

APPROVED

VERMONT
COMMISSION
ON
NATIVE AMERICAN
AFFAIRS



VCNAA Meeting Minutes
Wednesday, February 12, 2014
133 State Street Room
Montpelier VT 05682



vcnaa.vermont.gov

CONTACT

COMMISSION
Lucy Cannon-Neel, Chair
Jeffrey Benay, Vice-Chair
Charlene McManis, Secretary
Andrew Beaupre
Walker Brook
Dave Van Deusen
Shirly Hook
Patricia Johnson
Trudy Ann Parker

Members Present: Lucy Cannon-Neel, Chair; Charlene McManis, Secretary; Andrew Beaupre; Walker Brook; Dave Van Deusen; Patricia Johnson; Trudy Ann Parker.

Via Phone: Shirly Hook

Absent: Jeff Benay

Guests: Monte A. Mason, Morrisville; Chief Bernie Mortz, Newbury; Chief Don Stevens, Shelburne; John Moody, Carol Irons, Donald Parker; James Haslam, Workers' Center; Mason; Julie McDonald, Georgia; Kate Kanelstein, Workers' Center; Trudy Thomas; VHP.

The meeting was brought to order at 1:05 by Chair Lucy.

1. Public Comment

Don spoke about tribes interacted with each other. Don has been working with Vermont tourism. Nulhegan was featured in Destination Vermont magazine winter 2013-14, A 20 minute video was created a documentary about the Vermont Abenaki which played on public television in Canada. A copy has been sent to Nulhegan.

Don had been contacted with the power company about the Power grid going through sensitive Abenaki sites. Don has contacted the other tribes regarding this. Don has sent two bills in the state house – Abenakis performing native marriages, and the second H589 to allow state recognized tribes to possess native feathers. Discussion was held. Don had questions regarding the Abenaki Heritage Gathering.

2. Organizing and Building Community/Labor Partnerships with James Haslam (Director of the Workers' Center), Monte Mason and Julie McDonald (VSEA)

Dave introduced the speakers. The commission introduced themselves to the speakers. James Haslam and Kate were from Vermont Workers' Center and their mission with the indigenous people in Vermont. He gave a history of the labor movement in Vermont. Kate asked what the commission wished to learn about the Vermont Workers' Center. How to reach into the grass roots of economic development for the Vermont tribes. Don was asking for Abenaki to have a collective say in the Vermont government. Kate stated she is an organizer with the Vermont Workers' Center. What is organizing and what is building? What are the issues for the native community? Drug & Alcohol abuse, no

power in DCF, no income, no chance of economic development, lack of healthy food, health care, transportation, lack of services. Policy makers have the authority to make the laws and rules. Don stated there is a bill in the state house for a paid commissioner of Native American affairs. Discussion was held regarding organizing a voice to tip the balance of power of the few making the laws of the many. Don stated when dealing with minimum wage, we are fighting business. Discussion was held about minimum wage. Minimum wage used to provide shelter, food and transportation. Dave spoke about having Abenaki representatives in the state house, listening and discussing issues.

Discussion was held regarding the fear of identifying as Abenakis in Vermont. Kate spoke how to bring solidarity with many Abenakis and unions. Also how many Native Americans are state employees? Monte from the VSEA, spoke about being native and his struggles to bring out improved wages in his job. Monte believes Abenakis need to gather and have solidarity. Everyone needs that voice. Don has written letters to various organizations regarding issues in Vermont. Discussion was held.

Discussion was held regarding a bill for paid sick days. It is all about having a balance of power.

On March 8th, there will be a women's march for dignity. Women leaders to sign – key hearings on these issues. VSEA will write letters of support regarding issues for Native Americans. Contact Julie McDonald at jewelsinvt@yahoo.com.

Lucy adjourned at 2:20pm for break.

Commission reconvened at 2:30pm.

3. Approve January 8th 2014 minutes

Charlene moved to approve the minutes as written. Pat seconded. All agreed.

OLD BUSINESS

1. Action Plans

A. Explore Title VII Indian Education for Inclusion in the Orleans County School System

The initial plan needs to be processed by February 28th. Lucy spoke with Andy regarding the Orleans Central Supervisory Union. John Moody will send a list of identified tribes in the Northeast Kingdom. She needs at least as 10 children for Orleans central. Discussion was held.

