

Northfield Historical Commission

Northfield MA

September 27, 2022 1:30 (zoom)

Minutes

Attendance: Jacque, McLoughlin, Graveline (1:45), Bond (2:17), Campbell, Stoia, Mayshark-Stavely (alternate), King.

Call to Order: 1:39 p.m. No citizen input.

Minutes, 1/27/22: Motion to accept by Mayshark-Stavely, seconded by Campbell, passed unanimously: Jacque Aye, Campbell Aye, McLoughlin Aye, King Aye, Mayshark-Stavely Aye, Stoia Aye. Jacque reminded King that the October 28, 2021 minutes have been passed but need to be posted on the town website.

Correspondence from MHC re: Gravel Pit: MHC directed the gravel pit applicant to engage an archaeologist with the site because the proposed project involves potentially culturally sensitive areas. While Jacque had asked the ZBA for a condition requiring the submission of a Project Notification Form (PNF) to the Massachusetts Historical Commission (MHC), the ZBA did not specify one. It appears though from the recent notice from the EPA, a PNF was submitted. **ACTION:** Jacque will follow up with MHC to see if a permit was pulled and consult with Graveline about following up with the EPA if necessary.

Follow-up to MHC Survey re: needs of local commissions: our draft letter to MHC was discussed and heartily approved with a couple of suggested changes. Underfunding of local historical commissions, and the lack of bylaws that lead to and protect historical preservation are problems. The support of local historical commissions by MHC to the full extent that MA law provides is needed. Jacque said that in order to have a bylaw change we need the help of MHC expertise plus money in our budget for other legal advice. NHC's effort at a bylaw several years ago was not successful. The goal is that an applicant respect and take into consideration the historical and archaeological aspects of their project as one of the required steps in the permit approval process, and NHC's strongest action is to put it into a bylaw. Graveline said that regarding our concern with Indigenous issues, the fact that we are within the 16-mile radius of certified ceremonial stone

landscapes makes it clear that we need MHC's help in enforcing the protection of this landscape. We hope and expect MHC to align their policies with those of the federal government. Campbell asked what a certified local government is; it is a government that has completed the complicated process to be *pre-certified in a grant situation to receive federal money*. **MOTION:** Campbell moved and Graveline seconded that the chair of NHC send the draft letter with suggested edits to MHC: Jacque Aye, McLoughlin Aye, Graveline Aye, Stoia Aye, Campbell Aye, Bond Aye, King Aye.

Updates, Battlefield Grant and Western MA Commission: Graveline reported that Northfield has been included in the fourth round of the Battlefield grant! Amount is \$83,300; and it must be implemented in the 2 years from last month. Majority of funding is for a principal investigator, plus money for design work. Montague selectboard remains local overseer. McBride and crew from UConn who have done the work in earlier rounds will continue, they are good. Peter Thomas is working to get found objects from his digs digitized. Council Fires, Beer's attack and Graveline's property where an attack on the fort occurred in 1675 are of interest. No update on the Western MA Commission.

FERC Relicensing of First Light: NHC members should write to FERC expressing thoughts as individual citizens asking that First Light be held accountable for erosion and preservation of cultural artifacts.

Healing Group updates, next steps: Campbell introduced the work being done by a small group to build good relations with our Elnu Abenaki neighbors. While the NHC has an understanding with the Elnu, the rest of the town has not been included in it. A letter to the Elnu Abenaki was reviewed. It is a recognition and acceptance of responsibility, to be followed by small actions and conversations that include the greater Northfield community and that hopefully build relationship and trust. Stoia asked if there would be something more than the letter undertaken. Graveline suggested that the language include "wholesome and good for the next seven generations". McLoughlin **moved** and Mayshark-Stavely seconded that the NHC endorse the letter with edits, and it passed unanimously: Jacque Aye, McLoughlin Aye, Campbell Aye, Graveline Aye, Bond Aye, Stoia Aye, King Aye. Actions to bring more community members into this group and practical ways to relate with the Elnu will come next, as well as sending this letter to Chief Roger Longtoe and developing other means of sharing it. This is a process that is ongoing and needs evolving support.

350th History Focus group update, next steps: Stoia needs to know which history events are being "sponsored" by NHC, plus there needs to be a term other than *sponsor* that indicates planning responsibility but not financial support. *Sponsor* should be reserved for financial backers; what is that other term? King reported on some events that are being planned, including a Calvin Swan sign at his homestead and a concert on the First Parish historic organ, and Campbell spoke of the three events within "Biography of a House" about 88 Main Street: a Timothy Swan shape note concert with music from the 1700s and a short lecture about Swan; the talk by Jonathan Smith, son of the couple who began the Youth Hostel movement in the USA in Northfield in 1934; and a concert by members of the original Spirit in the Flesh band from the Renaissance Community days at 88 Main Street. Stoia described the local history project and emphasized that if we have important conversations under the Healing project, they should be recorded.

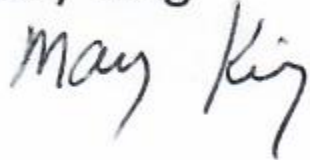
Commission officer elections: Graveline **moved** and Stoia **seconded** that the slate of officers remain as is, Chair Jacque, Vice Chair Graveline, Secretary King. The motion passed unanimously: Jacque Aye, Graveline Aye, King Aye, Stoia Aye, McLoughlin Aye, Campbell Aye, Bond Aye.

Unanticipated business: none.

Adjourned at 3:14, **Motion:** Graveline, **second:** McLoughlin, passed unanimously.

Respectfully,

Mary King

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Mary King".

Secretary