

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

William Francis Galvin, Secretary of the Commonwealth
Massachusetts Historical Commission

November 30, 2006

Lisa Specht
Assistant to the Chilmark Planning Board
Town of Chilmark
Bettlebung Corner
P.O. Box 119
Chilmark, MA 02535

RE: Middle Line Road Housing Project, Map 13, Parcel 43, 73 Middle Line Road, Chilmark,
MA. MHC #RC.40912.

Dear Ms. Specht:

Staff of the Massachusetts Historical Commission (MHC) have reviewed the Project Notification Form (PNF) you submitted, received in this office on 10/30/2006, regarding the proposed project referenced above. MHC appreciates early consultation to assist the Town of Chilmark with technical assistance and historic preservation planning. The proposed project involves the construction of 12 affordable housing units on approximately 21.4 acres of land. MHC understands that no project construction plans are available at this time.

Review of the Inventory of Historic and Archaeological Assets of the Commonwealth indicates that two recorded historic period archaeological sites, the Indian Chapel Site (CHL-HA-6) and the Francis Family Wigwam Site (CHL-HA-7), are located southwest of the project area. Review of MHC's files and the information you submitted also indicates that portions of the project area contain clay pits and may have historically been used for the extraction of clay. The clay pits may possibly be associated with the recorded Native American archaeological sites referenced above, or could be associated with an unrelated extractive activity. Based on previous research conducted in the area, MHC has determined that portions of the project area are considered to be archaeologically sensitive, likely to contain significant archaeological sites associated with ancient and historical period occupation and land use. In New England, archaeological sites are typically buried and require systematic archaeological testing to be located and identified. The archaeological sensitivity of the project area is principally defined by its environmental setting, which includes well-drained soils in proximity to wetlands and water resources associated with the Tiasquam River, favorable for Native American occupation and land use.

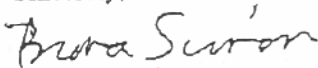
A town-wide archaeological reconnaissance survey was conducted for Chilmark indicating specific archaeological resources that may be expected in the project area. The archaeological report indicates that the project area may contain evidence of ancient habitation and land use. The report also indicates that the project area is part of seventeenth century "Indian Lands" and historic period resources would likely relate to the seventeenth and eighteenth century settlement by Native Americans and European settlers. It is likely that any historical period resources would be related to habitation and agriculture. Features such as trash pits, privies, and small buildings also might be found.

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MHC recommends that an intensive (locational) archaeological survey (950 CMR 70) be conducted for the proposed project. The purpose of the survey is to locate and identify any significant historic or archaeological resources that may be affected by the project. The results of the survey will provide information to assist in consultation to avoid, minimize, or mitigate any adverse effects to significant archaeological resources. This consultation process, for example, could consider feasible development scenarios to avoid and protect any important cultural resources in open space areas of the property. MHC staff are available to consult to develop an appropriate scope for the archaeological survey.

These comments are provided to assist in compliance with Massachusetts General Laws, Chapter 9, Sections 26-27C (950 CMR 70). Should you have any questions, please feel free to contact Gregory R. Dubell, at this office.

Sincerely,



Brona Simon
State Archaeologist
Deputy State Historic Preservation Officer
Executive Director
Massachusetts Historical Commission

xc: Chilmark Historical Commission
Martha's Vineyard Commission
Cheryl Andrews-Maltais, WTGH(A)