

VERMONT
COMMISSION
ON
NATIVE AMERICAN
AFFAIRS



VCNAA Meeting Minutes
October 18, 2011



vcnaa.vermont.gov

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COMMISSION
Luke Willard, Chairman
Melody Walker Brook, Vice-Chair
Charlene McManis, Secretary
Andrew Beaupre
Shirly Hook
Betty Johnson
Takara Matthews
Dave Van Deusen
Fred W. Wiseman

Members Present: Luke Willard; Chairman; Charlene McManis, Secretary; Melody Walker Brook, Vice-Chair; Andrew Beaupre, Betty Johnson, Dave Van Deusen.

Absent: Shirly Hook, Takara Matthews, Fred W. Wiseman

Guests: John Moody, VT; Scott Dillon, VT

The meeting was brought to order by Chairman Luke Willard at 1:10pm at the National Life Building in Montpelier.

1. Approve minutes of September 20, 2011.

Charlene moved to accept the minutes with the change from John Moody, NH to John Moody, VT. Melody seconded. All agreed.

2. Individual Abenaki Recognition.

Due to comments made by guests at past meetings and public forums, Luke posed the question. "Is there any type of recognition for people who self-identify as Abenaki yet are not members of any tribe by their own choice?" Discussion revealed the clarity that Vermont and the federal government only recognize tribes and bands, not individuals. This commission certainly does not have the resources to examine the claims of every person who refuses to enroll with their tribe simply because they "don't like politics". Luke moved to adopt the following statement: "It is the position of this Commission that Indian status is determined by Native American Indian tribes." Andrew seconded. All agreed.

3. Committee Assignments.

Luke proposed to have the following three sub-committees recreated for more efficiency:

- 1) Government Policy
- 2) Social Services
- 3) Cultural Resources

Andrew moved to accept the above sub-committees. Betty seconded. All agreed.

Committee assignments:

Government Policy – David Van Deusen, Luke Willard, Fred Wiseman

Social Services – Betty Johnson, Charlene McManis, Shirly Hook

Cultural Resources – Melody Walker Brook, Andrew Beaupre, Takara Matthews

Discussion was held regarding procedures with the sub-committees. Luke asked each sub-committee to brain-storm and help to develop their own committee. Betty asked if sub-committees could “cc” Luke regarding their progress. Luke agreed.

4. Indigenous Sites Protection

Andrew read his research regarding policy for notification, using Virginia-established policies. The hard line interpretation is that the state archeologists should inform Vermont tribes and the Commission of any previously unidentified prehistoric archeological sites identified and subsequent site numbers issued within the “specific geographic locations” specified by state-recognized tribes in their recognition applications. Discussion was held. Scott Dillon, State Archeologist, spoke about the procedures in informing tribes regarding prehistoric archeological sites. Luke questioned Scott on the current procedures of notifying tribes, if any, and the Division’s openness to adopting fair procedures that will satisfy the tribes. Luke also questioned Scott regarding the tentative locations of future big wind projects and inquired what archeological measures the state was taking to identify and/or protect indigenous sites prior to blasting ridge tops during the construction of big wind projects. Luke thanked Scott for coming.

5. American Indian Heritage Month/Abenaki Heritage Week

Luke will draft a proclamation for Governor Shumlin’s signature proclaiming November as Native American Heritage Month in Vermont. Charlene gave her report regarding research on celebrating Abenaki Heritage Week, May 7th through May 12th. Some weekly events discussed were a celebration rally on the state house lawn, a one-day workshop to help Vermont educators more properly teach about the Abenaki, and an open studio for Abenaki Artisans. Discussion was held regarding a theme for the workshop and Abenaki week. John Moody suggested the pavilion of the historical society or the Vermont College. Melody suggested UVM for help. Discussion was held regarding the tribe’s roles in the events and financial and physical help. Discussion was held regarding the booking of presenters and venues and the creation of a budget and fundraising. It was decided to reserve the statehouse lawn May 7th, 2012 for an Abenaki rally.

6. Abenaki Language Revitalization

Due to time limits, this discussion was postponed.

NEW BUSINESS

1. Next meeting schedule

The next meeting will be on December 13, 2011 from 11am to 1:30pm in Montpelier.

The meeting was adjourned at 3:05pm.

Respectfully Submitted,

Charlene McManis, Secretary