

D&H Transportation Heritage Council

July 27, 2016 Quarterly Meeting Minutes

DePuy Canal House, High Falls, NY

Attendance at business meeting:

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
Kenny Christianson, Lackawaxen River Conservancy
William Clark, Matamoras-Westfall Historical Society
S. Robert Powell, Carbondale Historical Society
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
Steve Skye, Neversink Valley Museum of History and Innovation
Kerron Barnes, Town of Mamakating
Ingrid Peterec, National Park Service Upper Delaware Scenic and Recreational River
Bill Bollinger, Bollinger & Rutter Video Production and Services

Call to Order: Vice-Chairperson Merchant called the business meeting hosted by the D&H Canal and Historical Society and Museum to order at 1:10 p.m.

Acceptance of April 27, 2016 Minutes: On a **motion** by Talaga, seconded by Burns, the minutes were approved.

Treasurer's Report and Membership Update: Varcoe reported current balances of \$220.08 in the checking account and \$2,020.34 in the savings account, for total DHTHC assets of \$2,240.42. Her report also listed 10 voting members and six affiliate/individual members on the 2016 roster. The Neversink Valley Museum of History and Innovation will be added to the full member list since they paid dues at the last meeting. Corrections were offered for Lackawaxen (not Lackawanna) River Conservancy, Matamoras (spelling), and George J. Fluhr (middle initial and last name spelling). On a **motion** by Clark, seconded by Talaga, the Treasurer's Report was accepted, with all in favor.

New Business:

- a) **Updates on Release of Bollinger & Rutter Video: Gravity Railroad to Honesdale** – Bollinger brought 100 copies of the newly-available DVD, "The Delaware & Hudson Canal Co.: Its History and Legacy. Chapter One – The Gravity Railroad". The Council established at the last meeting that the wholesale price for members would be \$7 and the retail price would be \$10. The video is under 15 minutes in length. DHTHC can accept checks or cash for payment. Clark asked who would be in charge of distribution. The Matamoras-Westfall Historical Society had already paid \$105 so he would take their supply of 15 DVDs. Bollinger also showed a prototype of note cards or postcards which reproduce the cover art. If that's of any interest, he can print more. Merchant said he would scan the image and send it out for review. Bollinger said he will check to see whether the DVDs are encrypted in a response to that question.
- b) **Planning and Funding Discussion for Production of Future Video Segments** – In response to a question on pricing, Bollinger said this first video cost \$2,000 for his services and producing the 100 DVDs was another \$420. It was noted that there isn't enough money in the treasury to cover Chapter 2 currently. Bollinger said he'd be willing

- to start work on the next video based on receiving a deposit in any amount to enable them to get footage during the nice summer weather. Others noted that filming is better when the leaves are down in October. On the topic of fundraising, Varcoe reported that she brought a copy of the DVD to the Lackawanna Valley Heritage Authority to inquire about grant opportunities. She learned that they currently cap their grants at \$2,500. They were open to meeting a match from the Hudson Valley Heritage Authority on the New York side up to \$2,500. Merchant phoned DHTHC President Cliff Robinson, who had an emergency work call, to involve him in the discussion. Robinson said he had anticipated a total of 5 video segments. The next, #2 of the series, would cover Honesdale to the Delaware River. Video #3 will be Lackawaxen to Port Jervis. Video #4 will be Port Jervis to Spring Glen. Video #5 will be Spring Glen to Rondout/Kingston. Robinson said that starting now to figure out the narration and where to film in October for the second chapter would be wise. He made a **motion**, seconded by Powell, to authorize the treasurer to issue a \$500 deposit to Bollinger & Rutter toward the \$2,000 cost for filming and editing, with all in favor. Bollinger asked to set up a committee to work with him on the next video segment. Peterec, Talaga, Christianson, Merchant, and Robinson will arrange to meet with Bollinger at the Wayne County Historical Society Museum in Honesdale to plot out their approach. Talaga said she will start gathering historic photos.
- c) **Support Letter for an Orange County Study to Assess the D&H Canal's Condition** – Skye said that the D&H Canal Park in Cuddebackville has been deteriorating and devoid of water, turning it into a mile-long dry pit with large boulders in it from the Roebling Aqueduct on the Neversink River. The abutments are starting to crumble from the ground up and stones are coming out of the wall. The Orange County Parks Department has been in watchful waiting mode. Parks Commissioner Richard Rose would like to hire a consultant to assess the condition. He plans to ask the Orange County Legislature for \$350,000 in the 2017 budget to evaluate the D&H Canal Park and two other sites. In the meantime, the historic canal continues to deteriorate in that area which he said is sad. Merchant asked if there is any federal responsibility since the site is a National Historical Landmark. Skye said that state funding comes with many complications. Orange County has an emergency fund. He has requested that the county hire a grant writer or an engineer to help address this problem. Varcoe said that Northeast Pennsylvania has an Alliance whose job it is to find and write grants. She asked if there is an equivalent organization in New York and was told no. The Parks Department feels that letters of support would be helpful to accompany the budget request that will be made this fall. Barnes suggested addressing letters to Orange County Legislature Chairman Steve Brescia with copies to Parks Commissioner Richard Rose and Majority Leader Melissa Bonacic, or one's local county legislator for those who live or work in Orange County. Merchant suggested getting this story of this landmark property's condition out to the press. He offered to contact the Open Space Institute to see if they're interested in this project given that they could provide a local match. Merchant said the property is in the worse condition he's seen in 10 years. He made a **motion**, seconded by Barnes, for DHTHC to write a letter of support on this subject, with all in favor. Merchant said he would collaborate with Robinson on the letter. Skye said he would provide additional background and contact information.
- d) **Website and Facebook Updates** – Ramie said that the National Geographic's Scenic Wild Delaware River MapGuide now has an emblem that listed sites such as the D&H Canal can place on their websites to provide a link. She will forward instructions to the www.dhthc.org webmaster Mike Harellick from Hillside Application Services with a request to install that website badge. Powell said that the link to the Carbondale Historical Society on the DHTHC's membership page is incorrect. Regarding the <https://www.facebook.com/DHTHC> page, Merchant says he posts a new item every

