

**D&H Transportation Heritage Council**  
**October 24, 2018 Quarterly Meeting Minutes**  
**Neversink Valley Area Museum of History and Innovation,**  
**Cuddebackville, NY (actions noted in bold)**

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  
**S. Robert Powell**, Carbondale Historical Society  
**Kathy Land**, Waymart Area Historical Society  
**Brian Scardefield**, Sullivan County Parks and Recreation  
**Ingrid Peterec**, National Park Service Upper Delaware Scenic and Recreational River  
**Lauren Hauptman**, NPS Upper Delaware  
**Sally Talaga**, Wayne County Historical Society's D&H Canal Park at Lock 31  
**Lynn Burns**, Town of Deerpark 1863 Schoolhouse Museum  
**Norma Schadt**, Town of Deerpark 1863 Schoolhouse Museum  
**Debra Conway**, The Delaware Company  
**Myra Snook**, Warren County, NJ Canal Committee  
**Steve Skye**, Neversink Valley Area Museum of History and Innovation  
**Dr. Jane Lord**, NVAM  
**Dave Lawrence**, NVAM  
**Bill Bollinger**, Bollinger & Rutter Video Production and Services  
**Connor Simon**, guest of Bill Bollinger

Call to Order: Chairperson Robinson called the business meeting held at the D&H Canal Park Visitor Center to order at 1:44 p.m. following an optional morning hike of the dried canal bed led by Steve Skye and lunch gathering at Family & Friends Restaurant.

Additions to the Agenda: Ramie noted that the amendment to the bylaws proposed at the July 25 meeting needed to be officially voted on at this meeting for ratification following the minimum 30-day notification period for revisions. On a **motion** by Talaga, seconded by Merchant, the revision of the Mission Statement to add the clause (indicated in italics): "The D&H Transportation Heritage Council is committed to promoting appreciation and preservation of the historic resources of the Delaware and Hudson Canal Company, and the Gravity Railroad of the Pennsylvania Coal Company, *and of those industries and communities that owed their existence to these organizations*" was unanimously approved.

Acceptance of July 25, 2018 Minutes: Secretary Ramie reported that Skye had requested a correction under the Member Accomplishments, Concerns, and Upcoming Meetings section to the following: "Steve Skye – Regarding a New York State 'Blue Sheet' D&H inventory of the Town of Deerpark done in the 80s, Skye said that the New York State Historic Preservation Office has a set and that inventory is stored in Albany." On a **motion** by Skye, seconded by Merchant, the minutes of the last quarterly meeting were approved as amended.

Treasurer's Report: Treasurer Varcoe reviewed her written report, which included an accounting of deposits made and checks issued since July 25, 2018. The current balance is \$2,539.47. There are 13 full members and eight affiliate members. She noted there were two new affiliate members since the last report, Brendan Weiden from the Narrowsburg Union, and Professor Paul King. **Robinson questioned the absence of his organization from the full member list. On a motion**

by Merchant, seconded by Conway, the Treasurer's Report was approved. **Varcoe asked everyone to review their organization's listings on the [www.dhthc.org](http://www.dhthc.org) website which is a privilege extended to members.**

New Business:

a) **Presentation by Dr. Jane Lord, NVAM Board, on the Dried-up Canal Bed Situation**

