

D&H Transportation Heritage Council

October 26, 2016 Quarterly Meeting Minutes

D&H Canal Park at Lock 31, Hawley, PA

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

Laurie Ramie (secretary), Upper Delaware Council Executive Director

Sally Talaga, Wayne County Historical Society Volunteer

Rolf Moeller, Shohola Railroad & Historical Society

S. Robert Powell, Carbondale Historical Society

George J. Fluhr, Pike County, PA Historian

Lynn Burns, Town of Deerpark, NY Historian

Norma Schadt, Town of Deerpark, NY Assistant Historian

Kathy Land, Waymart Area Historical Society

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

Myra Snook, Morris Canal, New Jersey Canal Society

Call to Order: Chairperson Robinson called the business meeting held at the D&H Canal Park at Lock 31 to order at 1:04 p.m. following an optional morning tour and deli lunch on-site. Rev. Nancy Vonderhorst had participated in the morning session and brought with her a historic ledger recording inventories and collections of stone kept by Charles W. Maxwell of Pond Eddy that she had found in her Pond Eddy church, which was established in 1881. "To me, it's fascinating because it's history with a mystery," Rev. Vonderhorst said as she encouraged members to look through the ledger.

Acceptance of July 27, 2016 Minutes: Talaga offered a correction to page 4 under her member accomplishments report which stated, "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." She clarified that the painting and clean-up tasks were done by volunteers, whereas the archeological work cost \$66,000. On a **motion** by Merchant, seconded by Talaga, the minutes were approved with that amendment noted.

Treasurer's Report and Membership Update: Powell provided Treasurer Jane Varcoe's written report on her behalf showing current balances of \$410.08 in the checking account and \$2,070.57 in the savings account, for total DHTHC assets of \$2,480.65. There had been one check received from the Lackawaxen River Conservancy for \$300 toward the cost of the next D&H DVD production, with a reminder via Powell that other pledges are due. The written report also listed 11 voting members and six affiliate/individual members on the 2016 roster. Powell said Varcoe had asked about setting dues for 2017. By consensus, the Council agreed to maintain the dues of \$40 for full voting members and \$20 for affiliated and individual members. On a **motion** by Merchant, seconded by Talaga, the Treasurer's Report was accepted, with all in favor.

New Business:

- a) **Election of Chairperson and Vice-Chairperson for Jan. 2017-Dec. 2019 Terms** – Ramie noted that the bylaws updated in 2014 stagger the terms for officers to even and odd years, with chair and vice-chair up for election currently. They also state that a chairperson may serve no more than three consecutive terms in office. Robinson said that he and Merchant each have one term left. On a **motion** by Schadt, seconded by Powell, the D&H Transportation Heritage Council elected Cliff Robinson, Jr. as Chairperson and

Bill Merchant as Vice-Chairperson for the term of January 2017 to December 2019, with all in favor.

