

VCNAA Meeting Minutes
April 7, 2011



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COMMISSION CHAIRMAN
Luke Willard
(802) 754-2216

COMMISSION
Charlene McManis, Secretary
Melody Walker Brook
Dawn Macie
Takara Matthews
Nathan E. Pero
Shirly Hook
David K. Vanslette
Fred W. Wiseman

Members Present: Luke Willard, Chairman; Melody Walker, Vice-Chair; Charlene McManis, Secretary; Nathan Pero; Shirly Hook; David Vanslette; Fred Wiseman

Absent: Dawn Macie; Takara Matthews.

Guests: John Moody, Underhill, VT; Chief April Merrill, Swanton, VT; David Skinas, Northfield, VT; Nicole Vanslette

The hearing was brought to order by Chairman Luke Willard at 10:05am at the National Life Building, 4th Floor, Conference Room 1 in Montpelier, VT.

Public Hearing regarding the Missisquoi St. Francis-Sokoki application:

Luke thanked everyone for attending the meeting. Chief Merrill recapped the testimony she had given in March. Luke detailed several phone calls and emails that he received regarding specific names listed within the St. Francis-Sokoki Band's recognition application. Each communication made it clear that they were not members of the St. Francis-Sokoki Band and wanted their names removed. While the Commission has no authority over the internal affairs of tribal organization, Luke expressed that the first criterion (Sec. 4. 1 V.S.A. § 853(c)(1)) relies heavily upon a 'current' list of names and addresses. Chief Merrill explained that the tribe has specific procedures outlined in its constitution for renouncement of citizenship and/or disenfranchisement and that the individuals who contacted Luke did not properly follow those procedures. Chief Merrill added that the list is not quite up-to-date. Luke stated that there are 2244 members listed and he calculated that 51% of those reside in Franklin, Grand Isle, Chittenden, and Lamoille counties. Chief Merrill stated there are over 2600 members. David Skinas added that the tribal rolls are as current as they could have been when the application was submitted. Luke suggested that the application would be much stronger if the names and addresses of the tribe's members were brought up-to-date. This sparked much debate. Luke mentioned that state legislators have informed him that they would not be acting on any new recommendations until the next

legislative session and he suggested that it may be wise to use the time to update the names submitted to the Commission. Chief Merrill said that it may be best for the tribe to withdraw its application. Luke clarified that if that choice was made, the tribe would not be able to reapply for two years. John Moody spoke regarding territorial history.

Meeting was called to order at 11:25am.

1. Approve minutes of February 15, 2011.

Nathan moved to approve the minutes. Melody seconded. All agreed.

2. Approve minutes of March 15, 2011

Charlene moved to approve the minutes. Dave seconded. All agreed.

3. Discussion re: Missisquoi St. Francis/Sokoki application

Luke asked if the Commission had enough information to act upon this today. David asked if the Commission approved this application, can the tribe add an addendum to include Chittenden County and time to make the tribal rolls current. It was decided that once the application is approved, the Commission's report to the legislature will reflect the information that we currently have. Melody asked if the addendum can be submitted at the next meeting. The answer is yes. Dave stated for the record that Chittenden County is part of the applicant's "specific geographic location". Nathan moved to accept the application as is. Shirly seconded. Discussion held. The motion was amended 'to recommend state recognition of the Missisquoi St. Francis/Sokoki Tribe'. Luke wanted to state for the record that while this motion is to recommend the applicant for recognition, the Commission will still need to generate and agree upon the legislative report. Luke asked for a roll call. Nathan [Yes]. Shirly [Yes]. Fred [Yes]. Luke [Yes]. Charlene [Yes]. For the record, David and Melody abstained.

NEW BUSINESS

1. Next meeting:

The next meeting will be April 19, 2011 at the Swanton Municipal Village Hall (Village Complex). Pot luck will be at 12noon. Parking will be in the back. Commission members should arrive early for set-up.

2. Update on the current bills.

The final readings of H.85 and H.86 were held on April 6, 2011 and passed in concurrence. The bills are awaiting final signature from Governor Shumlin. All commission members are encouraged to attend the public signing. There was a Senate committee hearing for S.26 on March 25th where testimony was given. The House committee made it clear that they do not have time to take up any more recommendations.

3. New Information

David Skinas and David Lacy were not cited for "ethnic violations" for using their professional letterhead for the scholar report, contrary to what Commission members were told.

4. Scholar Panel

David Skinas will remain on the scholar's panel on personal time.

5. Sweetgrass offering

David Skinas offered to bring sweetgrass plants to the next meeting.

6. Meeting of July 19th

Nathan stated the location of this meeting will be at the Thetford Center Community Building (the Old School House) on RTE 113. Potluck will be at 12noon. We will ask Diane to finalize this location.

The meeting was adjourned at 12:25 pm.

Respectfully Submitted,

Charlene McManis
Secretary