– Skye introduced Lord as a board member of the Neversink Valley Area Museum who runs the Facebook site, Wet the Canal. Lord explained that she moved to the area 20 years ago and had been looking for a safe place to walk. She discovered the mule path here and joined the museum as a volunteer. At that time, this section of the canal was watered. She had a very sinking feeling, watching the removal of the dam in 2005. She started a political action group around three years ago, beginning at the town supervisor level, hoping to make the re-watering part of a platform for office. A letter-writing campaign followed to emphasize the industrial importance of the canal. The Facebook site was an outgrowth. Orange County Commissioner of Parks Jim Brooks recently announced, according to an article in the Oct. 18 issue of the *Pike County Dispatch*, that the county will fund an engineering study on the feasibility of restoring flowing water to the historic section of the D&H Canal in Cuddebackville. There had at one time been enough water maintained to provide rides on the museum's reproduction canal boat, the Neversink Kate. A series of destructive floods and hydrologic changes to the flow system to protect endangered river species dried up the canal section, leaving dry basins filled with weeds. The study has been contracted to Fusco Engineering of Middletown, NY. A goal is to come up with a cost for a long-term solution to the problem. Lord said that they are considering establishing a conservancy. There are volunteers available to work with the county to raise funds for the repairs. They've amassed 300 members in three years and are seeking additional community support. **She encouraged everyone to like the Wet the Canal Facebook page.** Robinson said that he met with Orange County Legislator Tom Faggione and the county legal department. He has a license to work in the D&H Canal Park that expires at the end of this year. He had it for 10 years. The first issue is the slackwater in the Neversink River. That can't be addressed until the dam is fixed, which requires involvement by the NYS Department of Environmental Conservation. The second issue is that there are leaks underneath the waste weir. Robinson said these problems could be fixed relatively quickly if they had permission to work there. Lord noted that consultant Rob Honders had estimated a \$50,000-\$60,000 cost and a couple days' time to accomplish the work needed. Robinson said he imagines that the \$18,000 engineering study will come up with a big number that will be intimidating to funders. Lord said another issue to consider is the long-term maintenance. Robinson said this project has been beset by fear which must be overcome. Lord thanked the Council for listening and departed the meeting at 2:10.

b) **Presentation by Debra Conway, The Delaware Company, on "The Kate Project"** – Conway passed around a photo of Tom Tischler's "Hogee and Mule" life-size bronze sculpture located at the Erie Canal Museum in Syracuse which she said inspired her to advocate for a similar sculpture for the D&H Canal. She would like to feature a girl, such as the one depicted in Edward Lamson Henry's 1891 oil painting "On the Towpath". Conway referenced a presentation she attended by national planning expert Ed McMahon in which he said that to create a community identity and experiences, the key is to identify the unique story in your area and tell it. She wants that to be the D&H Canal. Her dubbing of this as "The Kate Project" is an homage to Sullivan County Planner Heather Jacksy's daughter, Kate. This would be a multi-year process with an estimated cost of \$200,000. The sculptor she has been communicating with who is interested in this commission lives in Australia. While some towns have done murals that feature images

