

**D&H Transportation Heritage Council**  
**April 27, 2022 Quarterly Meeting Minutes**  
*Hosted by the D&H Canal Historical Society at the D&H Canal Museum  
and Mid-Hudson Visitor Center, High Falls, NY*

Participants:

**Bill Merchant (chair)**, D&H Canal Historical Society and Museum, High Falls  
**Cliff Robinson, Jr. (vice-chair)**, Neversink Feeder & Canal Conservancy  
**Donna Durland (treasurer)**, Mamakating Historical Society  
**Laurie Ramie (secretary)**, Upper Delaware Council  
**Jane Varcoe**, Waymart Area Historical Society  
**S. Robert Powell**, Carbondale Historical Society  
**Sally Talaga**, Wayne County Historical Society's D&H Canal Park at Lock 31  
**Ingrid Peterec**, National Park Service Upper Delaware Scenic and Recreational River  
**Henry Lowengard**, Century House Historical Society  
**Danielle Berg**, Mamakating Historical Society  
**Norma Schadt**, Town of Deerpark 1863 School House Museum (by Zoom)  
**Kenny Christianson**, Lackawaxen River Conservancy and The Rowland Cooperative (by Zoom)  
**Judy Gumaer Testa**, Neversink Valley Museum of History and Innovation and Assistant to the Mamakating Historian (by Zoom)  
**Michael Ward**, Outdoor Club of Port Jervis and Port Jervis Transportation History Center (by Zoom)  
**Janet Lybolt**, Mamakating Historical Society and individual member (by Zoom)  
**Chester Hartwell**, individual member (by Zoom)  
**Joe Tantillo**, guest  
**Bill Bollinger**, Bollinger & Rutter Video Services, guest

**Call to Order:** Merchant called the business meeting to order at 12:58 p.m. following the optional morning tours of the developing facility at the DePuy Tavern and a lunch gathering.

**Additions to the Agenda:** Merchant added payment for Video #4 that can be discussed during the Treasurer's Report, while Robinson added a support letter request and World Canals Conference notice.

**Acceptance of January 26, 2022 Minutes:** On a **motion** by Durland, seconded by Talaga, the minutes of the last quarterly meeting held via Zoom were approved.

**Treasurer's Report and Membership Update:** Durland, who was elected treasurer at the January 26, 2022 meeting for the Jan. 1, 2022-Dec. 31, 2024 term and will serve as the sole signatory for the Delaware & Hudson Transportation Heritage Council account at Wayne Bank, presented a written report of transactions. The balance is \$4,314.73. She also listed organizations and individuals who have paid their 2022 dues as of this date, which includes as full voting members: Pike County Historical Society, Upper Delaware Council, Waymart Area Historical Society, Town of Deerpark, Town of Mamakating, The Delaware Company, Mamakating Historical Society, Matamoras-Westfall Historical Society, Wayne County Historical Society, Don Drewett, The D&H Canal Historical Society, The Century House Historical Society, Mamakating Library, The Lackawaxen River Conservancy, The Rowland Cooperative, Carbondale Historical Society, Neversink Valley Museum of History and Innovation, Sullivan County, Mamakating Local Development Corp., and The Outdoor Club of Port Jervis. Affiliate/individual members are: Kathy Land, Janet Lybolt, Chester Hartwell, and Robert Barth. Robinson submitted dues at that time for the Neversink Feeder & Canal Conservancy. Merchant

noted that one of the benefits of Council membership is having the rights to the historic Canadian Pacific map collection, for which we have a license for non-commercial usage. Ramie thanked Durland for preparing an Excel file of contact information for the current DHTHC membership and asked everyone to check that handout for accuracy. Two new bills were introduced. On a **motion** by Talaga, seconded by Durland, DHTHC approved reimbursing Bill Merchant \$275 as the filing fee for the 501(c)3 application, with all in favor. On a **motion** by Ramie, seconded by Varcoe, DHTHC approved paying the \$243.75 invoice due to W Design of Barryville, NY for website updates accomplished since the January meeting, with all in favor.

**DHTHC Legislative Liaison Report** – Merchant noted that Don Drewett was unable to attend today’s meeting but he has started communicating with legislators about the D&H Canal. The Open Space Institute received a \$500,000 NYS CFA grant to unite the O&W Rail Trail. Merchant feels that OSI will be an ally in our canal trail rehabilitation work as well.

