

Town of Shutesbury, Massachusetts
WARRANT ARTICLE PETITION

Filed March 22, 2017, 2:15 pm'clock

Resolution to
Preserve Native American Historical Sites and Traditional Cultural Properties,
Including Ceremonial Stone Landscapes

WHEREAS Shutesbury is rich in Native American historic and Traditional Cultural Properties and Ceremonial Stone Landscapes (TCPs and CSLs, see *Town Master Plan*, Natural and Historic Resources section, Town of Shutesbury, and "A Quantitative Analysis of Stone Relics in a Western Massachusetts Town," *Bulletin of the Massachusetts Archaeological Society*, v. 77(2), 2016); and

WHEREAS the Town of Shutesbury has not performed a thorough inventory of Native American historic features, including TCPs and CSLs; and

WHEREAS all Shutesbury residents are stakeholders in our shared historic heritage, regardless of origin, substance or form, and as historic heritage holds economic value, cultural value, value of pride, and as these heritage forms are a birthright of the future generations; and

WHEREAS the Massachusetts Historical Commission mission statement includes a directive to preserve heritage items regardless of their origin; and

WHEREAS the Town of Shutesbury further recognizes the shared interest in Traditional Cultural Properties of persons having diverse origins, who desire to preserve these sites for a range of reasons, including, but not limited to spiritual practices, personal practices, aesthetic value, cultural and educational value, and shared heritage value; and

WHEREAS the Town of Shutesbury also recognizes that a number of town and area residents currently utilize Traditional Cultural Properties (TCPs) and Ceremonial Stone Landscapes (CSLs) as places of religious practice, under diverse spiritual practices, including, but not limited to Native religion and syncretic religion; and

WHEREAS the Town of Shutesbury recognizes that non-indigenous historic features (Colonial, post-Colonial) exist together with and separately from Native American features, and that historic period non-indigenous features also hold great value culturally, historically, while also having economic and birthright heritage value, and thus also deserve preservation; and

WHEREAS Shutesbury is fortunate to this point that the town retains several dozen historic and traditional cultural sites of Native origin, many currently in

exceptionally good condition; however many or most of these TCPs and CSLs are under threat of damage, or complete demolition, in the absence of even the most rudimentary data recovery or inventory, and:

WHEREAS the time is more than due for Native American Traditional Cultural Properties and associated Ceremonial Stone Landscapes to be included in the systematic assessment, inventory, and prioritized preservation plans of Shutesbury,

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the citizens of the Town of Shutesbury, Massachusetts that:

The Town of Shutesbury shall revise the scope of its plans and mission statements to remedy the present imbalance of preservation to address equally all the community's representative groups; and in particular, the Town shall redress the lack of preservation for Indigenous peoples' traditional, cultural and historic properties and other heritage; and

The Community Preservation Commission (CPC) shall allocate funds (from CPA and other sources) in response to estimates from the Historical Commission and coordinating bodies to assess, to prepare for, and to effect the historic preservation of Traditional Cultural Properties (TCPs) and Ceremonial Stone Landscapes (CSLs) within the town of Shutesbury, through the Historical Commission, Select Board and other agencies, including volunteer assistants as needed; and

Funds for the processes of survey, assessment, and planning preservation of Native American TCPs and CSLs will be partly or wholly secured through submission of Massachusetts Historical Commission grant(s) request(s) for historical survey and planning; and Shutesbury Historical Commission shall apply for the named grants as well as other potential grant(s); and

The Shutesbury Historical Commission (HC) shall invite local avocational archaeologists, who know "best the true number and location" of Native American historical and traditional features (as stated in the Town Master Plan, Natural and Historic Resources section), to contribute surveys and data, and to gather in reports of TCPs and CSLs, their content, and locations; and

The contributed inventory and condition assessments of TCPs and CSLs gathered in by the Historical Commission by the above process shall be shared with those regional Tribal Historic Preservation Offices (THPOs), as listed in the attached Appendix, who choose to participate; and