couple of weeks. He would like other contributors to provide fresh content. They only have to give him their email addresses to get administrator status. So far, Peterec and Barnes have done so. Merchant asked for a show of hands on how many local D&H organizations are actively using Facebook. He said he will visit those pages and like them to help link together the members. Peterec said it would behoove us to promote our events through the Facebook page so these items can be shared and spread. She offered to set up an Instagram page for this group.

- e) **Other** – Ramie thanked Merchant for arranging a comprehensive morning tour of the DePuy Canal House followed by lunch at The Roost in Stone Ridge prior to the business meeting.

Old Business:

- a) **Status of PA High-Hazard Dams Managed by PA Fish & Boat Commission** – Talaga said that she believes activist Paul Ludick, who made a presentation on this topic at the April meeting, became discouraged about the removal of the dams and has given up.
- b) **List Current Public Hiking Areas of the Canal by Mile Marker Points per County** – Merchant volunteered to take over from Robinson the task of compiling this information since he would really like to get this accomplished and put into a form that will be most useful to the public. Peterec said she still owes her list of hiking areas in the National Park Service territory of the canal. Christianson reported that there are new river mile markers installed along the Lackawaxen River for emergency purposes that could be used as landmarks for that area following the canal.
- c) **Fundraising to Photograph D&H Company Maps and Records in Montreal** – Regarding the books were transferred from Canadian Pacific Railroad to Expo Rail in 2015, Barnes reiterated the offer to allow the Council to photograph each page at \$40/Canadian funds (approximately \$30 U.S.) for research purposes. There are 82 pages of 23 x 32” hand-drawn maps providing an aerial view of the entire canal from 1865 which would cost approximately \$2,500. Barnes displayed a copy of the actual size of the first plate as drawn by RL Gorr, Jr., an engineer for the D&H Canal. The Port Jervis to Kingston book of maps is currently missing from the inventory. Barnes said if each of the five counties gave \$500, the cost would be covered to obtain digital images of each map page placed on a disk. Merchant said he is trying to get Ulster County to donate \$500. Varcoe said the question is, what can we do with these maps? Barnes said they can be printed from the disc and kept in archives, libraries, or museums for consultation. Talaga asked if we can figure out how many pages are in each of the county jurisdictions before approaching their legislators. Barnes said the archivist in Montreal can’t figure that out. Merchant said if we can raise some of the money needed, that could provide leverage. Powell said that Carbondale Historical Society will commit \$200. Merchant pledged \$500 from either Ulster County or his organization. Skye pledged \$250 from Neversink Museum. Christianson believed he could secure \$300 from the Lackawaxen River Conservancy. Talaga pledged \$300 from Wayne County Historical Society. Burns felt she could get \$500 from Deepark. That amounted to \$2,100. Talaga made a **motion**, which Skye seconded, for each individual group that had just offered pledges to actively pursue the acquisition of those funds in order to receive digital copies of the maps, with all in favor. Skye said he fears these map books will disappear if this action isn’t taken. Talaga asked Barnes to create a flyer describing the maps and this funding request so that information may be provided as supporting data to decision-makers.
- d) **Organizational Records Inventory and Digitization** – Ramie said this item can be deleted from the agenda since the records have been gathered and the most important documents are in digital form.

