U.S. COAST GUARD

FIRST COAST GUARD DISTRICT (OAN)

AIDS TO NAVIGATION BRANCH

SEGUIN ISLAND LIGHT SOLARIZATION

Issue:

Despite best CG efforts to resolve historical preservation issue for Seguin solarization project, Maine State Historic Preservation Commission (SHPO), continues to make a determination of "adverse effect" on all CG alternatives presented. In light of most recent correspondence from SHPO, it is readily apparent that no compromise will be attainable

Chronological History:

May 21,1985: Coast Guard sends letter notifying Maine SHPO intentions on removing First order Fresnel Lens from Seguin Island Light

May 23, 1985: Maine SHPO responds to above letter stating "this project will have no adverse effect upon the historic or architectural significance of this property"

Jan 15, 1998: Coast Guard sends letter to Maine SHPO stating solarization plans including removal of the submarine cable and the First order Fresnel lens

Feb 11, 1998 : Maine SHPO responds to above letter stating "the proposed undertaking will, in accordance with the advisory council's regulation promulgated in 36 CFR PART 800.9(b), have and adverse effect on the Seguin Island Light Station". The letter goes on to state that **"Furthermore in view of the fact that The Friends will require a source of power in the future in order to preserve this property, it is important that their input becomes an integral part of this consultation process".**

Mar 17, 1998: A meeting was held between the State of Maine SHPO, Friends of Seguin and the Coast Guard to seek an alternative option. The SHPO and the Friends of Seguin would not agree to eight possible options, however they added a ninth and would agree only to that which was to leave the light "**status quo**".

Dec 22, 1998 Senator Olympia Snow sends letter to Commandant asking the Coast Guard "to reconsider the Coast Guard's current position and develop alternative proposals that better address local concerns".

Dec 31, 1998 Commander, First Coast Guard District sends letter to Commandant (G-O) explaining district solarization plan and expected savings by solarizing Seguin Island Light

Feb 2, 1999 Commandant responds to Senator Snow's letter stating "based on this review I have decided not to execute any plans to solarize the light until the summer of 2003. If for some reason a catastrophic failure of the submarine cable occurs prior to this date, it will be necessary for us to proceed with a plan to establish a solar powered aid" Admiral Loy also states "**In the interim we will continue to work with the**

- SHPO goes on to asset that solarization in event of catastrophic failure disregards Sec. 106 of the consultation process and claims CG has not satisfied Advisory Council Regs but provides no explanation. **Bottom line**, only acceptable alternative for SHPO is maintaining status quo.

IMPORTANT FACTS RELATING DIRECTLY AND INDIRECTLY TO SEGUIN ISLAND LIGHT ISSUE

In the Coast Guard today there is over 20M in aids to navigation projects on the backlog. During the past two years the entire Coast Guard has only received 5M for ATON projects nationwide.

In the First Coast Guard District alone there is a backlog for ATON projects of 10.2M.

Currently the Coast Guard is 590 bodies short of authorized personnel. This puts additional duties and responsibilities on personnel where some members are working over 100 hours each week

Solarization of Seguin Island Light will result in a savings of over 3M over 20 years.

Currently the 56 ft cable boat is reaching the end of its life span. It is a converted WW II landing craft that was built over 50 years ago.

If the Coast Guard continues to maintain the cable for the Friends of Seguin, it would be extremely unfair to the other lighthouse organizations that were told had to either take responsibility for the cable or we would salvage it.

Currently Cape Ann Light and New London Ledge Light lighthouse groups are in the process of accepting ownership of the submarine cables.

Coast Guard Headquarters calculated a solar array package to determine how many solar arrays and batteries were needed to keep lens active with steady white light and the figure was over 400 solar panels. and hundreds of batteries

Summary:

The Coast Guard highly desires to work out a solution with the Friends of Seguin and the Maine State Historic Preservation Officer that will allow us to provide an adequate signal to the mariner and meet the criteria for historic preservation. . Due to budget constraints and day to day missions such as search and rescue, law enforcement, etc historic preservation is not one of the Coast Guard's top priorities. We have and will continue to work closely with SHPO'S throughout the country ensuring that we work within the scope of the Historic Preservation ACT. We are more than willing to continue consultation and examine alternatives that will minimize the impact of submarine cable divestiture on both providing a signal to the mariner and meeting the reasonable needs of historicity of Seguin Island Light. We are confident there are alternatives that will allow us to meet our needs ie: divestiture of expensive submarine cable and the needs of the Friends of Seguin and the historical community. Both sides need to be willing to work together to find a solution.

Friends of Seguin, the State Historic Preservation Officer, and the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation to explore other alternatives".

Aug 18, 1999: CEU Providence sends letter to State of Maine SHPO following a meeting that was held in August between Friends of Seguin, SHPO, and Coast Guard. The purpose of the letter was explaining the costs savings of solarization including an economic analysis of the subcable. and a full explanation of the solar plan including photos

Sep 15, 1999: : Maine SHPO responds to above letter stating "**deactivation of the lens will alter its intrinsic value: namely, its remarkable ability to create a powerful beacon of light. At night the beacon's characteristic becomes a historic landmark along mid-coastal Maine, much as the tower itself is a landmark by day"**. The letter goes on to state that we believe that the Coast Guard's plans fail to meet the intent of Section 110 of the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended. In accordance with Section 106 of the NHPA, it is in their opinion that the proposed undertaking will have an adverse effect on the Seguin Island Light Station.

Dec 15, 1999 Friends of Seguin mail to Commandant a petition with 7,174 signatures requesting that the Coast Guard keep Seguin Island Light lens operational.

Jan 6, 2000: The Vice Commandant responds to Friends of Seguin's petition stating that **"We have decided not to execute any plans to remove the Fresnel lens until the summer of 2003. If a catastrophic failure occurs prior to this date we will proceed with a plan to establish a solar powered aid"**. This was the same response as in the February, 2' 1999 letter.

Background:

The Commandant and Vice Commandant have already made the decision to defer solarization until 2003. CEU re-engaged SHPO, reviewed alternatives and advised of plan to solarize using smaller solar array and trolley mast on light (similar to other masts we've deployed on lights in ME.

SHPO response:

- Trolley mast will significantly alter visual characteristic of the tower.
- Solar panels don't appear to be a show stopper (that's a change over prior letter)
- **Most important**, SHPO now asserts deactivation of lens will alter it's intrinsic value
- characteristic becomes an historic landmark along mid-coastal Maine , much as the tower itself is a landmark by day".