

# D&H Transportation Heritage Council

## January 22, 2020 Quarterly Meeting Minutes

### City of Port Jervis Municipal Building, Port Jervis, NY

#### Attendance at business meeting:

**Bill Merchant (chair)**, D&H Canal Historical Society, High Falls  
**Cliff Robinson, Jr. (vice-chair)**, Delaware & Hudson Canal and Gravity Railroad Conservancy  
**Jane Varcoe (treasurer)**, Waymart Area Historical Society  
**Laurie Ramie (secretary)**, Upper Delaware Council  
**Sally Talaga**, Wayne County Historical Society's D&H Canal Park at Lock 31  
**S. Robert Powell**, Carbondale Historical Society  
**Kathy Land**, Waymart Area Historical Society  
**Kerron Barnes**, Town of Mamakating  
**Steve Skye**, Neversink Valley Museum of History and Innovation  
**David Lawrence**, Neversink Valley Museum of History and Innovation  
**William Clark**, Westfall-Matamoras Historical Society  
**Rolf Moeller**, Shohola Railroad & Historical Society  
**Myra Snook**, Warren County, NJ Canal Committee  
**Lauren Hauptman**, National Park Service Upper Delaware Scenic and Recreational River  
**Susie Kaspar**, National Park Service Upper Delaware Scenic and Recreational River  
**Amanda Casper**, National Park Service Region 1 Preservation and Assistance Program (Philadelphia)  
**Bethany Serafine**, National Park Service Region 1 historian (Vermont and Boston)  
**Michael Ward**, Outdoor Club of Port Jervis  
**Burt Thelander**, D&H Canal and Gravity Railroad Conservancy, Outdoor Club of Port Jervis  
**Bill Bollinger**, Bollinger & Rutter Video Production and Services

Call to Order: Acting as chair pending the election, Robinson called the business meeting held at the Port Jervis City Hall to order at 1:05 p.m. following an optional lunch at The Erie Hotel & Restaurant in Port Jervis.

Acceptance of October 23, 2019 Minutes: Talaga offered corrections on page 3, paragraph 2, line 9: The Centennial bike ride group took one chunk of coal to New York City in 1998 (not chunks) and on page 4 in the Wayne County Historical Society report, it reads "they counted over 800 vehicles at the festival", but Talaga said there were actually more due to a discrepancy. On a **motion** by Robinson, seconded by Merchant, the minutes of the last quarterly meeting hosted by the Century House Historical Society at the Snyder Estate in Rosendale were approved as amended.

Treasurer's Report: Varcoe presented her written report, which included an accounting of transactions since October 23. The current balance is \$2,568.59. There are 14 full memberships and five affiliate memberships. She noted that this list will be updated after receiving numerous dues payments today and payments to purchase DVD copies. Varcoe thanked Rolf Moeller for donating \$200 toward the filming of the fourth DVD. On a **motion** by Moeller, seconded by Talaga, the Treasurer's Report was approved as presented.

#### New Business:

- a) **Election of DHTHC Chair and Vice-chair for Jan. 1, 2020-Dec. 31, 2022 Term** – With nominations being made at the last meeting of the year on October 23, 2019, a **motion** was made by Moeller and seconded by Talaga to elect Bill Merchant as chairperson and Cliff Robinson, Jr. as vice-chairperson, with all in favor. Merchant presided over the rest of the meeting.
- b) **Presentation: Options to Update the National Historic Landmark Designation** – Casper and Serafine said they are both historians with the National Park Service; Casper is based in Philadelphia and Serafine is based in Vermont and Boston. They have been working with Hauptman at the NPS Upper Delaware Scenic and Recreational River on the new National Register nomination for canal-related resources. This is different than the National Historic Landmark program. Introductions were offered around the room from one end of the canal and gravity railroad route to the other. Casper said she appreciated that geographic approach. She offered an update on the National Historic

