

D&H Transportation Heritage Council

April 25, 2018 Quarterly Meeting Minutes

Mamakating Environmental Education and Interpretive Center

Attendance at business meeting:

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

Bill Merchant (vice-chair), D&H Canal Historical Society and Museum, High Falls

Jane Varcoe (treasurer), Waymart Area Historical Society

Laurie Ramie (secretary), Upper Delaware Council

Lynn Burns, Town of Deerpark Historian, 1863 Schoolhouse Museum, Huguenot

Norma Schadt, Town of Deerpark Assistant Historian, 1863 Schoolhouse Museum

S. Robert Powell, Carbondale Historical Society

William Clark, Matamoras-Westfall Historical Society

Kathy Land, Waymart Area Historical Society.

Sally Talaga, Wayne County Historical Society's D&H Canal Park at Lock 31

Kerron Barnes, Town of Mamakating

Debra Conway, The Delaware Company

Rolf Moeller, Wallenpaupack Historical Society, Shohola Historical and Railroad Society

Steve Skye, Neversink Valley Area Museum of History and Innovation

Christine Saward, Mamakating Canal Committee

Robert Fiore, Town of Mamakating

Robert Honders, presenter

Call to Order: Chairperson Robinson called the business meeting held at the Mamakating Environmental Education and Interpretive Center to order at 1:05 p.m. following an optional lunch gathering at The Wurtsboro Diner.

“Restoring Our History” Presentation by Robert Honders of Honderosa Valley Consulting:

Honders offered a Power Point presentation on a plan to re-water a small section of the D&H Canal in Cuddebackville, which he said can be done economically and safely, while minimizing future maintenance burdens. The objectives are to be historically authentic, enhance recreation, and attract tourists. He provided a site overview orientation and described the concept. The South Dam was removed in 2005-06 to save the endangered Dwarf Wedge Mussel, which changed the course of the Neversink River and left the North Dam high and dry, causing little to no water to reach the feeder canal and main canal. The multi-phase plan includes cleaning out the existing channel of the feeder canal of trees and debris, which will require permission from Orange County and help from volunteers; excavating a trench and installing a PVC drain pipe under the dam to divert runoff; fill-patching it with concrete and reinforcing with existing concrete blocks; and removing the sediment in front of the head gate to allow water to raise high enough to flow into the canal. The anticipated cost is less than \$100,000 and the work would take a few weeks to complete. The plan is to only fill the canal to 50% of its original design depth, approximately 3 feet, up to Oakland Valley Road. The overflow will partially refill two lakes. The head gate of the canal could be closed seasonally. The long-term maintenance plan is to encourage the use of walking trails along the towpath and feeder berm to have a continual presence to increase recreation and deter vandalism. Honders said funding is not the main issue. It's getting permission from Orange County. Permits are needed from the NYS Department of Environmental Conservation and the Dam Safety Program. Skye explained that Orange County officials always felt if the canal section was re-watered, it could break and cause damage. There is no full-time parks person anymore due to staff cuts. Not a lot of funding is dedicated to maintenance of the county park in Cuddebackville.

Robinson said that he had spoken with Orange County Legislator Tom Faggione who raised the same concerns that Skye summarized. The primary objection seems to be, if it blows out, who will be on the hook for the liability? Robinson told him they would spend more on hiring a consultant than it would cost to fix it. The key is to get the county's Department of Public Works to agree to let volunteers do this work. It has been 10 years now and none of the fears have materialized. Robinson feels that the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers was "100% wrong" to remove the dam in the first place. When this comes up for a vote at the county level, he said it would be nice to get support from this Council and its member organizations. Robinson encouraged Honders and Skye to initiate a petition drive, and continue making this presentation. More convincing is needed. Honders said Orange County has been responsible for maintaining the county park since 1988. Schadt recalled a two-year planning project called 20/20 that was done for all Orange County parks. She wondered if that is ever cited or what happened with it. Honders said he would research that. On a **motion** by Talaga, seconded by Merchant, the D&H Transportation Heritage Council unanimously agreed to write a letter of support for re-watering this section of the D&H Canal in Cuddebackville at the appropriate time for public comment.

