – The Oct. 28, 2015 nominations of Laurie Ramie as secretary and Jane Varcoe as treasurer were upheld in a unanimous vote from which Ramie and Varcoe abstained. The chairperson and vice-chairperson positions will be up for election in 2017.
- b) **Preview and Critique of Bollinger & Rutter Video** – Videographer Bill Bollinger previewed on a large screen an approximately 15-minute video describing the Gravity

Railroad to Honesdale section of the D&H Canal System, featuring Cliff Robinson, S. Robert Powell, and Jane Varcoe; still photos; and moving images set to music. Varcoe called Bollinger “a genius” for compiling all the raw footage so seamlessly, while Snook commented, “It is one of the best [histories] of anything I’ve ever seen.” Clark said the photography was sharp and compelling. Burns said it offered her new revelations. Merchant felt it was well-paced and covered the material. Others noted how interesting it was in terms of storytelling and teaching them new facts. Bollinger said this is still a draft and he welcomes suggestions. Regarding the length, the committee felt it was appropriate for certain formats and it would be very challenging to cut anything out. Varcoe said that would be just the right length for fourth graders, such as the school groups they get at the Waymart depot. The 15-minute film could be followed by a discussion for a great program length. Snook said one photo representing America without many trees was repeated. Talaga found the inclusion of a steam locomotive photo in the discussion about the arches to be a confusing mix of eras. Bollinger said he would center the photo on the bridge and eliminate the steam train. He wants to find a better photo to depict the energy crisis. Burns suggested finding photos to juxtapose a thick forest with a bare hill. Talaga said the Wayne County Historical Society has three views of Honesdale without trees as part of the Johnson series that would work. Asked whether there will be end credits, Bollinger said those and a title page need to be added. He will work with Robinson on that. Fluhr said it should state Volume 1 to indicate that more videos will follow. Peterec suggested including captions to identify by name and title who is speaking. She pointed out for future videos that the narrators should wear the same clothing for continuity’s sake, even if they are being filmed on different days. She praised the content of the video. The committee discussed a scene of Powell looking out over Farview Mountain while telling a story, which Bollinger said was not the actual audio. They agreed to replace that with a gazebo shot overlooking the valley. Bollinger said it was unfortunate that Powell was unable to attend today and that he would make sure he was able to preview the video. Robinson offered to record some acoustic guitar or banjo music so that there is another option to the produced music currently being used. He and Bollinger will meet at a recording studio in Liberty, NY to do the instrumental tracks.

- c) **Planning and Funding Discussion for Production of Future Video Segments** – Fluhr asked what the intentions are for the use of this video. Will it be loaned or given to organization and schools? What would be the cost? Will it be sold to help raise funds for the next videos? Robinson said that we had planned for four more videos, covering Honesdale to the Delaware River; the Delaware to Port Jervis; Port Jervis to Spring Glen; and Spring Glen to the end. That is being done to break up the huge chunks of miles involved. The hope is to provide a much better understanding to people who are unfamiliar with the D&H Canal and Gravity Railroad and to possibly offer new information to those who are aware of the history. Merchant agreed that each video segment should be free-standing. Bollinger asked if the Council would consider taking this on as one project to get all the footage into the can then break it down into segments. All of the filming could be done over a few days or weeks. Robinson said we could organize that but wouldn’t be able to pay for it all at once. Bollinger said a new approach to take for future segments is to previsualize the videos and script it. That would make filming more efficient. Talaga said we can use the finished product to raise funds for the next. Robinson said the expectation is for this video to be tweaked and ready within two months. Having this available will also promote membership in DHTHC through the end credits. Merchant asked about the possibility of doing a crowd-sourcing campaign. This would be a perfect type of project to post on the Internet at a site like Indiegogo which sets a time period and the goal of an amount to raise through small individual donations. Links could be posted on all of the member websites. He will look into it further.

Robinson said he foresaw selling this video as a DVD at site gift shops. If this was put on the web for free, why would anyone buy it? Talaga recounted that WCHS has produced two videos over the years. They held release parties to make a big splash. Tickets can be sold to attend the party with refreshments and entertainment, and take home a DVD. That creates a lot of buzz. Copies can be made on demand. Those release parties could be done at multiple locations. WCHS was able to get some of the food donated. Snook recalled the 1998 commemoration of the canal's closing which was marked with a symposium and a bicycle trek carrying a symbolic piece of coal. That got a lot of publicity. It was acknowledged those events required a major planning effort. Robinson noted that this organization has to work through one of its 501(c)3 groups to handle monies since the Council is not incorporated. Bollinger noted that DVDs seem to be going out of style these days but simply providing a link to a website or a flash drive takes away from the pleasure of viewing it, in his opinion. The cost of DVD cases and labels has to be figured into the reproduction price. He anticipated that that it would cost approximately \$5 per DVD to produce. The more that are done, the less the expense per unit will be. This first video cost \$2,000 for the filming and editing. Producing 100 DVDs at an estimated \$500 would be manageable with DHTHC on-hand funds after the new 2016 dues are deposited. By consensus, the Council gave Robinson the authority to work with Bollinger on the video tweaks as discussed, decide on the wording for the title and end credits, recording of music, the style and cover image for the DVD cases, and to approve the final product. Varcoe and Powell should start discussing arrangements for a release party in the Carbondale area. Varcoe said she would be attending a Meet the Funders event in Scranton the following day and would see if any grants appear like good prospects for a project like this. Merchant suggested doing a Google search of historic film grants. Bollinger asked whether it may be possible to approach private donors with an interest in these types of local history projects. Clark suggested that advance orders of the DVD should be taken. *[Note to minutes: After the meeting, it was learned that Myra Snook contributed a generous personal donation to assist with the expense of future video productions.]*

