

Northfield Historical Commission

Northfield MA

April 22, 2021 2:00 (zoom)

Minutes

Attendance: Jacque, McLoughlin, Graveline, Bond, Stoia, Campbell, Mayshark-Stavely, King. Guests: Rich Holschuh, Elnu Abenaki Tribal Historic Preservation Officer; Beth Greenblatt, Beacon Integrated Solutions; Laura Kaye, citizen of Northfield.

Call to Order: 2:08 p.m.

Citizen input: Beth Greenblatt is the managing director of Beacon Integrated Solutions, and is consulting with the town on the solar farm project that is before the Planning Board; she attended briefly at the request of the Planning Board chair. Beth left the meeting at 2:15.

Minutes, 3/25/2021: Motion to accept by Bond, seconded by Graveline, passed unanimously.

Solar Farm project: Planning Board public hearings are closed. Deliberative and conditions-setting meetings are still to come and since the Planning Board sets conditions, the NHC and Holschuh will work with the town's consultant Greenblatt to frame conditions regarding archaeological studies and cultural resources. **MOTION** by Jacque, seconded by King to form a subcommittee of Graveline, Campbell and Jacque to work with Holschuh on drafting conditions relative to the solar farm. Passed unanimously.

Schell Bridge: The Public Archaeology Laboratory (PAL) has the MassDOT contract for cultural resource management (CRM). Work was to begin 4/13 according to a packet mailed to Jacque, who had previously notified MassDOT of the facts of our Memorandum of Understanding with the Elnu Abenaki. They have been left out of discussions despite the fact that Holschuh has been granted consulting status on the project and, as Holschuh said, "they are doing a survey of the area without talking to the Natives of the Homeland". Discussion took place concerning what next steps are advisable because of things happening without due process and without notice to and consultation with Elnu Abenaki: Conversations with Sen. Comerford and Rep. Mark? Talk to the Town Administrator? Advice of Town Counsel? Laura Kaye said that trees are cleared along the utility easement by Eversource or their contractor. Graveline said that their utility licenses require access to tribal monitors with any kind of ground disturbance. **ACTION:** Jacque will talk to the Town Administrator, contact PAL, and give MassDOT a few more days to respond to her email.

Holschuh left the meeting at 2:55.

Original Voices Project: Stoia shared a shortened version of the project description calling for at least one artistic and historic work to be created by indigenous artists before Northfield's 350th settlement anniversary year, 2023. This work will provide some balance to the five historic signs placed in town during the state's Tercentenary year. Though abbreviated in statement, the project description was found by NHC members to be stronger rather than less ambitious, and magical in its concept. Discussion of upkeep was tabled for now. **ACTION:** make it clear in any NHC or 350th committee statements that in 2023 we will be commemorating the 350th anniversary of the English settlement of Northfield (not celebrating the anniversary of the town which was incorporated 50 years later in 1723). **ACTION:** Jacque will sign this document as Chair after a couple of small revisions.

350th Anniversary: Bond reported that the 350th has new volunteers, guests speaking at our committee meetings, a web designer, and 7 logo designs submitted. Discussion took place about designing a form for people to fill out briefly outlining their event ideas, the costs, and where the funds might come from; Hatfield did this for their recent 350th anniversary and it worked well. In so doing the NHC and the 350th Committee would have something to react to and to say besides "sounds great", and might move a good idea forward by asking the originator to define it and help it really happen. Jacque spoke of the balancing act we have between the good ideas surrounding us especially as the 350th approaches, and the already defined priorities that NHC must move forward on: the solar farm project, Schell Bridge and Original Voices. Ideas for consideration next fall when NHC will have worked on our priorities and can take on other 350th events are:

- Calvin Swan homestead archaeological study (include Betty Congdon's research)
- Architectural Northfield ---independent walking tour and/or lecture by Eric Gradoia (zoom or in person), and Mimi Burstein has information and photos on old homes; or NHC could produce the walking tour without a consultant
- Barn tour based on Agricultural Commission's brochure (Joel Fowler's research)
- Richard Little on the geologic history of the Connecticut River Valley – Mayshark-Stavely can contact him?
- Early and pre-Northfield – boundaries, early maps, neighboring towns – Campbell and Stoia with information

We need a bench of volunteers to tackle these ideas. As a nonprofit, NHC can get an INTERN, with McLoughlin as the academic liaison and Jacque as mentor/ monitor. TerraCorps fits best for help with the Swan archaeological study, the academic intern working with Campbell, receiving academic credit and learning a lot. Partnering with Mount Grace Land Trust, C.S. Lewis and other organizations is important too.

Crosswalks on Main Street: the town is seeking and receiving feedback on construction, lighting and other essentials.

Announcements, Unanticipated Business, Mail: none.

Next meeting: Thursday 5/27/2021, 2:00 ZOOM

Adjourned: passed unanimously at 4:05 p.m., **M:** Stoia **S:** Graveline

Respectfully,


Mary King

Secretary