

**Shutesbury Historical Commission**  
**Minutes – 6/17/21**  
**(approved 6/23/21)**  
***Virtual Meeting***

**Meeting start:** 7:41 pm

**Commissioners Present:** Henry Geddes (Chair), Miriam DeFant, Greg Caulton, Mary Lou Conca, Janice Stone

**Commissioners Absent:** Ezzell Floranina, Karen Czerwonka

**Review AMP Solar and MHC Correspondence:** The Commission received in May several letters from the Massachusetts Historical Commission (MHC) in response to project notifications submitted by AMP Solar. The letters outline MHC's concerns about historic and ancient sites on the five parcels being considered for development. The letters further note that the projects require federal EPA permits and are subject to the regulations of Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act ("Section 106"). AMP Solar also sent the Historical Commission a copy of a letter being sent to various Tribal authorities in the region to seek input on the parcels. DeFant reports that she wrote to AMP asking for a list of the notified Tribes, which AMP has now provided. She further asked for copies of the Project Notifications sent to MHC. AMP has agreed to provide them, but has not done so as of this meeting. The Commission discusses the significance of the MHC letters. Conca expresses concern that the MHC letters do not use the word "Indigenous" to describe sites. DeFant explains that the MGL statute that allows MHC to identify sites uses the word "ancient," so the letters may be using that statutory language. It is understood, however, that ancient sites are pre-Contact and not of Euroamerican origin. DeFant shares drafts of letters to federal officials at the EPA and Army Corps of Engineers, alerting them to the possible Section 106 ramifications of these projects. The intent is to send these letters and ccing Bettina Washington, Tribal Historic Preservation Officer (THPO) for the Wampanoag Tribe of Gay Head (Aquinnah). Conca asks about the potential impact of the Section 106 process. Geddes notes that Section 106 review is not intended to stop projects but it might lead to protection of sensitive sites. Conca expressed concern about protection of potential burial sites. DeFant notes there are laws protecting Indigenous burial sites. Hopefully, AMP researchers and THPO review will assist if there are suspected burial sites.

**Motion:** Caulton moves to approve both letters with small editing changes.

**Second:** Geddes seconds.

**Roll Call:** Caulton: aye; Conca: aye; DeFant: aye; Geddes: aye; Stone: aye

DeFant reports she has communicated with Bettina Washington, THPO (Tribal Historic Preservation Officer) of the Wampanoag Tribe of Gay Head (Aquinnah). DeFant shared the privacy policy for reviewing sensitive data and also sent the MHC letters to the THPO. When sending the letters to the federal agencies, the THPO will be cc'd.

DeFant notes that the Leverett Historical Commission might pursue nomination of an Indigenous site to the National Register of Historic Places. This site was evaluated by the USGS in 2020 and found to be several hundred years old. DeFant wonders if the SHC might wish to support such an effort in the future. The Commission generally agreed it would support such efforts. Some interesting research is coming out, using Optically Stimulated Luminescence dating methods,

that conclusively shows stone structures around New England are ancient and Indigenous in origin.

**Motion:** Geddes moves to adjourn.

**Second:** Conca seconds motion.

**Roll Call:** Caulton: aye; Conca: aye; DeFant: aye; Geddes: aye

**Adjournment:** 8:27 pm

**Documents Used:**

Agenda

Letters from Massachusetts Historical Commission

Letters from Amp Solar Development, Inc.

Draft emails for US Army Corps of Engineers and US EPA

**Date of Next Meeting: 6/23/21**

*Respectfully submitted by Miriam DeFant, Historical Commission Secretary, 6/24/21*