Acceptance of January 24, 2018 Minutes: On a **motion** by Varcoe, seconded by Moeller, the minutes of the last quarterly meeting were approved.

Treasurer's Report and 2018 Membership Update: Treasurer Varcoe reviewed her written report, which included an accounting of deposits made and checks issued since Jan. 24, 2018. The current balance was \$1,703.78. That includes a check for an additional \$116.52 owed to ExpoRail for the digital maps that is ready to send. There are 11 full members and five affiliate members. On a **motion** by Moeller, seconded by Conway, the Treasurer's Report was approved.

New Business:

- a) **Final Logistics for April 29 D&H Canal Company Sites Bus Tour** – Talaga announced that the trip sold out, with 29 reservations received. Because there was such a waiting list, she arranged for a second bus tour on the next Sunday, May 6, with the same itinerary and presenters. The buses leave at 9 a.m. and return at 3:45 p.m. to Honesdale, with an hour lunch included. Robinson suggested selling D&H DVDs on the bus. Talaga said she was planning to show the first chapter on the bus and that it could be purchased at the various stops. Talaga suggested that the next bus trip begin on the New York side of the river and that the fall season would be an ideal time. Robinson said we can gauge the interest in a D&H-focused tour on the NY side after making sure that we break even with this first attempt in PA.
- b) **William G. Pomeroy Foundation Grants for Historic Canal Markers** – Conway reported that the William G. Pomeroy Foundation has started a new Historic Canal Markers program which will produce free, blue and gold roadside markers for canal properties in any state. As the Town of Highland historian, she has applied for a canal marker on NYS Route 97 at the DEC's fishing access upriver from Barryville. It will be relatively generic in describing the D&H Canal and the years that it operated. The Foundation does require documenting information with primary sources. Conway said we should all apply to take advantage of this program, then a joint unveiling or publicity could be considered when the markers are installed. The marker must be within close proximity, 25 feet, of the canal site. She said she's not sure of the cut-off date for the program but Letters of Intent must be submitted by April 27. The link is at <http://www.wgpfoundation.org/index.cfm/historic-canal-marker-grants/>. Burns commented that this foundation has been easy to work with and they may be flexible on the dates. She asked whether the digital map images from the Canadian Pacific Railroad could be used as source documentation. Barnes said that the Town of Mamakating did

- two Pomeroy Foundation applications, and used deeds and newspaper clippings to back up their claims. The foundation is located in Syracuse, NY but this program is valid throughout the United States.
- c) **DVD Production Update** – Robinson reported that he spoke with videographer Bill Bollinger. The 2nd chapter DVD covering Honesdale to Delaware River is done and edited. It awaits insertion of images from the digital historic maps which are now available. That usage will require special permission. Barnes said we have to request access to the archives from ExpoRail, tell them the purpose, and sign a four-page license to allow the group the use 2 images at \$50 per page. We need to tell them how many copies we'll be making but will only be responsible to pay once, up to 100 copies. Barnes said Exporail has promised to expedite the request. Merchant suggested we make the number of copies higher to cover any additional needs. Talaga said she does not want to delay the DVD's completion since the donors who contributed toward cost of this project have been so patient. She made a **motion** to proceed without including the map images in the Chapter 2 DVD, which Conway seconded, and it carried. Regarding Chapter 3 covering the Roebling Bridge to Port Jervis, Robinson said Bollinger has the majority of the footage collected and editing will be the next step. He would like to shoot the canal facilities at Van Tuyl Road in the Town of Highland. Conway volunteered to seek permission from the private property owner. Talaga pointed out that we haven't raised the funds to pay for the production of Chapter 3 as yet. Only the first DVD is available for sale. The wholesale rate is \$7.