- of local people to tell their stories and raise funds that way, she envisions creating miniature sculptures to sell or give for certain donation levels. Conway noted that the Upper Delaware Scenic Byway board had written a letter of support for The Delaware Company's funding application to the Sullivan County Legislature, which would include preliminary planning work for this project. She has some good leads on grants such as the NYS Council on the Arts. A letter of support from the D&H THC and any member groups would be appreciated. Conway said that we have focused on what an engineering marvel this canal is and the contributions it made to industry and our region, but there has been little emphasis on the human element of the canal. The daily existence of the families working on the canal is a side of the story that hasn't been focused on to a great extent. She has identified a location for it at an existing NYS Department of Transportation pull-off area along the Upper Delaware River in the Town of Highland, and foresees the sculpture being surrounded by wildflowers, a bench, and an interpretive sign. That will require permission by DOT and the town, which maintains that site. Talaga asked whether permission is needed from the original artist of "On the Towpath"; Conway said no, it will be inspired by that image but not an exact replica. Merchant asked whether Conway can prepare a sample letter for consideration by the various groups, including to whom it should be addressed. Conway said she will and suggested using "To Whom It May Concern" since the letters could be applied to multiple purposes, then having a section for each organization to add verbiage about itself in relationship to the canal. On a **motion** by Scardefield, seconded by Merchant, **the D&H Transportation Heritage Council approved writing a letter of support for the proposed sculpture project based on Conway's sample to be provided.** Talaga asked Conway to inquire what the price would be for two sculptures from the bronze cast. Conway said the artist will start with sketches, then create a prototype, and she will request a table-top size casting for fundraising purposes in addition to the life-size cast.
- c) **Production Status of DVD Chapter 3: Roebing Bridge to Port Jervis** – Bollinger reported that this new documentary follows the same format as the first two, with Robinson serving as narrator to introduce unscripted speakers relevant to this section of the canal. Bollinger said he would like to incorporate some anecdotes, like discussion of what life was like for canal families based on the previous topic. The first two DVDs went over the mechanics of how the canal system operated; now we are looking for stories to add more color. Merchant recommended a storybook by Dorothy H. Sanderson of Ellenville titled, "The Delaware & Hudson Canalway: Carrying Coal to Rondout", as excellent source material. Robinson said it would be great if we could find the locations where these stories took place and tell them there. Regarding the daily life on a canal boat, it was noted for footage purposes that the NVAM has a replica of a bedroom and the National Park Service interprets a canal boat cabin at its Roebing Bridge toll house. Robinson said he does not want to hold up the release of Chapter 3 though since it has all been structured and the only thing left to shoot is one lock. Anecdotes will be needed for the 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> chapters. Powell suggested talking about the telegraph on the canals in Chapter 4, where a telegraph house can be shown.
- d) **Plans for DVD Chapter 4:** The next DVD will cover Port Jervis to Ulster County. Robinson said he prefers shooting footage in the winter to better see the canal. **Once Chapter 3 is finished, he recommends immediately starting the filming for Chapter 4.** Chapter 5 will wholly cover the canal in Ulster County.
- e) **Plans for Next D&H Bus Tour:** Given the success of the spring tour which sold out on two dates (April 29 and May 6) with its 29-passenger buses and two step-on guides, the Council discussed plans for another bus tour covering a different section of the canal. Conway noted that the Magical History Tour organized annually by her husband John, the Sullivan County Historian, uses 45-passenger charter buses. Talaga said she had a

waiting list for the spring tours. She suggested that we replicate the geographic pattern of the DVDs, with this next tour following the Roebling Bridge to Port Jervis route. The last tour featured stops at 3 interior locations plus lunch. Robinson said he's willing to work on the itinerary though he doesn't feel there will be any inside visits this time. **He asked Conway if she could supply the bus company information to him. The goal is to plan the next bus tour for the early spring 2019.**

- f) **Call-in by Kerron Barnes: Suggestion for Future of the Organization & Maps Update** – Barnes called in to the meeting from a conference. Regarding the Canadian-Pacific Railroad canal maps, he said that he spoke to the county attorney about this. They can't sign the license because, under the Freedom of Information Law, they can't refuse to give out copies to anyone who requests it. Barnes has asked the Town of Mamakating attorney and the railroad company archivist to look into that. Not everyone may be subject to FOIL the way a government entity would. Secondly, Barnes said he believes that the **DHTHC should incorporate in New York State**, though not as a federal 501(c)(3) organization. Being a group of canal supporters isn't recognized formally; this state designation would elevate the group's standing. Barnes said he would volunteer to file the application and pay the approximately \$300 fee. He asked to **put that on the next quarterly meeting's agenda** for discussion and returned to his meeting. Merchant thanked Barnes for his generous offer. Robinson noted that incorporating in NY would exclude the PA side of the canal. His conservancy's mission statement encompasses the canal in both states. Conway said that the state incorporation wouldn't make DHTHC tax-exempt. Merchant noted there would be new accounting responsibilities for the corporation to file a 990 tax return. Varcoe wondered whether the Council would be competing with its member groups for donations. Robinson said we will need to consider what the benefits are of incorporating. Currently, each member can seek grants individually so it might be a redundant action. Lawrence said that the NVAM's charter says that they are the stewards for the canal in this park. They could sponsor another group under their 501(c)(3) status such as a conservancy, but the board hasn't made that determination yet. Robinson said that Orange County owns the building and land in this park, so there should be a solid agreement with NVAM or more investment shown by the county in this property. In the interest of time, Robinson asked everyone to **think about the pros and cons for further discussion at the Jan. 23 meeting.**
- g) **Other** – 1) Ramie reported on an email that she received from Gladys Moran on Aug. 13 stating that Gladys and her husband, Hank Wilson, own **Locks 65 and 66 on Tow Path Road in Pond Eddy**. "If your group wants to photograph these locks, feel free to do so," she said. Robinson expressed the Council's appreciation for this permission. 2) The Council's webmaster, Mike Harellick, read in the last meeting's bus trip report the suggestion to **accept credit card payments for the next tour**. He sent an Aug. 14 message recommending SquareUp as a good option based on his research for being easy to set up and providing reporting services at no additional cost. The company provides a basic credit card reader which the organization can use on anybody's cell phone or tablet to scan cards. SquareUp charges a modest fee of approximately 2.75% at the time of purchase, and buyers have not reported any difficulties with billing. Merchant concurred that SquareUp is simple to use. Talaga said that 75% of the payments for the last bus tour were done through credit cards processed by the Wayne County Historical Society. 3) Bollinger said that his assistant, Connor Simon, is involved with a **TV program on Blue Ridge Cable**. They are looking for material to cover around the Lake Wallenpaupack vicinity. Bollinger clearly has a lot of footage about the D&H Canal. At no cost, he has offered to **compile a three-minute segment that would merge information from DVD Chapters 1-3 and end with a message to visit [www.dhthc.org](http://www.dhthc.org)**. Bollinger asked if there were any objections. On a **motion** by Varcoe, seconded by Conway, the Council