Participating THPOs will be invited to confirm or dismiss designations of, and assign priority cultural value ranking to, each reported site and each individual feature within reported sites, from which final designations by participating THPOs the Historical Commission will prepare a scheduled inventory of prioritized preservation targets in the Town of Shutesbury, and shall report these prioritized targets to the Select Board within the sequestered bounds of a protected sensitive information transfer (to prevent vandalism and artifact theft); and

The Shutesbury Historical Commission (HC) shall draft a resolution to protect all reports, data, and inventories received in the course of assessing TCPs and CSLs from indiscrete public dissemination (in order to secure these sites against vandalism and artifact theft), for which the HC shall model its resolution to sequester sensitive reports following the same measure for the same purpose already in place by the Massachusetts Historical Commission (MHC); and

The Select Board, in coordination with the Historical Commission, the Department of Conservation and Recreation (on state forest and watershed lands), and other necessary bodies, shall effect the preservation of prioritized TCPs and CSLs through the use of CPC funds, MHC grants, and other grants/funds, to enact land purchases, easements, and/or other covenants on prioritized parcels as defined through the previously described process; and

Private landowners will be permitted to apply with the Historical Commission to include assessment of their property or properties in this preservation effort, but private landowners shall not be compelled to include any property in this preservation effort unless otherwise required to do so by existing law; and

The Historical Commission, in coordination with other bodies, and with help of volunteers if needed, shall prepare a calendar of targeted actions and a schedule of cost estimates, and shall submit these estimates and goals to the Community Preservation Commission and the Select Board; and

The HC shall be expedient in their efforts in order to reclaim time lost on preservation of Native American heritage, recognizing that time is of the essence in this matter and that many sites face the threat of demolition without ever having been recorded or surveyed by the town; and

The Historical Commission (HC), on its own or in concert with other bodies and volunteers, will initiate a plan to provide archiving of this preservation effort and interpretative materials for education, to the town library, and for use by the town to publicize this preservation effort and thereby receive benefit to town reputation, as well as cultural and economic benefit.

The Select Board shall evaluate efforts to assess and preserve Native American heritage features in order to assure that actions are appropriate within cultural paradigms of regional Native cultures, as represented by participating tribal offices, and that actions are effective, expeditious, and inclusive to fulfill the described tasks.

Appendix:

Regional Native Nations Entities

Chaubunagungamaug Nipmuck nation (C.B.N.I.) P.O. Box 314 Fiskdale, MA 01518: **Rae Gould**, Tribal Researcher 508-860-9800, rgould@anthro.umass.edu

**Hassanamisco (Hassanamessit) Nipmuck nation, Cheryl Toney
Holley, Sonksqua (Chief):
crwritings@aol.com**

**Mashantucket Western Pequot nation, Marissa Turnbull (THPO):
860-396-7570/6745**

**Mohegan nation, James Quinn (THPO), Elaine Thomas (Dpty. THPO):
860-862-693/6395**

**Narragansett nation, John Brown (THPO), Doug Harris (Dpty. THPO):
401-491-9549/539-4217, dhnithpo@gmail.com**

**Aquinnah Wampanoag nation, Bettina Washington (THPO):
bettina@wampanoagtribe.net**

Local avocational archaeologists (*partial list*):

Sarah Kohler: joyfarm@localnet.com

Michael Suter: bass_sutra@hotmail.com

Rolf Cachat: rgcs7@icloud.com

Regional Archaeologist with experience in TCPs and CSLs

Dr. Curtiss Hoffman: C1HOFFMAN@bridgew.edu

Summary of warrant article to appear in printed warrant:

This resolution uses Massachusetts Historical Commission grant funds and Community Preservation Act (CPA, MGL Ch. 44B) funds, through the Historical Commission and coordinating bodies, possibly to include volunteer assistance, to effect assessment, prioritization and preservation of Native American sacred sites and historical sites (including co-located non-indigenous historical features), in consort with regional tribes. Private landowners may apply to include a property or properties in this preservation effort if they so desire. Grant funds and CPA funds acquired, as well as other potential grants and funds, will be applied to perform the measures named above, and to purchases, easements and/or covenants for the purpose of historic preservation of the named features.