- b) **Sales and Publicity Report for DHTHC's DVD Chapter 1: Gravity Railroad to Honesdale** – Talaga reported that the Council has 20 left out of the original 100 copies of the DVD that were ordered. Revenue of \$560 has been collected although some payments are outstanding. She noted that Varcoe needs receipts. Talaga offered that the Wayne County Historical Society will hold on to the last 20 DVDs. She also has the balance of the 1000 new DHTHC brochures that were ordered if anyone needs an additional supply. Merchant said he would like to see a more compelling cover for the brochure. He has the file since he had arranged for the on-demand printing. Peterec asked if he could provide her with the PDF so she can post it on the National Park Service website. Regarding the DVDs, Talaga said that buyers can order them by mail with a credit card or stop by at the museum in Honesdale. Their hours of Wed.-Sat. from 10-4 are reduced from January through March to Fridays and Saturdays. It is best to call ahead at (570) 253-3240 to confirm they are open. The DVDs retail for \$10. They must collect sales tax for products sold in Pennsylvania. Robinson said he would like to ask videographer Bill Bollinger to do a 30-second highlight teaser that can be posted on social media with a message about where the entire 15-minute DVD can be found to purchase. He offered to pick out the scenes that Bollinger could edit together. Fluhr confirmed that we will have the Wayne County Historical Society as our point of contact for these videos. Merchant said since they are doing the work of keeping the inventory, WCHS should keep the difference of the \$3 profit between the production and sales price. Regarding publicity, Talaga said she had proposed two meetings ago that we hold a launch party to announce the DVD's release. Instead of a party, she felt that asking the organizations that will be featured in the next video segment to split the \$2,000 production cost for filming and editing, which does not include the manufacturing of the DVDs, was fair. Talaga said she used the first DVD to entice pledges for the next one. Robinson said he still likes the idea of holding a launch party for the first video at which it could be aired and then orders could be taken for more copies. Powell asked who would attend this party. He thinks it's a great idea but is concerned about building the audience. Robinson responded he would envision members of the Carbondale and Honesdale historical societies and libraries to be among those interested. Fluhr said that there is a Local Pike-Wayne History Roundtable that now meets. Talaga wondered what venue they could use. Merchant noted that we already paid a \$500 deposit to Bollinger & Rutter Video to initiate the second video so that leaves \$1,500 to collect. Robinson said the idea was to sell enough videos to recoup our costs. We're only making a \$300 profit for 100 sales. We need to sell 700 for that. Powell said that the emotional and family connections to the gravity railroad and canal are diminishing rapidly. He thinks we need to go wider, like through the Pocono Mountains Visitors Bureau or the Chamber of the Northern Poconos. Talaga said we should look for more wholesale outlets. Robinson proposed that each museum site could reach out to businesses with an offer to have these DVDs in their stores, perhaps at a lower rate. He asked everyone to think about that.
- c) **Status of Filming for DVD Chapter 2: Honesdale to Delaware River** – It was expected that Bollinger would be coming to Hawley later today to start the filming.
- d) **Webmaster Recommendation: Invest in Dedicated Website Hosting Site** – Ramie reported that she had trouble getting the most current version of www.dhthc.org to display several times and had asked Mike Harelick at Hillside Application Services why that was. He responded that there is a problem with the way that the website is stored. "When I first created the website back in 2005 at the request of the then director of the Canal Museum, it was decided as a cost-saving to allow the Canal Museum to host the website at no cost to DHTHC and create a domain name only for DHTHC and allow that

- name to redirect the viewer to the ‘real’ web page – the process is called URL forwarding or page forwarding. The annual fee for that was about one-tenth of buying full hosting. When the Canal Museum withdrew support for the DHTHC hosting, I used the domain space of another client who allowed me to use that space. I also just included the cost of the domain name in the web maintenance fee. A few times in recent years I suggested when the DHTHC budget allowed it to buy dedicated hosting and the cache problem would likely go away. The dedicated hosting would cost about \$150 per year instead of the \$15 for the domain name only (which I have been donating as I said.) Certainly worth considering if you can afford it,” Harelick said in an Aug. 17 message. Robinson said the bottom line is that we’re a page on somebody else’s website. We are using up another client’s cache. Given that we take in \$500-\$600 a year in membership fees, he feels that this would be a worthy investment. Robinson added that we could then set up direct email addresses through the website. On a **motion** by Robinson, seconded by Powell, DHTHC agreed to set up dedicated website hosting for www.dhthc.org at an estimated cost of \$150, with all in favor. Ramie said she will contact Harelick to ask him to proceed with that task and submit a bill.
- e) **Other** – Powell announced that Jane Varcoe and Ann O’Hara were being honored by the Wayne County Community Foundation with the 2016 Benjamin Franklin Award for Community Service in an awards dinner to be held Oct. 27 at the Bryn Mawr Conference Center.