Old Business:

- a) **Distribution of 2,000 New Brochures** – Merchant noted that he brought more brochures for anybody who would like to pick up a supply today.
- b) **Status of Canadian Pacific Railroad Historic D&H Maps Digitization** – Barnes reported that two flash drives and two DVDs containing the two oldest books of the D&H Company maps were received in mid-April. The repositories will be the Neversink Valley Area Museum and the Town of Mamakating Town Clerk's Vault. Every full member of the organization is entitled to receive a copy. In advance of the business meeting, Barnes started collecting signed license agreements. The 24 x 36" maps may be displayed in organizational offices. The exhibits must give attribution, as follows: "Credit: Exporail, Canadian Pacific Railway Company Fonds." No copying or photographing is allowed without permission. He suggests each site post a sign to that effect by their display. If any are sold, the cost is \$50 per page. We are under strict terms of the use of the maps and especially for publishing purposes. Robinson informed everyone that the 109 maps are not in order on the DVD because the computer that digitized them did not recognize the Roman numerals that were used as the page numbers. Skye asked people to let him know if they need a particular format of DVD since he is making the copies based on the license requests. Barnes said we had raised \$2,400 toward the map digitization but the actual cost was approximately \$2,016. That balance can be turned back to another project. Council members thanked him for his persistence in obtaining this access to the historic maps that have been sought for so long.
- c) **Google Maps Directory of Publicly Accessible D&H Corridor Hikes** – Merchant and Robinson will get together to figure out how to advance this project.
- d) **DHTHC.org Website and <https://www.facebook.com/DHTHC> page** – Merchant will send the file for the new DHTHC brochure to Hillside Application Services to request its posting on the website. He said that he welcomes additional contributions and administrators to post fresh items on the Council's Facebook page.

Announcements of Member Accomplishments, Concerns, and Upcoming Events:

Laurie Ramie – The Upper Delaware Council honored DHTHC member George J. Fluhr of Shohola with its Distinguished Service Award and Carol Ann MacMaster from the Equinunk Historical Society with its Cultural Achievement Award, among other categories, at its 30th Annual Awards Banquet held April 22 in Beach Lake, PA. Ramie handed out copies of the Spring/Summer issue of “The Upper Delaware”, in which she had included a notice about the April 29 D&H Bus Trip.

Bill Clark – The Matamoras-Westfall Historical Society had recently hosted Peter Osborne of Nebraska (formerly executive director of the Minisink Valley Historical Society) as a guest speaker. His program attracted nearly 100 guests. Peter sends his regards to the Council membership.

Deb Conway – The Delaware Company will present “The Magical History Tour” from Cushetunk to Minisink on June 16, 8:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m., departing from and returning to the Minisink Battleground Park. Sullivan County Historian John Conway and other experts will provide narration at sites including the Minisink Battleground, Great Shohola Train Wreck, Delaware Aqueduct, D&H Canal, Mackenzie Mansions, and Neversink Valley Museum of History & Innovation. Advance registration at \$45 per person is required, which includes lunch and museum admission. Contact: The Delaware Company, P.O. Box 88, Barryville, NY 12719 or debrarconway@hotmail.com. Conway noted that Cliff Robinson, Jr. will be a step-on guide to talk about the D&H Canal. This date coincides with the New York State Path Through History weekend.

Steve Skye – It looks like there is some energy in Orange County to push the re-watering of the canal forward. There is a new Parks Commissioner. The Neversink museum has already hosted five school groups and three bus tours this season.

Kerron Barnes – Bob Fiore is the curator of the Mamakating Environmental Education and Interpretive Center. The town had purchased this foreclosed house on 5 acres for \$118,000 in December 2016 and invested \$57,500 to renovate it. The property abuts the Basha Kill Wildlife Area. The Mamakating D&H Canal Trail is getting through the preliminary design phase. They are unable to remove any trees from March to October to avoid disturbing bats. That will delay construction. Barnes found maps of north and south showing the canal and rail-trail in Orange County. He received at no expense to taxpayers two maps from the Open Space Institute that show all five trails that run through Mamakating.

