

Minutes
May 24, 2007

*Vermont Commission
On
Native American Affairs*

Mark Mitchell, Chairman
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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: Diane McInerney, Executive Administrative Assistance; Scott Dillon, Survey Archeologist, John S. Hall, Commissioner DHC

Guests: Donna Moody; John Moody; Doug Brink; Kit Perkins, Intervale, Burlington; Amanda Davis, Intervale, Burlington; Richard Bernier; Chinka Buck Whitekiller, AAIM North East; Phyllis Donovan, Wheelock; Doris Seale, Burlington

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

Minutes from April 26, 2007 meeting

A correction to the spelling of a name for a guest was made. The minutes were approved with the correction by Commission consensus.

Mark began the meeting by distributing a roster for the NAAC meetings that will take place August 2007 thru April 2008 in the AOT Board Room, 5th Floor of the National Life Building, Montpelier.

Mark informed the Commission members that holding an executive session as it must be in compliance with the open meeting law 1 V.S.A. § 313(a) and is the reason that this meeting did not take place.

Mark also informed the Commission that an executive session cannot be added as an agenda item as "The law requires the board to move, in open session, to go into an executive session."

**1. The Abenaki in Vermont a Cultural Competency Training–Newport Update,
Tim de la Bruere/Jeanne Brink**

Tim informed the commission that the first exploratory meeting with Louise Lampman Larivee was held in Newport at the Goodrich Memorial Library with excellent results; many people from the Newport area submitting text that they wish to be incorporated in the curriculum. Currently the committee is trying to get the family bands to buy into the program and the Obonsawin family is meeting with Odanak, the band council, the chief and the health minister, both on, and off the reserve to decide if this curriculum will satisfy what they expect for their children. Although the meeting was announced on the website and in several papers, some felt that they were not informed and another meeting will be held for those interested. Mark felt that advertising was sufficient since it was not only on the website and in the newspaper, but also on the radio.

Tim said that he has found 4 people on the North Country School Board that want to turn this program into a full time class offered in the Career Center which would be an Abenaki Cultural Competency where one week they would do arts and crafts and another week would be Abenaki history. This would satisfy all requirements, and may be the training classroom for the correctional officers, social workers, and anyone who deals with foster children.

Jeanne informed the commission that an advisory board has not been established as of yet, but there is a list of those interested. Tim felt that community members should be the ones to set up the advisory board since there will also be a steering committee established by UVM and DCF. Mark suggested that Commission members make themselves available to the community to assist on the advisory board. He also said that St.Johnsbury vocational rehabilitation workers are interested and do travel to Newport. It was Tim's understands that correctional officers receive credits toward their pay for taking cultural competency classes and Louise felt that this particular class is the only one that deals with true cultural competency.

Don asked if the advisory council is there to develop the curriculum, or is there a benchmark, and Tim said that the current UVM curriculum is copy written and cannot be changed, but that each community has their own stories and Louise will be asking UVM how that can be adjusted.

Judy questioned the educational component since what Louise has presented focuses on the Missisquoi. She asked Tim if there will be a focus on Abenaki history since that is what community members have presented. Tim felt that this is where the Commission may be able to guide the school board into understanding that there are alternatives to presenting the materials that include all Native American families and bands in any given area. The experiential type education, as opposed to standard education, is what is available at the

Career Center and will coincide with a changing program. Committees will be formed when another meeting can be arranged with UVM in attendance.

2. Update on the Lake Champlain Quadracentennial

Jeanne gave an update on the Lake Champlain quad meeting that she attended. At this meeting the following was addressed.

1. Caro Thompson gave an update on the video she is starting and said that she will be interviewing Abenaki and French people.
2. They also reviewed the summer program- the Archeological dig at the DAR Park and the two weeks classes. Jeanne volunteered herself and Tim to teach two 1 1/2 hour classes to the teachers on July 16 and 23 on what the Abenaki used for food, medicines, herbs, oral traditions and personal stories.

She offered them handouts on months of the year, days of the week and what they mean in Abenaki.

3. Jeanne said the Jeff Benay was going to donate Finding One's Way and the Teacher's guide book to every participant in the classes-about thirty people. Jeanne also stated we are also going to try and get Malian's song too.

Tim suggested the creation of a brochure discussing the Commission's goals and said it would be helpful to educators. Mark asked everyone to get him things they would like to see in the brochure and he would put it together.

Conversation pursued between Jeanne and John Moody about incorrect spelling of the Abenaki words in Finding One's way. John offered to help anyone with the correct words.

This program will occur starting July 16th and continue to August 3rd. The next Quadracentennial meeting will take place in September.

3. Intervale Center – Presentation Kit Perkins and Amanda Davis

Kit Perkins thanked Judy for the cultural and historic information about the Abenaki that she provided to the Intervale. Kit expressed interest in understanding tribal issues that will help in educating the Intervale community. Mark felt that educating the Intervale through cultural competency is important and the Commission shares a continued interest in a community program for education.

Judy asked Kit to clarify the corporate structure under the Intervale umbrella. Kit explained the organizations 5 programs in action: the compost facility, incubator farms, state-wide technical and business assistance, youth farm for at risk teens, and a gleaning

program for welfare assisted families. Kit also spoke about the restoration efforts at the Calkin Farmstead with facilities for storage, education and offices in the old house. Kit said that the Intervale enforces strict lease requirements for responsible practices and organic only guidelines.

Mark said the Commission needs to continue education awareness with the Intervale. Inaccurate time lines posted on the Intervale website reveal their misunderstanding of Abenaki history and Kit explained that they are now mindful of their advertising techniques and have taken it off the website. Jeanne asked Kit who the educational information was being aimed at and Kit explained that they will be focusing on employees first. Charlene asked if the Intervale land was open to the public and if Native Americans are able to visit traditional sites. She also felt that Native Americans have knowledge to share about traditional plants and herbs on this land. Kit explained that the land is public access, that employees do encourage visitors to stay on the walking trails and bike paths, and that Native Americans are able to visit traditional sites. The Commission and the Intervale agreed to continue their educational collaboration.

4. Site Protection efforts in Vermont

Donna and John Moody distributed information to the Commission on the "Guidelines for Archeological Studies" created by Giovanna Peebles, State Archeologist, in 1989 as well as confidential burial site locations. Their discussion involved a burial site protection overview at the Intervale. Mark said that his interest lies in working with state agencies toward site protection and the development of a Bill to that end. Donna felt that laws and policies from other states should be taken into consideration. John felt that burial laws should not be complicated and should include sacred sites. All members and guests felt that a stable and firm law needs to exist with language in statute. Mark assured meeting members that over the next few months a Native American Burial law will be established, by Native Americans, to present to the legislature.

5. New Business

Mark expressed his appreciation to all members and guests for their support over the past year with the Commission and said that Native American summer events in Vermont and New Hampshire will be posted on the web site.

Don reminded members to consider the Executive code of ethics that the Commission does follow.

Mark asked if any guests had issues to bring to the table and one guest asked if the Commission could present a project to Fish & Wildlife that would entitle Native Americans to hold a special permit for hunting and fishing rights since hunting and

gathering are their traditional and cultural heritage. Mark said that, in the future the Fish & Wildlife were welcome to attend a meeting where this could be discussed.

Mark wished all a good summer and the meeting was adjourned at 2:36 pm.

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