

Minutes
January 24, 2008

**Vermont Commission
On
Native American Affairs**

Mark Mitchell, Chairman
vcnaa@earthlink.net
www.vcnaa.com

Commission Members:

Jeanne A. Brink
Timothy de la Bruere
Hilary Casillas
Judy Dow
Charlene R. McManis
Donald W. Stevens

Members Present: Mark Mitchell, Chairman; Tim de la Bruere, Charlene McManis, Don Stevens, Judy Dow, Jeanne Brink, Hilary Casillas

Staff: Giovanna Peebles, VT State Archeologist; Jane Lendway, SHPO; Scott Dillon, Survey Archeologist

Guests: Bruce Hyde, Deputy Commissioner-Tourism & Marketing; Todd Hebert; Shirley Hook-Therrien; John Moody; Doris Seale, Burlington; Fred Wiseman, Johnson State College; T. Timreck, Smithsonian National Museum; Debra Herbert; Alicia Seyler

This meeting was brought to order by the Chairman, Mark Mitchell, at 1:00 p.m. in the AOT Board Room, 5th Floor, National Life Building; Montpelier, Vermont.

1. Approval of Minutes

Corrections were made to the November 29th minutes and approved by Commission consensus.

2. Deputy Commissioner of Tourism and Marketing Bruce Hyde - Ways to promote Abenaki culture in Vermont.

Bruce Hyde distributed a copy of *The Vermont Travel Planner* to Commission members. Bruce spoke about the Cultural Heritage Days and mentioned a list of events posted on the state website at www.vermontvacations.com. Bruce handed out directions on how to access the website and enter events free of charge and noted that the Department of Tourism partners with organizations to attract an out of state audience. He also mentioned matching grants available to these partners. Don asked about information available at rest areas and Judy informed the Commission that the New England Arts Council has funds available for publishing brochures for this purpose. Bruce said that the Department of Tourism is looking for artistic and cultural exchanges with Quebec this summer and during the Quadracentennial, and expects them to share in the commemoration of history and culture.

Mark asked Bruce if the Commission could be linked to the Vermont Vacations web site and he said that this was certainly possible. Bruce also encouraged Mark to send updated stories and history that can be shared at both sites. All agreed that education is important and can also be presented at these sites as well as another link, www.celebratechamplain.org. Bruce distributed a copy of the strategic plan for 2009 and noted that there are many committees for the creation and marketing of events and encouraged everyone to participate. Bruce also handed out the first promotional brochure that will be updated as new events are created. Jane Lendway noted that there will be smaller community events that will also be included in the brochure. This commemoration is scheduled for July 3-12 in 2009 and Bruce anticipates a large delegation from around the world to attend.

3. Fred Wiseman – Report on the Champlain QUAD

Fred noted that there is now a February 15th deadline for proposals to the Quad Commission. Fund raisers will be held and packages sent to large donors for assistance. Fred is hoping that a group of indigenous people from Vermont and the surrounding area would take part in the advisory panel for the Champlain Project and thanked Mark for making this request for participants available on the NAAC website. The goal is for all projects to have representation by these panel members from different nations and regions, and the projects will be divided in February. The panel will be meeting every other month and by e-mail. Point people like Nancy Millet, who has experience working with pow-wows and Native American themed music festivals will be working with Nick Warner and the city of Burlington.

Focal points for projects are the Eco Center and Lake Champlain Maritime Museum. There are also 7-14 movies being worked on and Mountain Lake will be doing a series of shows. MT Lake is interested in doing work on the French and Indian wars from an Abenaki perspective and Fred told them to get in touch with the Commission for assistance. Fred noted that 2009 seems to be the year of documentaries and he is looking toward the advisory panel for help. To have a native presence, indigenous people need to get involved. Don asked what kind of native visual experience will be available during the commemoration and Fred noted that Nancy will be making sure that there will be something going on along the water front and at other locations. Fund raisers will assist with money for these “signature” events. Fred suggested that members interested in projects or helping with events get in touch with Catherine Brooks at the Department of Tourism. Bruce suggested that having a signature event like a pow-wow would work best on Saturday July 11, 2009, and people interested in working for this event should be in touch with Nancy Millet.

Tim mentioned that he would like to do a film screening with Mary Collins. But was not sure how this could be incorporated. Tim would like to approach several Universities and the Native American student organizations to support a Native American film festival. This would be a two year project. Fred noted that the Quad commission is planning a film festival at the Waterfront Theater where a venue is being planned and Dion Baired should be contacted about films with a Native American theme to be shown. Bruce mentioned that there will be two half hour performances focusing on New England in Quebec City on July 4th of this year. Contact person for this event is Catherine Brooks from the Department of Tourism.

4. Wiseman – Screening of video 1609; The other side of History

Fred presented a film that he worked on about Champlain. This is a 24 minute show and Fred asked for input from Commission members on their perspective and for advice and consent about the correctness of what he is presenting. The film draft is not complete, but there is a story board. Fred expressed sovereignty as the defining characteristic of his work and will be taking the perspective from specific advocates; Missisquoi and the Seven Nations of Canada Alliance. Fred's goal is to premier the movie in 2009. Judy commented on the pronunciation of French words and Fred said he would verify the correct sounds. Fred will be working on making Champlain's armor and the French flag as accurate as possible. Fred has been working for three years on artifacts for this time period in an attempt to accurately recreate each one, and will be working on the exact features of the shake tent. The final product will also be interactive. Fred will be on the May agenda.

5. Todd Herbert – Development of museum in East Montpelier

Todd Herbert handed out a letter of invitation to the museum and gift shop for Commission Members explaining the museum expansion, and requesting any Native American artifacts that may be available on loan for display purposes. Todd would like to create a section in the museum dedicated to the Commission where they may want to display pictures of Commission members and have available any information about issues and affairs being negotiated. Todd invited members to examine the area and choose what information they wish to disseminate to the public, as well as making any changes through time to the content of the display. Charlene volunteered to inspect and create a space with Jeanne, and Commission members will assist with cultural and artistic displays and information. The museum is scheduled to open by the end of March.

6. Other Business

Judy introduced Vermont Law School student Alicia Seyler; member of the Choctaw Nation in Oklahoma. Alicia will be following legislature affairs that concern and affect Native Americans. Alicia is a part-time clerk in the legislative council for general and Economic Development in the Senate Committee. Alicia asked for input from Commission members that may concern any bills being written and passed during this session.

Jeanne Brink informed members and guests that the Wabenacki dancers will be performing at the State House on Farmers Night, February 20th at 7:00 pm.

The meeting was adjourned at 2:57 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Diane McNerney (say-air-kee-wayn-chukws)