Landmark (NHL) program. There are 2,000 nominees across the country so it's very prestigious. In 1968, the NHL designation for the D&H Canal had five components. She displayed a copy of the original nomination paperwork, noting this is one of the older styles that is basically in a report format. The Washington office has identified this one as outdated. During the 1930s-1950s, historians went out and surveyed properties individually. After that, they did it more in bulk, sometimes 50 or 100 at a time. They rolled them in through boundaries and resources. The question is, what are the contributing resources? Other government agencies need to see that applicability for Section 106 permitting purposes. It must be defined well. They have been helping the Neversink Valley Museum of History and Innovation with an update. They're not looking to remove any components. There is a question of whether some could be added. This requires documentation through photos and mapping to show how it plays out on the landscape. It must get the history right. This report doesn't capture everything we know about this place. This designation is partly a regulatory document and partly for you. Robinson asked, what if it's an area that connects two extant canal regions? Casper said they would need to see it. There are some areas that are in ruins or decayed. In those cases, they do an Integrity Survey. Again, the question is, can you define the contributing features? What needs to be preserved or understood about it? Robinson elaborated that the canal towpath has some big gaps, sometimes connected by a bridge, with berms and prisms. Casper said that would need to be weighed out. The nomination currently focuses on engineering and transportation history, but is there a social aspect or some other consideration? This update will take a lot of work. They estimate 3-5 years. There may be some funding available. The process includes documentation, writing, peer review, and submission into the queue for the National Historic Landmarks Committee's consideration. But currently there is no active NHL committee, Casper added. She suggested taking the energy now to call attention to the resource, get the counties involved, and prepare the information. Merchant said we have primary source documentation to verify the history. Skye noted that most of the people here are volunteers. This starts with money. Are there any grants available? Talaga said with two states involved, it may require federal funding. Robinson asked, how do you nominate sections like NYS Route 97 when there's no canal left. Casper said the NPS funding isn't done per state. You could designate individual components if they are nationally significant and stand on their own. Currently it's a discontinuous district. Think of it as a string of pearls called the canal. You can add more pearls to that string. Talaga said to define what is contributing and what isn't is not our exercise. Casper said one logistical issue to connect or add new components is that you have to get approval from property owners. They can only be added with owner consent. That's a current requirement. Robinson clarified, so you need a list from us of the most extant sections of the canal. Casper said it would come under one designation. Robinson asked what is the advantage of the NHL designation. Talaga said if there is a federal project going on such as a highway expansion, it would trigger a Section 106 review. They must consider the impacts it would have on this identified resource. Then if it moves forward, at least there can be mitigation, as occurred with the Casey Highway construction. Wayne County Historical Society was a consulting party in the planning stages for that project. They got a book published and a video done out of that mitigation process. Casper said the D&H Canal currently has what are considered to be the five best sections identified. We want to translate that into current standards and show how they contribute to the larger canal resource. Powell said there is no significant section of the Gravity Railroad that is still in place. It's not part of the current designation. Varcoe said that when USP Canaan went across the Gravity Railroad, they had to be consulted with mitigation provided. Robinson clarified that Honesdale to Eddyville is what we are discussing. Casper said yes, they would like to get a consultant in place to whom everyone could provide feedback with the goal of updating this nomination. Skye asked for the mechanics of funding this. Casper said that while the Washington office recommended this project for updating, there are not enough funds to cover the entire amount it would cost. The typical range is around \$50,000 for a consultant to do surveys, prepare the text, and draft the nomination package. The funding doesn't require a match, but since Congress hasn't approved the long-term budget for this fiscal year yet, they don't know how much NPS could allocate. Varcoe said that PennDOT offers transportation-oriented grants; Merchant said maybe NYS Department of Transportation does too. Skye said coming up with local matches for grants is often a problem. Casper said NPS could write the scope of work for this project. Merchant said we are not intimidated by the fundraising need but having paid staff to work on this is the only way to get it done. In the interest of time, Casper asked everyone to let her know who wants to be involved in future meetings on this subject. They can communicate that to Lauren Hauptman.

c) **Other** – Merchant announced that there are two parcels in the Rosendale area involving notable features that include Locks 8 and 9, two mines, a dam, feeder, basin, store and lock houses that are on the market by a private owner. His organization has approached the Open Space Institute with a hope that these parcels can be purchased and connected. This is part of a larger vision planned years ago by Karl Beard to have the D&H Trail continue on this

exact path. They are excited by this possibility of one of their organizations acquiring the properties rather than seeing them developed. He further reported that the D&H Canal Historical Society was awarded a Greenway Grant for a feasibility study of a loop trail at the Five Locks Walk. They are approaching the property owners to ask if they would will it to them.