Sally Talaga – The Wayne County Historical Society’s 2018 brochures and calendar of events were passed out. Anyone with a public site was encouraged to take a packet and make them available. Improved conceptual drawings of their proposed canal “boat” pavilion done by a volunteer were reviewed. It is hoped they will increase the chances of being awarded a PA DCNR grant this year, after three previous tries. If it is received, the project will be fully funded. The agreement for the \$40,000 or the \$75,000 that has already been raised will expire June 30, 2019, so this is the last opportunity to match it. If they do not receive the grant, work will begin this time next year and as much of the project will be completed as possible with the funds raised. A barn has been donated to the Canal Park which will replace the one whose foundation is by the existing parking lot. It will need to be disassembled, transported to the site, and stored until reassembly, which will not be this year. August 18 is the 6th Annual Canal Festival at D&H Canal Park at Lock 31. DHTHC member organizations are encouraged to have an information booth.

Those attending usually have an interest in canals and may not know about your part of the D&H. Let Talaga know as soon as possible if you would like to participate.

Bill Merchant – The D&H Canal Historical Society and Museum held its annual meeting last month with Larry Lowenthal as the speaker. They sold the building next door and made a profit that will assist with the cedar shake roof to be built on the DePuy Canal House. They are on track with closing out their grants. Since the last strategic plan was done 20 years ago, the society has started the process to develop a new one. Lectures and film series are planned for every two weeks, on Fridays. Merchant has joined the board of the Ulster County Historical Society. There is interest in putting a trails visitor center in the DePuy Canal House.

S. Robert Powell – The City of Carbondale has taken the D&H Caboose under its umbrella to use it as part of a visitor center office on Main Street. Having purchased the caboose 10 years ago, this is a positive development for its preservation. The Wayne-Pike Local History Roundtable will hold the Thomas Kennedy Local History Festival on April 28 at the Dorflinger Factory Museum in White Mills. Powell will offer a 9-11 a.m. lecture on “The D&H Gravity Railroad: Five Configurations.” Last year, over 100 people attended the talk. Powell has been asked to give a D&H presentation on August 16 at the Saratoga Springs History Museum in Saratoga Springs, NY. Volume 24 of his latest DVD series, “Delaware & Hudson Gravity Railroad and Delaware & Hudson Company” has just been published. This volume includes 634 pages with illustrations on the topic of “The Birth and First Maturity of Industrial America.” The cost is \$25. Each volume is available on the shop page at www.carbondalepahistorical.org or by calling (570) 282-0385. In total to date, 10,179 pages have been written. Powell announced that Jane Varcoe will be honored at Camp Ladore Lodge on May 3 for her 46 years on the Waymart Borough Council. She was asked to prepare a slide show on herself but is instead developing one about Waymart.

Kathy Land – The Waymart Area Historical Society has rack cards featuring all new photos of the Depot Museum and listing the 2018 calendar of events that she handed out. Land said that somebody posted on their Facebook page about a family moving into a house and finding boards labeled “D&H Company”. They’re trying to find out more information about that. The museum will re-open on May 19.

Lynn Burns – The Hudson Valley Magazine announced that it would feature 14 out of 1,400 historical sites, and the 1863 Schoolhouse turned out to be one of them. She and Schadt are in the process of preparing new displays for the museum. A helicopter tour of the Town of Deerpark is being planned for the fall when the leaves are down. Three people can fit with a pilot and they will last 15-20 minutes, landing in Huguenot or Sparrowbush.

Cliff Robinson, Jr. – The Conservancy is trying to get \$20,000 from Orange County to finish its projects under a \$60,000 grant that is unlikely to be extended for another year otherwise. Orange County Pathways is a potential source. Robinson noted that the City of Port Jervis is interested in watering a one-mile section of canal. The mayor is pursuing it seriously. They also want to incorporate visitors from the trains that come up from the city to walk to the canal to hike and get back on the train all in one day.

Next Council Meeting: The next quarterly meeting will take place on Wednesday, **July 25**, 2018, hosted by the D&H Canal Historical Society and Museum in High Falls, NY. An optional morning hike and lunch at The Egg’s Nest re-opened restaurant will be planned. An itinerary will be sent with the preliminary agenda closer to the date.

Adjourn: The April 25, 2018 DHTHC meeting adjourned at 3:50 p.m. on a **motion** by Merchant, seconded by Conway.

Minutes submitted by Laurie Ramie, 3/14/18