Old Business:

- a) **Pledges to Photograph D&H Company Maps and Records in Montreal** – Ramie referenced the one-page handout that Kerron Barnes had prepared providing a synopsis about the opportunity to purchase D&H Company canal maps that date back to as early as 1854. They became the property of Canadian Pacific Railways in 1990 and were transferred to ExpoRail in Montreal in 2015. The initial effort to raise funds to photograph them will be directed to an 83-page volume which has maps about 24 x 32 inches each. The ExpoRail archive will charge about \$40 per page in Canadian currency. Talaga said that making pledges to her means that she would not issue a check until there are assurances that we have the full funding in place for this project. Others had payments with them that day, while there were a couple pledges that needed to be redeemed. Merchant calculated in taking the exchange rate into effect that we need to have around \$2,455 as of this date. The Council reviewed the status of current pledges and made calculations. Snook and Schadt both volunteered to split the difference to subsidize the balance, believed to be shy by around \$400 depending on the prevailing exchange rate when the arrangements are made. Ramie will advise Barnes to make the deal with ExpoRail. If any extra funds are realized, everyone agreed that it could go toward the video project. [*Note to minutes:* Kerron Barnes contacted the ExpoRail archivist with this good news and determined that, as of Nov. 1, the current exchange rate put the cost for photographing the 83 plates at \$2,500.]
- b) **Request for Orange County Study to Assess the Canal Conditions in Cuddebackville** – Robinson said he had spoken with Orange County Parks Director Richard Rose and learned that funding was put into the county’s budget for this study. Burns said she understands from Town of Deerpark Supervisor Gary Spears that it is now off the docket. Robinson said if that’s the case, it will have to be approached in a different way. They have to solve the problem of fixing the river or fixing the canal. [*Note to minutes:* Subsequent information found that the county funding for this project remained viable as of Nov. 7, with Steve Skye from the Neversink Valley Museum of History and Innovation welcoming requests for supportive emails to be sent to Legislature Chairman

Steve Brescia (brescia@frontiernet.net) or Legislator Tom Faggione (tfaggione@orangecountygov.com).]

- c) **List Current Public Hiking Areas of the Canal by Mile Marker Points per County** – Merchant is coordinating the information that has been received. Robinson spoke of making historic markers on colored paper which would show distances between sections. That may encourage people to keep exploring the canal route.
- d) **Website and Facebook Updates** – Robinson said he still has trouble logging on to the Council's Facebook page. Merchant confirmed that it is working but the last post was done on Aug. 7. He encourages everyone who uses social media to put up fresh content. Peterec said if every organization could submit a photo, they could post them one at a time. Merchant volunteered to receive the photos and post them if anyone needs help.
- e) **Other** – Ramie mentioned two other handouts she had placed in the packets. The first is a Town of Mamakating press release from Sept. 12, "Town Gains New Trail Segments", regarding Open Space Institute's donation of two segments of former O&W rail grade and adjoining land to the town. The rail trail parallels the D&H Canal and runs from Wurtsboro to Summitville. Second was an article from the American Canals Summer 2016 newsletter provided by Snook titled, "Hoggie: Fact or Fiction?" written by Terry Woods. Young boys or girls who drove the team of horses or mules along a canal towpath were reportedly called hoggies and the article analyzes whether that term was accurate.

Announcements of Member Accomplishments, Concerns, and Upcoming Events:

Ingrid Peterec – The Roebling Bridge in Lackawaxen is currently under repair as of Oct. 26. They are re-doing the expansion joints. In the spring, the icebreakers will be addressed. They also fixed a road approach problem.

George Fluhr – Fluhr thanked members for taking an interest in Rev. Vanderhorst's ledgers after he had suggested that she bring them to the meeting to display.

Sally Talaga – The Canal Festival was successful with approximately 810 guests attending on a very hot day. Next year's event is already being planned for the 3rd Saturday, Aug. 19, 2017. She exhibited a copy of the Local History "Past-Port" that the Local Pike-Wayne History Roundtable had created and includes profiles of several of our member organizations and sites, including the Lock 31 house.

Bill Merchant – Merchant reported that he is no longer the president of the D&H Canal Historical Society and Museum Board of Directors. He has been hired as the historian and curator.