**Old Business:**

a) **Update on Historic DVD Series** – Talaga reported that she has four copies of Chapter 1, 46 of Chapter 2, and 26 of Chapter 3 remaining in the inventory. Asked for the re-order price, Bollinger said it would be \$4.25 each for 100, \$4.50 for 50, and \$4.75 for 25. On a **motion** by Robinson, seconded by Moeller, the Council agreed to re-order 50 copies of Chapter 1 at \$4.50 each, with all in favor. Asked about the status of Chapter 4, which covers Port Jervis to Spring Glen, Bollinger said he is able to incorporate a lot of the footage from prior interviews. He did more filming at Lock 50. Bollinger asked who are the experts for this Chapter 4 section? Robinson said he would give him a list of speakers. He's waiting until there's no snow or mud on the ground for additional filming. He anticipates it will take two more days of capturing footage and one day of interviews for Chapter 4, then if the weather is good, Bollinger can move on to start Chapter 5. This section will cover Ulster County, with the highlight being the Five Locks Walk. Financially, Bollinger said that Chapter 4 has been more than half paid-for; DHTHC owes another \$750 for the next phase. Later in the meeting, Talaga updated that she now had only one copy left of Chapter 3 following a purchase of 25 by the Outdoor Club of Port Jervis. On a **motion** by Lawrence, seconded by Robinson, the Council authorized a re-order of 25 Chapter 3 DVDs at \$4.75 each from Bill Bollinger, with all in favor.

b) **Incorporation of DHTHC as a New York State Non-profit Organization** – Barnes reported that he is nearly finished with the online nomination. He needs to include contact information for three incorporators, for which he has listed Merchant, Powell, and himself. The committee suggested instead naming Merchant, Robinson, and Ramie as the current UDSB officers who have New York State addresses. Barnes questioned the proper response to the box that describes charitable purposes. He said this application will be going through the New York Department of State and he will provide a copy of the draft to the officers for review.

c) **Website Updates Report** – Ramie reported that Merchant had successfully tracked down Mike Harellick to put him in touch with Dorene Warner from W Design of Barryville. Harellick provided the information necessary to switch the account information over to DHTHC to manage. Warner has now gained access to the back end of the website. She worked with Ramie to update the next meeting date on the home page, post the 2020 Membership form, add two new 2019 members (The Century House Historical Society and The Delaware Company), post 2018 July and October and all 2019 quarterly minutes, verify the officers, and set up a new link for the Contact Us page, which had been going to an invalid email address for Robinson. Warner also set up an annual automatic renewal schedule for website hosting through 1&1 Unlimited (\$95.88 charged on 11/22/19) and domain registration (\$20.17) for dhthc.org as of Jan. 20, 2020. Ramie advised Warner that we would likely be adding more memberships after this meeting took place and payment of annual dues is received.

d) **Report on Nov. 2, 2019 D&H Canal Bus Tour** – Robinson reported that they had perfect weather for the trip and a good turnout, although it did not break even by filling all 44 seats. Ramie noted that there were 32 guests. The speakers were all well-received, including Ranger Tim Oset from the National Park Service, and each stop worked out nicely. Lunch at The Foundry 42 in Port Jervis went over well. Robinson said everyone was enthused. We took a group photo at the end and have everybody's names. He sold quite a few DVDs to passengers. Ramie said she was impressed that participants were eagerly willing to follow Robinson deep into the woods in some cases to find hidden features associated with the canal. She noted that he brought historic photos and maps to provide a comparison at each site. Powell said he learned a lot of new information. The Mongaup stop in particular was a real eye-opener. He posted that map on social media and it got a lot of comments. Robinson asked whether there is interest in sponsoring another bus tour to highlight the Port Jervis to Spring Glen section of the canal that will be featured in DVD Chapter 4, since this trip traced the Chapter 3 route of Lackawaxen to Port Jervis. We could also do this same section again at a different time of the year perhaps. The committee discussed going with a smaller bus next time, noting that Garing offers 25-passenger buses compared to Avery's 44 seats. Talaga said that the prior bus tour in PA netted a \$718 profit after they added a repeat date from being sold out with the Garing bus for the first run. No decision was made.

