

D&H Transportation Heritage Council
October 23, 2019 Quarterly Meeting Minutes
Century House Historical Society at the Snyder Estate, Rosendale, NY

Attendance at business meeting:

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
Kerron Barnes, Town of Mamakating
Steve Skye, Neversink Valley Museum of History and Innovation
Sally Talaga, Wayne County Historical Society's D&H Canal Park at Lock 31
Bill Clark, Westfall-Matamoros Historical Society
Jack Braulein, D&H Canal Historical Society Executive Director
Brian Scardefield, Sullivan County Parks, Recreation and Beautification (through 2 p.m.)
Dave Hulse, Sullivan County D&H Canal Linear Park, Summitville (through 2 p.m.)
Myra Snook, Warren County, NJ Canal Committee
Lauren Hauptman, National Park Service Upper Delaware Scenic and Recreational River

Call to Order: Vice-Chairperson Merchant called the business meeting held at the Century House Historical Society at the Snyder Estate in Rosendale to order at 1:00 p.m. The meeting followed an optional morning tour of the Society's museum and the Widow Jane Mine, and lunch at The Kitchenette in High Falls.

Acceptance of July 24, 2019 Minutes: On a **motion** by Varcoe, seconded by Powell, the minutes of the last quarterly meeting held in Rowland, PA were approved.

Treasurer's Report: Varcoe presented her written report, which included an accounting of transactions since July 24. The current balance is \$2,505.47. There are 13 full memberships and five affiliate memberships. The Century House Historical Society needs to be added to the list. On a **motion** by Talaga, seconded by Skye, the Treasurer's Report was approved as presented.

New Business:

- a) **Nominations for DHTHC Chair and Vice-chair** – Ramie noted that the chair and vice-chair are elected in odd years for two-year terms, with this period being Jan. 1, 2020 to Dec. 31, 2022. Nominations take place at the last meeting of the year, with the election held in January. The chairperson may serve no more than three consecutive terms, which Cliff Robinson, Jr. has reached. On a **motion** by Talaga, seconded by Powell, Bill Merchant is nominated as chairperson and Cliff Robinson, Jr. as vice-chairperson, with all in favor. No nominations were offered from the floor.
- b) **Progress Report on Nov. 2 D&H Canal Bus Tour** – In absentia, Robinson reported that there are 15 open seats on the 44-seat bus at this time. He asked Ramie to continue publicizing it. Ramie said she plans to assist Robinson with the logistics for the Roebling Bridge to Port Jervis trip Saturday.
- c) **National Historic Landmark Documentation Update** – Skye said that Orange County has decided to seek a New York State grant to repair a chimney and two roofs at the D&H Canal Park in Cuddebackville. It turns out that the National Historic Landmark

nomination that was submitted circa 1966 didn't identify where the structures were on site and that is a requirement for the grant. There are five structures mentioned there but not located on a survey map. Skye volunteered to try to move this along. He has spoken with the NYS Historic Preservation Office, the National Park Service, and a historic preservation organization. The plan is to try to get funding to update the nomination so that the geographic locations are listed for the important structures. There are five D&H Canal sites included on that Landmark nomination: High Falls; Algerville; Cuddebackville; Roebling Bridge/Minisink Ford; and Honesdale. He has contacted site stewards for each to request the missing information and needed updates. Skye said there are grants of up to \$10,000 available to write nominations. He plans to submit an application for the next round that opens in January to hire a consultant. The official designation date for those National Historic Landmark sites was January 15, 1969. Talaga said that the Wayne County Historical Society was awarded their landmark plaque in 1967. She asked whether the D&H Canal Park at Lock 31 can be added. Skye said that's possible but recommends the more minimal changes to this documentation, the better. He spoke with a representative from the New York Preservation League this morning. They're assisting with an outline for the scope of work and cost for professional services. Barnes said from his experience that this is a very competitive grant program; they only fund 7 or 8 per year. They require a 20% match. Hauptman said that since the National Park Service is pursuing the D&H Canal nomination as a historic district, maybe they can merge efforts with this National Historic Landmark process. She is finding out about that at the Washington level. Skye agreed they certainly overlap. He said that the original nomination was not done on a formal form. Merchant said he has a copy of that paperwork. He doesn't foresee any changes being necessary for Algerville since that is on private property with no further developments.