**Business and Discussion Items:**

- a) **Corporate Reorganization: 501(c)3 Application; SAM.gov; Executive Director Appointment** – The DHTHC has been chartered through the New York State Education Department and has its tax identification number. Merchant submitted a 501(c)3 application with a \$275 filing fee as the next step. When that designation is received, there may be a need to reorganize and meet more frequently than four times a year. He feels the path of this organization is stewardship for the 125 miles represented by the D&H Canal and the Gravity Railroad system. Robinson agreed that the 501(c)3 designation will be transformative and bring about more activity for this group. He said that board members may need to meet more often, which is not difficult to accomplish despite the length of the corridor since it could be done virtually. He suggested that the entire group could continue to meet in person on a quarterly basis. After receiving 501(c)3 status, Ramie recommended that DHTHC register with SAM.gov (System for Award Management) since that will allow the Council to compete for and administer federal grants. There was no discussion on an executive director appointment at this time.
  
- b) **Historic DVD Series Inventory; New Orders; Filming/Editing Status for Chapter 4** – Filming for the 4<sup>th</sup> chapter of the DVD series (covering the Port Jervis to Spring Glen area of the canal) has resumed. Bollinger said he has some final interviews to do, footage to get in order to connect shots, then he can proceed to the editing stage. On a **motion** by Robinson, seconded by Talaga, DHTHC will pay \$750 to Bollinger & Rutter Video Services based on his invoice. Bollinger asked if he can use the railroad’s old maps in the video; Merchant said he would check with an attorney regarding any license limitations. Robinson said once Chapter 4 is “in the can”, shooting can take place this fall for Chapter 5 (covering the Ulster County portion). He has ideas for the script and filming locations. Talaga offered an inventory of the DVDs still available: Chapter 1= 4 (after an immediate order was fulfilled); Chapter 2 = 33; and Chapter 3 = 40. Bollinger offered prices to copy DVDs at various quantities. On a **motion** by Robinson, seconded by Talaga, DHTHC will order 25 copies of Chapter 1 at \$4.75 each, for a total of \$118.75, with all in favor. Noting that DVD players are getting harder to find, Bollinger said that he can produce alternative formats from his master file. Merchant said the question becomes how to monetize that. Talaga suggested revisiting the topic of formatting after all five chapters are completed.
  
- c) **Planning a Bus Tour from Port Jervis to Spring Glen** – Robinson felt that targeting November, when the leaves are down, for a bus tour of this Chapter 4 section would be appropriate. We have two meetings ahead of that timeframe.

- d) **Status of National Historic Landmark Update Project Report** – For anyone not familiar, Merchant summarized that the entire canal had been included on the National Historic Landmark list in 1968 but the nomination only called out five specific locations. When Cuddebackville was seeking project funding for some of its canal era buildings, they were denied because their site wasn't one of them. The National Park Service provided a \$50,000 grant and the assistance of their historians to oversee hiring a consultant, Richard Grubb & Associates, to update the nomination to the modern format, and to be more expansive and inclusive. Grubb subcontracted with Merchant to serve as a local historian and guide. They have documented 300+ extant canal features. Merchant stressed that being on the Register doesn't change anything for private property owners. It's done to raise awareness of the history, not even necessarily for preservation purposes. Merchant said he submitted a draft narrative two months ago and will be happy to share that data which includes the resource inventory. About 95% of it is done. He would like to include photos for as many features as possible. These features have various degrees of integrity. Some are subterranean from being filled in which would need ground-penetrating radar to identify them.
- e) **D&H 200<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Committee** – Talaga said that the committee has essentially done its job by providing a chronology of significant events and dates for the D&H Canal and Gravity Railroad. Now it's up to site stewards to come up with ideas for what they'd like to host where and when, then the committee can compile a collective list and help promote them. Merchant said we could start in 2023 to mark the 200<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the D&H Canal Company's incorporation by the NYS Legislature on April 23, 1823 and note events through 2029. A dedicated website could be established. Durland and Lybolt said that the Mamakating Historical Society would take on the July 13, 1825 date for the ground-breaking of the canal which took place on Dr. Morrison's property at that exact location in Wurtsboro with the exact speech. Talaga said the Wayne County Historical Society Canal Park commits to two events regarding the first (Aug. 8) and second (Sept. 9) trial runs of *The Stourbridge Lion* in 1829 in Honesdale. Robinson would like to work on a Jan. 7, 2025 event at the Orange County Bank in Goshen to mark that 1825 date of the D&HCC's initial stock offering. Merchant noted many events are not site-specific. Peterec said it's hard to grasp having a 200<sup>th</sup> anniversary celebration over such a large span of time. She suggests deciding what to specifically celebrate and picking a year. The National Park Service could do something at the Roebling Bridge but they'd prefer to gear it for the best timing for visitors, not to a certain historic date. Robinson said if one year is favored, he suggests starting in 1825/2025 then if it's a big hit, we could do more through 1829/2029. Peterec said it would be a neat social media campaign to post "this date in history" and tag each other to connect these events.
- f) **Website (www.dhthc.org) & Facebook Postings** – Ramie said that the previously-addressed invoice by W Design includes an itemized list of the updates that Warner had done to the website, such as adding meeting minutes, posting the 2022 dues form, and updating the membership directory. Ramie collects information on needed website updates and provides them to be handled at one time. Merchant said that the DHTHC Facebook page doesn't have a lot of activity which translates to not having a lot of followers. He encourages anyone to post or send him the information.
- g) **Port Jervis Transportation History Center** – While noting that Mike Ward had dropped off his Zoom link before this agenda item came up, Ramie said that the Port Jervis Transportation History Center will hold a grand opening celebration at the Erie