B. Establishing Scholarships

Andy spoke with Jeff about what they have going on in their parent advisory. Andy has spoken with Vermont state colleges and UVM regarding state scholarships. Regarding to create a license plate, need to have a bill passed in order to start a scholarship through the licenses and need a legislator to support the bill. UVM need a 10,000 scholarship to start. The scholarship would be canceled in 3 years if the amount is less than \$10,000. Discussion was held. Don suggested expand to the Vermont lottery commission or some of the private colleges. Dartmouth has four scholarships a year. Discussion was held regarding grant writers. Dave moved to authorize Andy to make progress on both suggested fronts, explore grant writing opportunities and to speak on the commission's behalf to legislators about license plates. Trudy seconded. All agreed.

C. Jim Petersen Plaque

Certain concerns have been brought to Andy's attention. Andy spoke with Jeff about to create a plaque from the commission to his widow at the Abenaki Gathering in June.

D. Abenaki Heritage Gathering

Monies are going to be needed for advertising. The Maritime Museum has a 501.c.3. Don questioned what the commission was bringing to the table. What does the commission plan to do different from what is being done now? Discussion was held.

Pat stated the commission wish to expand it on. Don had concerns about what was going to be added by the commission. The recognized tribes have been setting up this event.

Discussion was held about the event and provides stipends for various demonstrators.

Discussion was held regarding the fear from the tribes about the commission getting involved in this current event. Don asked the question about enlarging the event. One idea was to bring Jesse to build ash baskets. Shirly would like open communication with the chiefs and committee. Discussion was held. The tribes will work with the committee on this event.

Discussion was held regarding stipends to some and not for others.

E. Archeological Notification Process

Andy spoke the drafted the policy for the notification process to contact native people. The Stockbridge-Munsee band is another tribe in Vermont which is federally recognized. Sheri White represents Stockbridge and is currently in Albany. Discussion was held. Federal tribes have different procedures regarding issues with the state. Sheri would like to see the amended policy before moving forward. Dave stated maybe the policy should notify local tribes. Commission should also be notified. Don concerned is being notified by other means (newspaper, television or phone calls). Discussion was held regarding how much notification is needed and who is notified. There is an expectation of notification by the state on burials and artifacts. The question was asked as what cut off of each phase scatter. It was decided to notify the tribes on anything in phase two. John disagreed. John would like a copy of the drafted policy. Giovanna is working on the policy at this time.

F. Meeting with Governor Shumlin

Tabled.

G. Establishing Vocational Dialogue with Political Leaders

Tabled.

H. Establishing a State-Wide Abenaki Artisan Co-op

Tabled.

I. Updating the VCNAA Website

Suggestion was to have Fred "Haven Project" on the website and possibly Melanie's resource directory. Trudy Thomas, DHP, is the administrator for the site. Updates to be given to the secretary and will be forward to Trudy. Also the secretary will go through the website

for updating. Suggestions were more photos and teacher-friendly sites. Also discussed was posting old minutes from this commission from 2010 on in folders.

NEW BUSINESS

1. Talking Points for the Governor

Tabled. Discussion was held regarding what issues to speak with the Governor about. The leadership group meeting the governor is Lucy, Jeff and Trudy. The purpose is to create dialogue with the governor. Discussion was held regarding the current bills in the state at this time. Don suggested that the governor talk to his department heads to work with the commission on native issues, creating a dialogue with the native people on issues. Dave asked if the tribes have any contact with the corrections department. The answer is no. Don suggested that the Governor should state “it is the policy of the state of Vermont to work with native people on different policies and procedures and issues.” This would include education, HDP, dept of labor, etc. Discussion was held regarding representation in the legislation and funding.

2. Next Meeting

The next meeting will be Wednesday, March 12th, 2014 from 1pm – 4pm at 133 State Street, Basement Room 21, Montpelier, VT.

3. Announcements

Lucy wrote her first grant letter regarding her educational project and was awarded. Everyone applauded.

“Looking through the eyes from our grandmothers” event will be in Island Pond sponsored by the Historic Preservation on May 2nd. Nulhegan will be involved.

Lucy adjourned the meeting at 4pm.

Respectfully,

Charlene McManis
Secretary

FUTURE ITEMS

Hungry Hearts Movie