Announcements of Member Accomplishments, Concerns, and Upcoming Events:

Ingrid Peterec – The Roebling’s Delaware Aqueduct model is now housed at the D&H Interpretive Center in Summitville, though it required putting a hole in the wall to move it there. The last few hurdles are being crossed to enable the National Park Service to post its Virtual Tour on its website that includes a video section on the D&H Canal and the Roebling Bridge as cultural resources in the Upper Delaware.

Sally Talaga – Restoration of the Daniels’ Farmhouse Porch at the Lock 31 house has been completed at a cost of \$66,000 due to the archeology, painting, and cleanup needs. A ribbon-cutting will take place on August 18 at 6 p.m. Talaga handed out brochures for the 4th Annual Canal Festival at D&H Canal Park at Lock 31 which will take place from 10 a.m. - 4 p.m. on August 20. Visit www.waynehistorypa.org for the complete schedule of events. Talaga said they had a teacher with a degree in Historic Preservation volunteer to help for the last four weeks pulling down wallpaper in the house. They found stenciling and the signatures of Jason Torrey and others. In the ballroom, they found an indentation around the circumference of the room which would have been for a bench as evidence that it was used as a dance hall. They’ve been cleaning the unfinished wooden floors with mineral oil and found spots of bright yellows and reds behind the door.

George Fluhr – Fluhr said he met someone the previous evening who has a copy of a very fragile ledger kept by a towpath worker that lists bluestone orders and such. He will bring it to the next meeting.

S. Robert Powell – In October, Powell was interviewed by the PA Cable Network for Volumes 6-10 of his DVD series that cover detailed aspects of the Gravity Railroad. He provided several copies of that one-hour interview on a DVD. The next five volumes of the 24 will be released on Oct. 9, 2016. Powell offered examples of some new information he learned through his research.

Kathy Land –The Waymart Area Historical Society Gravity Depot Museum reopened in June. The gravity railroad exhibit has been getting great reviews. There was a good turnout for an open house in July. Ann O’Hara will teach a genealogy course for beginners in August, they will hold a flea market, and are joining forces for a bus tour of Carbondale, Waymart and Honesdale with Robert Powell doing the narration. See Facebook for details on these events.

Kenny Christianson – He drove the entire 108 miles from Honesdale to the Hudson yesterday and took photos along the canal route. It was amazing to see. The Wayne County Community Foundation awarded a \$3,500 grant to fund a Rail Trail from Hawley to Lock 31. The Lackawaxen River Conservancy sponsored its Day by the River last Saturday, which was very well-attended.

Steve Skye – His next lecture at the Neversink Museum will be on August 3, on the topic of the Cornell Family.

William Clark – He will follow up on the pledge from the Matamoras-Westfall Historical Society for the map project. Clark expressed appreciation to Merchant for the tour of the DePuy Canal House from attic to basement. He said the building has some terrific elements including all of the copper pans and machinery in the former restaurant’s kitchen. Clark finds the kitchen to be an amazing exhibit in itself. While he understands that it’s not from the canal era, Clark said he hopes the Society will retain it. Merchant responded that he appreciates that feedback. There are discussions about Ulster County Community College replicating the DePuy kitchen to start a culinary program.

Lynn Burns – Burns handed out a flyer for the Town of Deerpark Museum’s Star Party on August 11 at Harriet Space Park in Huguenot and copies of the “Deerpark Diary” newsletter for June 2016. She noted that D&H sites have been included in their summer-long road rally.

Kerron Barnes – The Town of Mamakating will acquire 2.5 miles of new trail paralleling the canal, which will increase its parkland by 50%.

Laurie Ramie – Ramie mentioned two handouts that she had included in the meeting packets: “Group Makes Headway on Filling D&H Canal with Water: Significant Obstacles are Still Ahead but Officials are Taking Interest in the Idea”, a 6/1/16 article based in Cuddebackville by Holly Kellum from The Epoch Times; and “Lock 31 Porch Renovation Complete”, a 5/27/16 article in the Wayne Independent based in Hawley.

Bill Merchant – On September 9, Merchant will give a 7 p.m. lecture at his museum building on D&H Engineer Russell Lord’s journals dated 1848-1852, which he acquired a copy of back in March and has been finding it a treasure trove of information. Anyone who would like a PDF copy of the journals should contact him. He is currently working to put the journals in chronological order and believes there are more out there.

Next Council Meeting: The quarterly meeting will take place on Wednesday, **October 26**, 2016 at the D&H Canal Park at Lock 31 in Hawley, PA. Talaga noted that they have a space heater to use if needed and the outhouse facility has been repaired. An agenda will be circulated detailing the itinerary.

Adjourn: The July 27, 2016 DHTHC meeting adjourned at 4:10 p.m. on a **motion** by Merchant, seconded by Barnes.

Minutes submitted by Laurie Ramie, 08/16/16