e) **Google Maps Directory of Publicly Accessible D&H Corridor Hikes** – Merchant said this map will be ready to post on the dhthc.org website by the next meeting. He would like to receive logos for the organizations that have sites along the corridor.

f) **Other** – Burt Thelander introduced himself as a member of Robinson’s D&H Conservancy and the Orange County Pathways Committee. He said he has been supportive of the efforts to re-water the Cuddebackville section of the canal. He’s interested in connecting Orange County Tourism, Parks, and Planning, trying to engage them through presentations focusing on long-term growth and development. He is also helping with the O&W Trail development from Monticello to Mamakating that Heather Jacksy from Sullivan County Planning has been spearheading. Mike Ward also introduced himself as president of the Outdoor Club of Port Jervis. They started with six members and are now up to 250 members with an email list of about 2,000. The club is trying to connect and maintain trails in the Port Jervis area, including the D&H. They’re also acquiring land. They won a \$1.7 million grant from The Pinchot Institute. Ward said they are talking to private property owners and working on alternatives to using the old canal bed on Rt. 97/42. Thelander said they will be meeting with the Physical Services Committee of the Orange County Legislature to update them on trail work and seek collaboration. Worden said he finds what helps them is to focus on recreation. People respond better to that than preservation. They look at it in a different way as more inviting. In the next two years, they’d like to make a link from Rt. 97/42 to the watershed trails.

Announcements of Member Accomplishments, Concerns, and Upcoming Events:

**Cliff Robinson, Jr.** – On October 5, 2009 the Conservancy got a 10-year license to work on Orange County trails for the D&H. He repeatedly asked for that to be renewed but it expired in 2019. The New York State Parks representative has said that the \$60,000 balance of a grant the Conservancy won could disappear. Robinson asked if the county has plans to do any of the work on their own and didn’t get a response. He had a meeting with County Executive Steve Neuhaus but then Neuhaus got activated for his Reserves duty. He then met with Deputy Harold Porr and emphasized the urgency of this situation, which was new to Porr. Robinson wrote a letter and explained the situation of needing authorization from the Parks Department and the Department of Public Works. He also encouraged his NYS contact to send a letter to the county requesting the extension. Robinson would appreciate it if individual members of this Council would do the same. He will provide talking points and email addresses. Any further trail improvement work by his volunteers is dead in the water without this license, so the more pressure that can be brought, the better. He talked to Town of Deerpark Supervisor Gary Spears about this also. The issues that keep being brought up are about liability and prevailing wages.

**Bill Merchant** – Merchant noted that he brought DHTHC brochures if anyone needs a supply of them. He distributed copies of “The Canawler” newsletter of the D&H Canal Historical Society, Winter 2019, which lists the year’s accomplishments. The Society won a grant to fund his position as Deputy Director for Collections, Historian & Curator as full-time as of March 1, 2020 for 2-3 years. Upcoming events in High Falls include: Feb. 23, 2 p.m.: “Marginalized Workers of the D&H Canal” presented by Bill Merchant, \$5 admission, free for members; and March 15, 2 p.m.: Local Railroad Photography Slideshow with Gene Dauner, same admission. Visit [www.canalmuseum.org](http://www.canalmuseum.org) for details.

**S. Robert Powell** – He has 225 issues of “The Delaware & Hudson Bulletin” from 1923-1938 in his Carbondale office which have been scanned to offer nearly 4,000 pages of primary source information on the D&H which is also searchable. Powell was recently filmed by Connor Simon for a Gravity Railroad program on “Wally Life” to air on Blue Ridge Cable.

