

Northfield Historical Commission

Northfield MA

June 24, 2021 1:00 (in-person with zoom option)

Minutes

**Attendance:** Jacque, McLoughlin, Graveline, Stoia, Campbell, King, Bond. Not present: Mayshark-Stavely. Guest: Rich Holschuh, Elnu Abenaki Tribal Historic Preservation Officer

**Call to Order:** 1:06 p.m.

**Citizen input:** none.

**Minutes, 5-27-2021:** Motion to accept by Campbell, seconded by Graveline, passed unanimously.

**Solar Farm project:** Graveline found among NHC files the 1984 conservation handbook which UMASS archaeologist Dena Dincauze wrote about Northfield. She refers to 'prehistoric resources' on "the terraces", a geological term for Northfield's levels of farm land which run up from the river. Several site maps are included and at least 5 sites are relevant to the proposed solar project. Since MA Historical Commission did not include this report in the materials sent to Blue Wave it can be assumed that MHC does not have the report. **MOTION** by Campbell, seconded by Graveline: send copies of Dincauze's 1984 report and associated maps to MHC and the archaeologist working for Blue Wave, and to Rich Holschuh. Passed unanimously. Chairperson Jacque will send a cover letter stating current activities at the properties to accompany the Dincauze report.

**Pauchaug-Schell Bridge:** the Schell advisory committee met with the select board regarding their recommendations and process. Jacque reviewed the SB meeting discussion on the bridge's color, rail type, information panel and name. The advisory committee's draft language paid scant attention to precolonial history and residents, concentrating on bridge design and Schell. Changes requested by the SB include the tribal names of Indigenous peoples and acknowledgment of the advocacy by townspeople to rehab the original bridge. Holschuh said that he has not been asked for information and will not offer input until asked by MassDot. Holschuh has deep concerns with the drafted language for the historical panel due to the very small portion of indigenous history. Native history needs its own panel. The bridge area is a *place*, a set of paths providing an interpretive opportunity, and it is important. As to whether the advisory committee's and select board's considerations will receive MassDot's attention, the Town Administrator has the responsibility to follow this through, seeking a response by a reasonable date. Holschuh also said he received an email stating that no cutting, dredging or topsoil piling will occur in the Pauchaug area during bridge construction, sent by two state agency reps that met with NHC members on site a month ago (Casey and Jamie). He will share this email with Jacque. She will contact the man in charge of the info panels and the overall manager of the bridge project with relevant notes from the walkabout and the SB meeting.



NHC discussed the "layers of resentment" that townspeople feel when end results do not reflect their feelings though opportunities for input have been available. It's also clear that the historical narrative relating to cultural resources needs to be updated from the MHC on down.

**350<sup>th</sup> Anniversary:** Bond reported that the community engagement subcommittee is moving forward. Stoia said that "signature events" need to be lined up for the 350<sup>th</sup> because the subcommittee works to get sponsorship of these events. Nothing is happening with the historical subcommittee which is a real problem. Jacque noted that confusion between the 350<sup>th</sup> and the 300<sup>th</sup> anniversaries is popping up too, and clarification is needed. Jacque asked for a meeting with Bond and King, and that the names of people interested in the historical subcommittee be shared with her.

**Announcements, Unanticipated Business, Mail:** Graveline reported that Northfield should be in line for grants like the Battlefield Grant because it was a big player in actions prior to the Great Falls battle. McLoughlin noted that Alderbrook Meadows Wildlife Sanctuary off route 63 is a Mount Grace Land Conservation Trust property, and archaeology done in conjunction with the Battlefield Grant has been authorized by Mount Grace as partial mitigation to the involved Tribes for excavation during the trail construction. Graveline owns culturally historic property in town, and other culturally significant properties include the site of the Fort, Great Meadows and Council Fires. The Battlefield Grant has a 6-year track record of research and an indigenous contingent providing context, which are too valuable to be dismantled now. **ACTION:** invite David Brule to our next meeting.

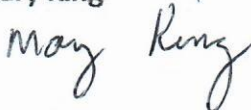
**Motion** to reappoint King as the NHC representative to the Community Preservation Committee, passed unanimously, **M:** Campbell **S:** Graveline

**Next meeting:** Thursday July 22, 2021 1:00, in person (ZOOM optional)

**Adjourned:** passed unanimously at 2:45 p.m., **M:** Graveline **S:** Campbell

Respectfully,

Mary King

  
Secretary

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