- d) **File Accessibility Issue with www.dhthc.org Website** – Ramie explained that we have been unable to get in touch with former webmaster Mike Harellick from Hillside Application Service since he moved to Texas. Dorene Warner from W Design of Barryville was authorized to maintain the website but is unable to access it to make any changes without the necessary authorizations. Her attempts to contact Harellick through social media have not been successful. Merchant said we could start over with a simple website page. This organization pays for the dhthc.org domain name. Currently the budget does not allow pursuing the mobile-friendly, upgraded website that Warner had proposed at our request following a subcommittee meeting to discuss its components. Powell said we should not let this die on the vine. The Council needs an active, online presence. Powell made a **motion**, seconded by Ramie, to authorize Bill Merchant to pursue this by further attempting to locate Harellick, who was also associated with The Coachhouse Players in Kingston, and retrieve the password codes, or to offer an alternative plan. Talaga asked later, do we need both a website and a Facebook page? Merchant said he doesn't recommend spending a lot of money on the web but regards it as a "business card" stop to drive traffic. It's a teaser essentially to find out more information. Merchant said Instagram is currently the more popular platform but the strength of Facebook is through people sharing likes, which extends the messaging. Barnes said maybe we should migrate to social media. Merchant said Facebook is more ephemeral than a website. The topics disappear or get downgraded without. It isn't archived forever.
- e) **Other** –
- 1) Varcoe asked if the Council wishes to entertain changing the amount of the annual membership dues for 2020. Nobody did. On a **motion** by Skye, seconded by Barnes, it

was agreed to maintain dues of \$40 for full voting membership and \$20 for affiliate and individual membership, to be payable in January.

2) Braulein noted that 2025-2028 is the 200th anniversary of when construction of the D&H Canal started and operations began. He would like to see a big celebration along the route to get people to think about and experience the canal. He sees this taking place over several years. It could be tied to events within our communities. Merchant agreed that it's not too early to start planning for this. We could form a subcommittee. Barnes said that Wurtsboro definitely would like to participate. Talaga recalled the Centennial Symposium and Bike Ride that took place in 1998, which Sandy Schultz from the National Park Service was instrumental in organizing. On the bike ride, participants took chunks of coal with them from Carbondale to New York City. They got on a boat at Rondout and brought the coal to the site of the D&H Company office to present it to the mayor of NYC. Braulein said he wishes we could produce a comprehensive documentary about the entire D&H Canal System. Talaga said when this Council is done with Chapter 4 of our DVD series, we'll have over an hour of great information on the Gravity Railroad and Canal. Merchant said that footage could be used in an overall documentary film. He said we have copies of the speech that was delivered at the D&H ground-breaking and could re-create that on July 13, 2025. Powell said period costumes and local actors would be a plus. Talaga suggested starting a chronology for significant events of the D&H Canal Company. Barnes said the best source for that is Larry Lowenthal's book, "From the Coalfields to the Hudson: A History of the Delaware & Hudson Canal". Merchant said he has a calendar started so he can post on social media dates of importance to the canal. Members agreed to put this anniversary planning topic on the next agenda for further discussion.

Old Business:

- a) **Status of DVD Chapter 3 Order, Inventory of Series, and Filming for Chapter 4** – Talaga said she brought 12 copies of Chapter 1, 46 copies of Chapter 2, and just received 80 copies yesterday from videographer Bill Bollinger of Chapter 3 as fulfillment of the group's paid order. They are available to members at the \$7 wholesale cost. For Chapter 4 which picks up in Port Jervis, Talaga noted that Robinson would like filming to proceed after the leaves are down in November. Barnes recommended against cutting the summit in half for the end point of the next segment. Merchant agreed that Chapter 4 should go to the end of it, then Chapter 5 could represent the Hudson River and beyond. That story needs to be told, including the influence of Rosendale cement.
- b) **Incorporation of DHTHC as a New York State Non-profit Organization** – Barnes said he is not familiar with the process of filing through the NYS Education Department that Robinson had suggested. It may require more commitments such as holding a certain number of programs. He is working through the Department of State to register the Council as a non-profit organization in New York. It would be an additional step to pursue 501(c)(3) status through the IRS. Barnes will complete the application, arrange for the signatories, and said he will contribute the \$180 filing cost. Merchant offered to kick in a share of that expense.
- c) **Google Maps Directory of Publicly Accessible D&H Corridor Hikes** – Merchant said the point of this endeavor was to link the directory to the DHTHC website, which currently isn't feasible. He asked for people to send him logos and information in the meantime. He will continue to add historic and contemporary photos to it.

Until the DHTHC website is figured out, this link could be placed on members' individual sites.

d) **Other** – None

Announcements of Member Accomplishments, Concerns, and Upcoming Events:

Brian Scardefield and Dave Hulse – The county is arranging drone footage of the D&H Canal trail in Summitville. That can be shared when it's available.

Sally Talaga – The 7th Annual Canal Festival on Aug. 17 was successful. They counted over 800 vehicles. They cleared \$2,000 but had more expenses this year. It's up in the air as to whether the festival will happen again due to the loss of three strategic volunteers. A determination will be made in January. The D&H Canal Park at Lock 31 unveiled its fourth interpretive sign (embedded fiberglass on a metal frame) on Oct. 12, prior to the appreciation dinner for the Friends group. This one is on the topic of the Lackawaxen River. She wrote the text and scanned photos. It was privately funded. Two sagging beams were discovered in the dance hall of the park building. A historic architect and structural engineer are coming the first week of November to advise about the repairs. Talaga handed out a brochure, "Hawley Trail Guide" by the Wayne & Pike Trails & Waterways Alliance. The Hawley trail connects the D&H Canal Park at Lock 31 to Lake Wallenpaupack, with interpretive signs along the trail to provide insight into Hawley's history. The kit for the Canal Boat Pavilion for which they placed an order in August and paid \$54,000 up front couldn't be delivered until December, so they have pushed it off until April. They must bid out its construction according to PA prevailing wage rates.