endorsed the project. Simon said the historical segment should be ready to **show at the Jan. 23 DHTHC meeting**. He will reach out with a draft and timeline.

Old Business:

- a) **Sales and Publicity for DVD Chapter 2: Honesdale to the Delaware River** – Copies of the Aug. 17 news release issued by Ramie, “New D&H Canal Documentary Available for \$10”, were handed out. Ramie and Talaga mentioned several newspapers that have published it. Ramie encouraged members to use this information in their newsletters. In terms of inventory, Talaga reported that there are 15 copies left each of Chapter 1 and Chapter 2. Varcoe noted that \$280 worth of DVDs were sold in the last quarter. Chapter 1 had 200 copies following a re-print and there were 100 copies of Chapter 2. On a **motion** by Powell, seconded by Burns, **the Council requested that Bollinger order 50 more copies of DVD Chapter 1 and 100 more copies of DVD Chapter 2** for which he will submit a bill to the treasurer, and authorized the **treasurer to issue a down-payment of \$500 to Bollinger** to start filming this winter of DVD Chapter 4.
- b) **Sept. 19 Cliff Robinson, Jr. Speech at Scenic Wild Delaware River Geotourism Workshop** – Ramie reported that the Scenic Wild Delaware River Geotourism Initiative was seeking a presenter to discuss the challenges and rewards of trail-building for a workshop they were holding on Sept. 19 in Blairstown, NJ. Ramie, as a member of the Geotourism Stewardship Council, proposed asking Robinson which they did and he delivered one of the most popular Power Point presentations of the day. Ramie thanked him for participating and raising more awareness of the D&H Canal to this nine-county group bordering the Delaware River in New York, Pennsylvania, and New Jersey. Many people asked for additional information and expressed interest in purchasing the DVDs. Robinson mentioned the excellent job that the Planning Department in Monmouth County, NJ has done with an interactive website that promotes the themes and attractions of that county, as well as a discussion about the use of social media – now known as digital communications – to attract interest by the younger generation. That made Robinson wonder whether the Council could come up with any **events geared toward children and youth** that would be a fun, learning experience for them. Peterec suggested a D&H “rumble” event at which groups could coordinate activities at their own sites to be linked together on a common day. She also proposed using a hash tag for a social media campaign to tie all 108 locks together. Robinson said we need to get more people interested some way. The irony is, this canal system depended on kids. Talaga said that her Canal Park Committee has been brainstorming over developing activities specific to kids at its festival. A popular one now is to hold a treasure hunt with prizes available if all the booths are visited. They would like to come up with a hands-on activity booth and find a volunteer to run it that day. Merchant said volunteer corps can be developed through outreach and educational programs. Talaga said that Wayne County Historical Society Executive Director Carol Dunn has been getting more school groups into the museum in conjunction with a Stourbridge Line railroad package. Robinson said it starts with getting teachers involved and aware. Snook said the problem is, there’s often no room in their schedules when they have to “teach to the test” these days. Merchant said we could assist with working this story into the local history curriculum. Lawrence commented that the NYS history curriculum may be moving from the 5<sup>th</sup> to 6<sup>th</sup> grade level. Peterec said the biggest problem in getting schools to the NPS canal sites is funding. Last year, they had only three of nine districts of fourth grade classes participate. Fortunately, they received a transportation grant to help with busing costs. This needs to be a priority for them. Powell mentioned leading a parade of students on foot from the school to the museum in Carbondale which they really enjoyed. Peterec said any of our

