

Northfield Historical Commission

Northfield Massachusetts, Nov. 24, 2020 ZOOM

Minutes

Call to order: Bee Jacque 1:03 pm

Present: Bee Jacque, Joe Graveline, Lis McLoughlin, Mary Mayshark-Stavely, Joan Stoia, Mary King. Patter Field, guest. **Absent:** Stacy Bond, Don Campbell

Citizen input: Patter Field spoke of the concern a group of town citizens has about a Moody Welcome Center development idea introduced in the Recorder on 11-10-2020 and to be sited along Moody St., Highland Ave., and Pine St. It would greatly change the character of a residential neighborhood. Jacque shared the Recorder article with NHC.

Patter asked the NHC to be aware of this project and consider it in the light of its mission of ensuring that preservation concerns are considered in community planning and development decisions.

Minutes: Oct. 27 minutes accepted unanimously as amended, **M:** Jacque **S:** Graveline

NHC Topic: Northfield history "in a nutshell". NHC reviewed Stoia's edits of the 19th century section of the original document on Northfield and agreed that the new details add so much interest. Suggestions for edits were made such as Northfield Seminary "for Girls", and naming the important people drawn to town, like Theodore Roosevelt. **ACTION:** Stoia will add information on 24 Main Street.

Discussion made it clear that most of the important issues and trends of historic Northfield are still relevant to the town today, such as small-scale agriculture, educational enterprise, economic development and historic architecture. The book "Images of America: Northfield" (2014, Ferre, Ross, Stoia) documents these early interests.

Referring back to the beginning of the History in a Nutshell document, Mayshark-Stavely asked if population numbers can be given for various periods of Northfield's history. Graveline said that tens of thousands of natives lived here before the pandemics of 1612-13 and 1630, with great population reductions after that according to oral tradition. **ACTION:** Graveline will consider how to best put this concept of early population into words. Also, relative to the discussion of the October 27 meeting on natives burning land, Temple & Sheldon's book (chapter 2, p. 49, 2nd paragraph) states this was done to keep the countryside open for travel and hunting. Oral tradition also suggests that the hills were kept bare for defense and ceremonial occasions, aided by the bald granite tops of some local hills. **ACTION:** all editors will send their changes to Jacque as soon as possible for final edit and submission to Julia Blyth.

NHC Priorities:

- Sensitivity map is being enhanced by information Graveline has found on a borrowed endangered species map.
- The draft letter to the Deerfield Select board regarding Bud Driver's assistance to NHC will be sent by Jacque very soon to the Deerfield board, with a cc to Bud.
- Graveline added information about a matter before the Planning Board, a solar project along Pine Meadow Road which may include historically sensitive sites. An informal informational

meeting was attended by Graveline and Jacque. The site has an agricultural restriction and also a dual use exemption, though a number of acres will be removed from the agricultural restriction. Crops will continue to be grown beneath the solar panels, and the farm will continue to have animals. The loss of this acreage from Northfield's agriculturally protected land amounts to a significant percentage of the entire protected acreage. UMASS Clean Energy Extension has a resource available online, "Agriculture and Solar Photovoltaics". The Planning Board will continue to meet on this proposed project.

ACTION: NHC should plan a meeting devoted to the topic of land and including a speaker with expertise on local land issues, perhaps Jamie Pottern who was affiliated with Mount Grace Land Conservation Trust.

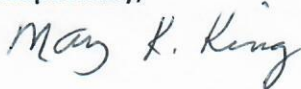
Committee & Project Updates

- 2021 Authors & Artists Festival: plans for the February weekend festival are going well. An anthology of the writings of A & A presenters will be sold in part to support the festival. Reserve a copy and secure a ticket to "Honoring Nature Anthology" ZOOM book launch event by emailing McLoughlin.
- 350th Anniversary: Bond has gotten the planning committee going after it was stalled by covid. Committee meets by zoom on 12/4 with the goal of electing a chair.
- Battlefield Grant: no activity.
- Community Preservation Committee: a zoom information session was offered for the individuals who are considering applying. Applications will be due in the early part of the 2021.
- Schell Bridge: Jacque is on the Schell Bridge mailing list and is working with the Town Administrator to absorb all the information including rights of way. McLoughlin stressed that the Tribes, as stakeholders and represented by Rich Holschuh at this point, must be kept apprised. Stakeholders should be copied on all information. Graveline said that the tribes need to receive information in time to discuss it in tribal fashion, and suggested that a note be sent to Holschuh to let the tribes know at what stage things are, and that a space is being held for them.
- Esri: Google MyMaps can have videos embedded. This is a way, rather than using esri, to enhance the story map with videos, documents, spoken word. It also ties in with Stoia's idea of a talking monument tour. Also, Jacque said that Ryan Clary is a resource at Franklin County Council of Governments who uses esri for mapping culverts throughout Franklin County.

Schedule next meeting: Dec. 22, 1:00, ZOOM

Adjournment: 3:10, unanimously: **M:** Stoia **S:** Mayshark-Stavelly

Respectfully,



Mary King

Secretary