Kerron Barnes – The federal grant-funded Canal Trail project in Wurtsboro has run into a delay. They must purchase four easements from private property owners. Three signed off but one is problematic due to a mortgage, with the bank reluctant to allow it. They can't move to the next phase until this is resolved. On the Mamakating Rail-Trail, they have installed a kiosk, flowers, parking spaces and signs. It is being used frequently. They found a beaver dam in front of a culvert under the canal, 50 feet long and four feet high, that is blocking it. There have been three major outbreaks of Japanese Knotweed, which is almost impossible to get rid of. There is some promise in using Psyllid, a flying insect bred in Japan that only eats Japanese Knotweed. It doesn't kill the plant but controls its spread via rhizomes. Its use awaits licensing. The Mamakating librarian has suggested developing an electronic, 3-mile loop tour through the area. They will be marking the attractions on Nov. 9. Barnes welcomes ideas for how best to present this, such as through cell phone-scannable QR codes, an audio tape, or printed materials.

Kathy Land – The Waymart Area Historical Society's annual flea market on Aug. 24 had a great turnout. They grossed \$2,146. Leftover items were taken by the Wayne County Historical Society to store in the Farm Museum. The town joined in with a town-wide yard sale. In September, they held a Farmers' Appreciation Dinner with demonstrations of iron forging, wool spinning, and a square dance. They'll host a Halloween Spooky Night and there is a make-your-own scarecrow contest going on, attached to posts throughout Waymart.

Myra Snook – There are two new strains of Lyme disease in New Jersey that can be deadly, carried by mice as opposed to deer. Waterloo Village put cut-outs of two canal mules, painted dark brown, that unfortunately can't be seen that well. She is working on a 14th interpretive sign for Morris County for the canal.

Lauren Hauptman – Upper Delaware Scenic and Recreational River Interpretive Ranger Tim Oset will be providing the programs at the NPS Roebing Bridge and Corwin Farm on Nov. 2 for the D&H Canal Bus Tour. The Park Service has completed its Long-Range Interpretive Plan which includes the canal and also did a Strategic Plan. There is funding for a Landscape Treatment Plan for the Roebing Bridge and the Zane Grey Museum, which coincides with its development into a visitor center. NPS is assisting with plans to extend a trail to the Highland Access and with The Delaware Company's Kate Project to help improve the visitor experience in that area. Work progresses on the National Register designation for the canal historic district.

Jack Braulein – The D&H Canal and Historical Society has finished the roof and restored the north addition on the DePuy Canal House in High Falls. They held an auction to help raise a needed grant match of \$100,000 which also served as a “friend-raiser” such as having Cousin Brucie join the advisory board. An architect is working on developing a Code Compliance Report and they have hired a team for creative design. They specialize in children and family concepts for visitor centers and museums. Bill Merchant has been doing research and preparing programs and exhibits on the marginalized groups that worked on the D&H Canal.

Steve Skye – The Orange County Parks Commissioner has taken a look at the Central Park Conservancy to serve as a model for a Friends group to raise money to preserve the canal. They would welcome ideas for that and hope to start working on it next year. They had a mile-long section of canal that was fully watered which is no longer, and would like to fund that. The Town of Deerpark has six local museums in the vicinity that Norma Schadt organized into a passport program in which people got stamps for visiting each one, with the prize of free admission to a community dance.

S. Robert Powell – The Carbondale Historical Society participates in the “Past-port” program through the Local History Roundtable in northeastern PA and it really works. He had visitors from Japan and Brazil recently. Powell finished Addendum #2 as a 400-page supplement to publish on DVD what he learned in the last year about the D&H. He acquired photos from 1916-18 from D&H Holdings in Albany that served as evidence of the condition of their real estate before the war. Seeing these professional, high-quality photos was like opening up a treasure chest. That discovery will be in Addendum #3. Powell has been collecting copies of “The Delaware & Hudson Railroad Bulletin” from the Bridgeline Historical Society, 225 issues from 1923-1938. It's a stupendous resource. He's had them professionally scanned into searchable PDF files. The approximately 4,000 pages are available for \$10 each.

Next Council Meeting: The next quarterly meeting will take place on the 4th Wednesday, **January 22, 2020**, in Port Jervis, NY. A request will be made to meet at the City Hall at 20 Hammond Street, preceded by lunch potentially at the Erie Depot. An agenda will be sent when arrangements are confirmed.

Adjourn: The October 23, 2019 DHTHC meeting adjourned at 3:21 p.m. on a **motion** by Powell, seconded by Land.

Minutes submitted by Laurie Ramie, 11/19/19