groups can go into the school and talk, but it's not the "aha" money they would get from being on site where the history happened.

- c) **Google Maps Directory of Publicly Accessible D&H Corridor Hikes** – No update.
- d) **DHTHC.org Website and <https://www.facebook.com/DHTHC> page** – No update.
- e) **Other** – Varcoe asked if the Council wants to make any changes to the dues structure for 2019, since **membership renewal notices will be sent out before the next meeting**. On a **motion** by Varcoe, seconded by Robinson, the Council agreed to maintain the current level of full (voting) membership annual dues at \$40 and affiliate (non-voting) membership annual dues at \$20.

*Announcements of Member Accomplishments, Concerns, and Upcoming Events (abbreviated due to length of the meeting, with handouts provided of newsletters and activity flyers):*

S. Robert Powell – The *Carbondale News* published a front-page article on Sept. 14 about his release of the final e-books of the 24-volume history of the D&H Canal and Gravity Railroad. Six volumes in the series have substantial sections on the Pennsylvania Coal Company's Gravity Railroad, much of it in print nowhere else. Powell can provide a list with the specific volume and page numbers. He also has DVDs available for \$20 each which feature 150 pages of canal maps. Powell thanked Merchant for providing him with a stellar, primary source historical document about the operation of the canal from the court battle, "**Pennsylvania Coal Company vs. Presidents/Managers of the D&H**" which he has been reading for research purposes. (Merchant noted that he can make this available as a PDF to anyone interested, since he had purchased a complete set of eight documents.) Powell is interested in finding out more about the conglomerate rock used on vertical supports for abutments that he had recently discovered. He shared information on an Oct. 28 concert in Carbondale by the Swansea Valley Celebration Male Choir from Wales and recounted how 90 Welsh families came to Carbondale in the 1830s to teach coal mine shafting practices. Lastly, he noted that he has written five articles for the Bridge Line Historical Society that will be released over the next five months.

Deb Conway – Conway asked whether there would be a market for **reprinting the Manville Wakefield book, "Coal Boats to Tide Waters: The Story of the Delaware & Hudson Canal"**. Merchant said he would sell it in his museum if it was available. He noted that he has all the original photos that were used in it. Conway expressed interest in pursuing a joint reprint project and splitting the proceeds.

Bill Merchant – The Community Foundation has awarded a grant to Merchant to research underrepresented communities of the D&H, specifically women and children. Merchant does a monthly call-in show on a Kingston public radio station focused on the D&H Canal.

Cliff Robinson, Jr. – As a result of the Geotourism Workshop, Robinson was interviewed for a "Radio Chatskill" show focusing on tourism that aired on WJFF Public Radio. It is available in the station's archives for listening.

**Next Council Meeting:** The next quarterly meeting will take place on the 4<sup>th</sup> Wednesday, **January 23, 2019, hosted by the Upper Delaware Council at 211 Bridge St. in Narrowsburg, NY.** The **agenda and itinerary will be circulated** closer to the date.

**Adjourn:** The Oct. 24, 2018 DHTHC meeting adjourned at 4:05 p.m. on a **motion** by Merchant, seconded by Conway.

*Minutes submitted by Laurie Ramie, 11/7/18*