Turntable railyard in Port Jervis on May 27-29. Events will include exhibits of their restored railroad equipment, historic displays, and food service in a dining car. Visit [www.PJTHC.org](http://www.PJTHC.org).

- h) **Request for Support Letters** – Orange County, NY bought the property along the D&H Canal route from Port Jervis to Westbrookville in 1988 for \$1. Robinson said that his former D&H conservancy group had secured a grant and a license to do trail restoration work there, but the county eventually declared the license invalid, even though county staff had written it. The last \$60,000 of the grant was lost because they weren't able to get a new license in place before the grant expired. They have asked the county to turn the property over to the Neversink Feeder and Canal Conservancy (NFCC) to maintain and improve. Robinson said the county is citing the New York State Handbook on Alienation in saying that it would be a change of use, which he disputes. Robinson charges that the Public Trust Doctrine is being ignored. The county is obligated to maintain and provide public access to its park property. He called “30 times in a row” and nobody answered him. There is no reason why the county should hold on to this property when there is a group ready to go to give it the attention it needs. He feels it would be helpful to get support letters from others who agree. Robinson handed out talking points with two addresses for the NYS Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation and NYS Assemblyman Karl Brabanec. He would appreciate it if member organizations would send letters to each of these recipients and copy him as well for the NFCC files. Ramie was asked to scan and send out his talking points electronically after the meeting, and to write two support letters on behalf of the D&H Transportation Heritage Council. [See attached]
- i) **World Canals Conference** – Robinson said he is fortunate that a major donor is covering the cost for him to attend the World Canals Conference in Leipzig, Germany May 30 through June 3. He also attended the last one in Hagerstown, MD. He will represent the Delaware & Hudson Canal and report back at the next meeting about what he learns. Visit [www.cccleipzig2022.com](http://www.cccleipzig2022.com) for more information on the conference.
- j) **Other** – Merchant displayed the last two versions of the DHTHC tri-fold brochure, and asked if we are satisfied with them and need to print more. They had been done through an online company with minimum graphics. Joe Tantillo said that he is a professional graphic designer and would be happy to update it. He has a great interest in the canal. The group would just need to decide what images it would like to use. He took the copies and said that he would work on them ahead of the next quarterly meeting. Peterec said that the National Park Service may be able to assist with printing. Merchant also invited everyone to provide their site brochures for the racks at the new Mid-Hudson Visitor Center that will be opening soon on the first floor of this former DePuy Tavern building. Bollinger asked whether the Council's DVD series “teaser” video that his colleague Connor Simon had produced had been posted on the [www.dhthc.org](http://www.dhthc.org) website. Ramie said no, because she hasn't received the file.

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

**Sally Talaga** – Plaster restoration at the Lock 31 house will begin next month. The grant for that project expires in September. The Wayne County Historical Society hasn't been able to find a contractor to build the canal boat replica for the pavilion at the park. They have the specifications for an 1850s era boat to follow. The 9<sup>th</sup> Annual Canal Festival will take place on August 20 from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. at the D&H Canal Park at Lock 31 on Rt. 6 between Hawley and White Mills,

PA. Talaga handed out copies of the WCHS Newsletter for January-March 2022 including a Calendar of Events, and their brochure listing WCHS facilities and permanent exhibits.