- d) **D&H Nomination to National Geographic's "Scenic, Wild Delaware River" MapGuide** – Ramie thanked Steve Skye for getting the nomination of the Delaware & Hudson Canal System started and noted that she had added photos and contact information for the Council. More than 600 nominations have been made from the nine-county area of the Upper and Middle Delaware River that National Geographic has targeted. A mid-term meeting originally planned for Jan. 25-26 is being rescheduled due to a Northeast snow storm's impact on travel for some participants. One topic of business will be reviewing all the nominations. The MapGuide interactive website will go live in May 2016. News releases and events will be held to accompany the launch.

Old Business:

- a) **List Current Public Hiking Areas of the Canal by Mile Marker Points Per County** – Robinson thanked Talaga for providing him with a copy of "A Guide to the Delaware & Hudson Canal" by David G. Barber to provide the mile marker corroboration. Snook noted parenthetically that Barber is the head of the American Canal Society which may have an interest in helping to sponsor the DHTHC video project. Robinson said the goal is to share information on the Council's website about where public access is available along the entire canal route. Merchant said he would assist by collating the information for each section into a PDF and providing that file to Robinson.
- b) **Cost-Sharing Proposal to Photograph D&H Company Maps and Records in Montreal** – While this item was tabled due to Kerron Barnes' inability to attend the meeting, Robinson noted that Varcoe had provided him with various computer files and

microfiche rolls that represent maps of the PA Canal Company and the D&H Canal Company that he will inventory to determine what they contain in case this is the same information available at the Canadian Pacific Railroad repository. *[Note to minutes: A further update by Kerron Barnes was provided in a 2/8/16 e-mail message.]*

- c) **DHTHC.org Website and Facebook Page** – Robinson said there had been no progress on getting a Facebook page operational. Ramie asked whether it is really needed and said there would be a responsibility to make sure it was kept active. Merchant said it is vital for awareness and providing an interactive forum. He noted that when his organization announced their purchase of the DePuy Canal House, it prompted 30,000 views to their Facebook page. Robinson agreed that the likes are important and said it would be a great forum to publicize the video release. There was no intention to set it up with only one administrator. Peterec said she highly recommended starting an Instagram page too, which she said is so much easier than Facebook and more photo-oriented. Merchant volunteered to work on setting up both a Facebook and Instagram page for DHTHC.
- d) **DHTHC Records Inventory, Digitization and Administrative Website Set-up** – Ramie said that there has been no further action on this project but that all of the minutes, bylaws, and several other records of this organization are already stored electronically.

#### Announcements of Member Accomplishments, Concerns, and Upcoming Events:

**Bill Merchant** – The Open Space Institute on Dec. 1 provided its \$500,000 match to enable the D&H Canal Historical Society and Museum to leverage their \$1 million grant to purchase 1797 DePuy Canal House in High Falls. It was saved for the community. The society expects to transition its museum into the building within 2-3 years. The next step is to raise money for the renovations. A capital campaign will be conducted and an endowment fund set up by the board, which has been re-energized with new members who are hard workers. Merchant has been fielding requests for various community presentations on historic topics. He discovered Manville Wakefield's old slide show in the archives and may base a program on replicating that presentation.

**Dick Briden** – He has a great interest in the Pennsylvania Canal Company and said he is here to learn.

**Myra Snook** – Warren County, NJ is researching and designing two more signs for the Morris Canal to replace paper copies in the kiosks. They will include Quick Response codes to link to websites for more information. A symposium is planned in February to discuss the status of six incline planes that are now in public domain. They are expanding into a statewide canal corridor.

**Kathy Lane and Jane Varcoe** – The first project of the Waymart Area Historical Society this season will be to re-position its 24-foot Gravity Railroad exhibit in the Depot building in order to reorganize the museum. That will require opening the whole side of the loading platform to turn it around. They plan to re-open in May and are pursuing several ideas for children's activities and programs.

**Lynn Burns** – Burns handed out two issues of the "Deerpark Diary" newsletter from September and December 2015. Another road rally is being planned in conjunction with the Neversink Valley Area Museum. The theme of the next Town of Deerpark Open House will be a "Community Show and Tell". The museum recently held another Joseph Brandt tour for Port Jervis School District students. Having the Navasing Long Rifles there to greet the kids and exhibit their firearms was a big hit. A big focus now is on renovating the Neversink Valley Grange building.

**William Clark** – Clark said he's a D&H Canal enthusiast from way back and enjoys living across the river from the canal town of Port Jervis.