Laurie Ramie – The Fall/Winter 2016 issue of "The Upper Delaware" newsletter was distributed.

S. Robert Powell – Powell said that the Local History Past-Port was a good indication of thinking regionally beyond county borders. He noted that each organization contributed \$100 to be included in it. There has been a sudden spur of visitation at the Carbondale Historical Society, which seems to go in cycles. On Oct. 9, Powell issued the latest 5 volumes (#11-15) of his 24-volume book series in a PDF format on the history of the Delaware and Hudson Railroad. The subjects are: The Jefferson Branch of the Erie Railroad (Carbondale to Lanesboro); Reaching Out: D&H Steam Lines beyond the Lackawanna Valley; Troubled Times – the 1870s; Carbondale Stations, Freight Houses, and the Carbondale Yard; and Locomotives and Roundhouses. They are available for \$25 each on-line at carbondalehistorical.org. Powell said he works on these books generally 8-10 hours per day and has gotten some gratifying feedback. He continued that Carbondale has started a train to Scranton using 6 passenger cars from Steamtown. They sold 300 tickets two weekends in a row at \$50 each. He was asked to be a speaker and gave talks in each car. Restaurants had food along the way and there were wineries involved too. Powell said that Varcoe had organized a bus tour of Waymart to Carbondale to Honesdale at which he also served as a speaker. These examples go to show that people love transportation outings.

Lynn Burns – The Town of Deerpark Museum averaged two programs per month. They raised \$900 from a road rally scavenger hunt that led to a final picnic. A new roof and gutters have been installed on the Grange building in Huguenot. Burns handed out copies of the “Deerpark Diary” newsletter for September 2016.

Norma Schadt – The Town of Deerpark received a grant from the Upper Delaware Council to create a brochure for the 56 historical markers in the town. The centerfold will be a map depicting the sites. Each one will have a write-up with a photo. That information will also be posted on-line.

Kathy Land – A summer volunteer enabled them to keep the Waymart Area Historical Society Gravity Depot Museum open on Saturdays and Sundays. They had 390 visitors through mid-September. They got great reviews about the bus tour Powell had mentioned and an August flea market was successful, along with an appraisal day, genealogy class, and coin evaluator program. Mike Stevens from PA “On the Road” TV show did a segment on Waymart Area Historical Society for WNEP. The museum will close on Nov. 1 after a Halloween night party in which they will decorate the train car for photo shoots. They will next meet in January to plan 2017 programs.

Myra Snook – The Morris Canal has been working on developing new signage.

Cliff Robinson – His conservancy’s main problem is money. They have \$60,000 left on a grant but need to up-front the cost before seeking reimbursement. The grantor gave an August deadline to submit another project or threatened to pull the balance. The conservancy requested \$1,500 from Orange County to do more work but was denied. The next bridge project costs \$40,000. Richard Rose has asked for consideration of Fiscal Year 2017 funding to keep the grant viable but Robinson is not sure how that will fare. They want to build a footpath to Hornbeck’s Culvert, which is 20 feet high and constructed of dirt and bluestone. City of Port Jervis Mayor Kelly Decker is very interested in the canal and how it can coordinate with the whitewater kayak park that the city hopes to develop. Recently they bulldozed the prism and berme stone work with an excavator at West End to build a practice area for the whitewater park, but that activity has stopped.

Rolf Moeller – Funds were raised through the raffle of an artist’s print to commission a Tom Kennedy memorial plaque that has been installed at the Hawley Depot.

Next Council Meeting: The quarterly meeting will take place on Wednesday, **January 25, 2017** at the Town of Deerpark 1863 School House Museum in Huguenot. Burns noted that a new restaurant had opened nearby that could be an advance lunch stop. An agenda will be circulated detailing the itinerary.

Adjourn: The October 26, 2016 DHTHC meeting adjourned at 3:12 p.m. on a **motion** by Land, seconded by Burns.

Minutes submitted by Laurie Ramie, 11/09/16