Ingrid Peterec – After three years, the National Park Service Upper Delaware is resuming their D&H Canal Days, although it's with half the number of schools they previously hosted. The dates are May 5-6 and June 2-3 at the Roebling Bridge starting at 9:30 a.m. Visitors are welcome. They invited Professor Paul King to give a program on Roebling's Delaware Aqueduct and the D&H Canal for NPS Seasonal Staff Training on May 13, starting with a 9 a.m. lecture at the Zane Grey Museum followed by a tour of the bridge. NPS Cultural Resources Program Manager Lauren Hauptman has accepted a new position with the Rocky Mountain National Park. Her last day with the Upper Delaware was April 29. The NPS will hold the Zane Grey Festival on July 16 at the museum grounds in Lackawaxen, PA.

Laurie Ramie – Copies of the Spring 2022 issue of "The Upper Delaware" were distributed. Ramie reported that, due to funding issues, this may be the last newsletter done in this 12-page printed format which gets mailed to approximately 9,000 free subscribers.

Jane Varcoe – The Waymart Area Historical Society met last night to discuss the new season. They would like to host a future meeting in conjunction with the Carbondale Historical Society.

Chester Hartwell – He has been doing some work with the Maritime Museum.

Henry Lowengard – The Century House Historical Society will reopen for the season on May 8. They'll work to clean up their canal slip. It is part of the pollinator pathway program so they're trying to get rid of invasive species over several years. They intend to do some activities with the Rosendale Library.

Judy Gumaer Testa (audio issues) – The Neversink Valley Museum of History and Innovation will be reopening in a few weeks. With the Mamakating Historian, Testa is working on a project regarding the Mamakating Precinct and Canal.

Kenny Christianson – The Lackawaxen River Conservancy continues to explore a proposal to become a Wild and Scenic River. They hosted a clean-up last week. They have applied to the Delaware Watershed Conservation Fund for a grant. The Rowland Cooperative is working on a May 15 celebration.

Janet Lybolt – There will be a May 15 evening bike ride at 7 p.m. along the canal. Pre-registration is required through the Mamakating Library website.

Donna Durland – The Mamakating Historical Society is developing program ideas.

S. Robert Powell – He is pleased that the Pike County Historical Society has been focusing on Locks 10-23 and holding events on the Lackawaxen at Lock 16. The schedule includes speakers, bicycle races, and cookouts, including a May 29 program. Powell discussed programs on Benjamin Wright, the Erie Canal, and the Schoharie Creek Aqueduct that he had attended since the last meeting. The Society has a contractor lined up to do roof repair and interior work on the Carbondale Caboose.

Joe Tantillo – He moved to East Stroudsburg, PA after having lived in Rosendale and Kingston, NY, and is the proprietor of Tantillo Fine Art. He is involved with a lot of historical societies and got connected with the Wayne County Historical Society.

Bill Merchant – The new museum and visitor center will open on June 18, after the D&H Canal Historical Society raised \$1.7 million over of the past 10 years. Every room has a theme to interpret, interactive exhibits, and QR codes that provide additional digital content. They hope that the visitor center will bring people into the building for tourism information, who will then opt to explore the museum to learn about canal history. A celebratory dinner will be held at Mohonk on June 12. Merchant displayed an 1881 watercolor painting of the D&H Canal over Wawarsing by artist William Rickarby Miller that he had purchased at auction which will be conserved and added to the museum collection. They raised \$12,500 to create drawings for restoration of the 1850 Telegraph Office next to Lock 15 that was purchased for \$4,000 last fall. Once that property is ready, their 5 Locks Walk will turn into the 6 Locks Walk. Copies of the Winter 2021 issue of “The Canawler” newsletter were distributed.

**Next Quarterly Meeting:** D&H THC will meet on the 4<sup>th</sup> Wednesday, **July 27**, 2022 at the National Park Service Upper Delaware Scenic and Recreational River’s Cowen Farm property along NYS Route 97 in the Town of Lumberland, NY. The meeting will be held outdoors or moved to the Zane Grey Museum upstairs office in Lackawaxen, PA in the event of inclement weather. An optional morning tour and lunch gathering will be arranged. For a site description, visit: <https://www.nps.gov/upde/learn/historyculture/cowen-farm.htm>.

**Adjourn:** The April 27, 2022 DHTHC meeting adjourned at 3:33 p.m. on a **motion** by Varcoe, seconded by Durland.

*Minutes submitted by Laurie Ramie, 5/10/22*