**George Fluhr** – Fluhr handed out a historic photo from circa 1940 and asked people if they could identify it. He confirmed that it was of the Lackawaxen Bridge built by John Roebling, though in extremely

deteriorated condition when this photo was taken. The only remnant of it today is one pier since the stones from the other pier were taken to build another bridge. The foundation is overgrown with weeds. It is located ¼ mile past the Roebling Bridge heading to PA Rt. 570. There were a half-dozen Roebling Bridges at one time. Fluhr noted that construction of a new Pond Eddy Bridge is now confirmed, with funding and a schedule in place. He wrote his first letter complaining about its deteriorating condition in 1980.

**Sally Talaga** – Talaga passed around photos depicting \$60,000 worth of repairs going on at the Lock 31 property on the porch, which required having an archeologist on site and using modern building standards. No pre-historic artifacts were found when digging the footers. The Wayne County Historical Society is about \$9,000 short to complete the project. Volunteers will be needed to do the finish painting. A \$15,000 Community Development Block Grant was awarded. Two state grants are pending for the canal boat pavilion and trail work but the Pennsylvania budget impasse has caused the funding flow to lag. The 4<sup>th</sup> Annual Canal Festival at D&H Canal Park at Lock 31 will take place from 10-4 on August 20. Interested exhibitors should contact Talaga.

**Ingrid Peterec** – This year’s Zane Grey Festival will be special in incorporating the theme of the National Park Service Centennial. It is set for July 16 in Lackawaxen. There will be a first-ever wagon ride from the Zane Grey Museum to the Roebling Bridge and the Stourbridge Line will run a train excursion to Lackawaxen that day. Peterec noted that NPS had submitted numerous nominations for the NatGeo tourism project. As part of the Centennial celebration, NPS Upper Delaware Scenic and Recreational River will conduct a second photo contest from March 1 to August 25. One category will include cultural resources. She would love to see the D&H represented. They have also commissioned a Virtual Park Tour that will be featured on their website. It includes a section on the D&H Canal and on the Roebling Bridge. That will be available by April. NPS Upper Delaware received a transportation grant for the Every Kid in a Park program to enable them to bring 10 school districts to the D&H Canal Days Programs during the first two weeks in May and again in September.

**Laurie Ramie** –The Upper Delaware Council’s Community Service application for a clean-up project at the National Park Service’s Corwin Farm property in the Town of Lumberland was accepted by Leadership Sullivan, a business leadership class sponsored by the Sullivan County Chamber of Commerce Foundation. The work will take place on May 21 with photo and video documentation to record the transformation. Ramie displayed the 2016 Sullivan County Catskills Travel Guide which has a special focus on the Upper Delaware Scenic and Recreational River for the NPS Centennial and the NYS Route 97 Upper Delaware Scenic Byway.

Other Business: Ramie reviewed additional handouts she had included in the packets today for informational purposes: “Upper Delaware Scenic and Recreational River Receives Field Trip Grant from the National Park Foundation” Jan. 19 press release; Pike/Wayne Local History Roundtable Jan. 15, 2016 Report, summarizing her notes from that meeting; “Plans Would Save Ill-Fated, Historic Wayne Ponds”, an article by David Hulse from the Nov. 19, 2015 River Reporter about five high hazard dams on state-owned ponds that were built to accommodate the former D&H Canal; and two articles from the Basha Kill Area Association’s (BKAA) “Guardian” newsletter: “D&H Canal Walk: A Treasure Trove of History, Lore” by Jane Anderson, Autumn 2015 issue; and “Huge Threat Looming on the Horizon – Hopper Hill LLC Sand and Gravel Mine Proposed Next to Wurtsboro Airport” by Paula Medley, Winter 2015/16 issue, along with calendar announcements for two upcoming BKAA repeat programs: Sunday, July 31, and Saturday, Aug. 13, both at 10 a.m., “History of D&H Canal with Gary Keeton” – Join Gary for a walk through time. Ever wonder about local stone walls and foundations? Curious about how people farmed the rocky soils or the relationships between the Basha Kill and the Pine Kills? Oh, and learn about the canal too! Meet at the DEC access road on Route 209 across from the Hometown Deli in Westbrookville. Bring binoculars. Contact Gary at (845) 386-4892 for particulars.

Next Council Meeting: The quarterly meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, **April 27**, 2016. Clark offered to host the group at the Westfall Township Municipal Building at 102 LaBarr Lane in Matamoras, PA (downstairs meeting room), with a morning field trip to visit the nearby Port Jervis sites of Tri-States Rock, Point Peter at the Elks-Brox Park, Fort Decker, and the West Main Street Heritage Trail, potentially. A lunch gathering will be organized before the 1 p.m. business meeting start. Details will be confirmed and provided in advance of the spring meeting. The targeted locations for the rest of the 2016 meetings were tentatively set for High Falls on July 27 and Huguenot (Town of Deerpark) on October 26.

Adjourn: The January 27, 2016 DHTHC meeting adjourned at 3:39 p.m. on a motion by Varcoe, seconded by Merchant.

*Minutes submitted by Laurie Ramie, 02/09/16*