**Lauren Hauptman** – Hauptman reiterated that if there are any questions for the historians for the National Park Service who spoke earlier, she will be happy to act as liaison.

**Kerron Barnes** – The study of the Orange County feeder canal improvements is moving along. His part of the research is almost complete. With the southwest dam’s removal, the flow just wasn’t there. It has subsequently filled in with silt, brush, and logs. The feeder is 4,200 feet long. There is almost nothing left of the original. There are three breaches in the towpath. The objective is to figure out if we can get water in it. Barnes found an article from October 1910 in “Old Ulster” magazine on “Story of the Canal” written by James McEntee (pages 289-304) which discusses the

groundbreaking in Wurtsboro. He will share a copy. Sullivan County has produced a 2 x 3 ft. map with six trail sections of the O&W line from Wurtsboro to Livingston Manor. This is a great project. As an update on the D&H trail project in Wurtsboro, they are acquiring easements and recording them. It's a long process.

Steve Skye – The re-watering of the Cuddebackville canal section depends on how the numbers come in from the study being done.

Myra Snook – She worked on two new posters. One interprets how the Morris Canal is a mountain climbing canal. They measured the amount of coal in the boat to determine the payment. They had a good description of that process from an engineering records. The other is a change bridge for a different path. The Jim Lee family recently finished Incline Plane 9 West. They created an animated video to show how it works. It's available on the Internet. The next project will be a boat going through the Bread Lock.

Sally Talaga – Last November for \$500, the Wayne County Historical Society was able to obtain a Quit-Claim Deed for an additional 0.81 acres to add to the D&H Canal Park at Lock 31. This is a wedge shaped parcel. One side borders the Lackawaxen River, south of the current Riverside Trail, so that trail can now be extended to connect with the towpath, which will hopefully be an Eagle Project. The next Canal Park Committee meeting is this Sunday. A vote will be taken whether to have the 8<sup>th</sup> Annual Canal Festival or not, tentatively on Aug. 15. They continue to lose tired volunteers and don't have enough to safely hold the event. Tomorrow is the mandatory pre-bid meeting for bidding on installing a prefabricated pavilion, and construction of the ADA ramp to it and the canal bed. On Jan. 30 the bids will be opened. The pavilion will be delivered on or around April 1<sup>st</sup> and take approximately six weeks to erect. Hopefully there will be extra funds to add the canal boat details and lockable storage for grounds maintenance equipment. They continue to work toward obtaining the lock house's Certificate of Occupancy. Two sagging beams in the dance hall require additional support to the ground level prior to the restoration and/or replacement of damaged plaster, for which they have a PHMC Keystone Grant which will fund 50% of the professional's work.

Rolf Moeller – The Shohola Railroad and Historical Society meets every 1<sup>st</sup> Wednesday of the month. The Caboose visitor center will reopen Memorial Day through Labor Day weekends.

**Next Council Meeting:** Ramie noted that there was an invitation by the Pike County Historical Society to host the next meeting at The Columns Museum in Milford, PA in order to see their new canal exhibit focusing on the life and times of the people who operated canal boats, and the effect of the canal in the small communities along the Lackawaxen River and the D&H Canal during the heydays of the canal's use. The unveiling of that exhibit is part of a sold-out "Canal Day" themed pot roast dinner with canal songs by Dan Engvaldsen and "mule races" on Jan. 25.

The next quarterly meeting will take place on the 4<sup>th</sup> Wednesday, **April 22**, 2020, with an optional advance tour of the exhibit at 10:30 a.m., lunch at the Milford Diner in its new room addition at 11:30 a.m., and the business meeting from 1:00-3:30 p.m. downstairs at The Columns Museum, located at 608 Broad St. Contact Ramie at [laurie@upperdelawarecouncil.org](mailto:laurie@upperdelawarecouncil.org) or (845) 252-3022 to reserve a seat for lunch.

**Adjourn:** The January 22, 2020 DHTHC meeting adjourned at 3:38 p.m. on a **motion** by Ramie, seconded by Lawrence.

*Minutes submitted by Laurie Ramie, 2/14/20*