

VERMONT  
COMMISSION  
ON  
NATIVE AMERICAN  
AFFAIRS



[vcnaa.vermont.gov](http://vcnaa.vermont.gov)

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**COMMISSION**

Lucy Cannon-Neel, Chair  
Jeffrey Benay, Vice-Chair  
Walker Brook  
Mark Mitchell  
Trudy Ann Parker  
Carol Irons  
Cheryl O'Neil  
Paul Fassler  
Joelen Mulvaney



**VCNAA Meeting Minutes  
Wednesday, October 14, 2015**

**Members Present:** Lucy Cannon-Neel, Chair; Jeffrey Benay, Vice-Chair; Walker Brook, Carol Irons, Cheryl O'Neil, Paul Fassler, Joelen Mulvaney and Trudy Ann Parker.

**Members Absent:** Mark Mitchell

**Guests:** John Moody, Sharon; Rich Holschuh, Brattleboro; Donald Parker, Lunenburg; Deb Reger, Community Radio; Duncan Mathewson, CCV; Dale Azaria, VT VDHP; Jess Robinson, VT VDHP; Jennifer Lavoie, VT VDHP.

The meeting was brought to order by Chair Lucy Cannon-Neel at 1:08 pm at 133 State Street, Room 410.

**1. Introduction of New / Returning Commission Members**

All new and returning commission members introduced themselves.

**2. Revisions / Changes to the Agenda**

Dale Azaria introduced herself and explained her role to the new and returning commission members. She also reviewed the state statute pertaining to the commission's duties and briefly discussed the public meeting law. Additionally, she discussed the current law regarding anti-looting and unmarked burials. Dale then fielded questions from commission members regarding the protection of site location, chain of custody and the unmarked burial fund.

Lucy Cannon-Neel advised that the Abenaki Heritage that is listed on the agenda under old business will be discussed under goal setting in new business.

**3. Public Comment**

Duncan Mathewson inquired about the recent attempted auction of Missisquoi artifacts. Lucy Cannon-Neel advised that the auction did not take place and that the issue has been resolved.

Rich Holschuh followed up about the underwater petroglyphs that were discussed at the last meeting. He's met with the diver who discovered the petroglyph twice since the last commission meeting. Rich advised that she was interested to learn more about the sacred site and has agreed not to divulge the location. Rich also advised that he recently attended the study update hearings for the re-licensing of the Vernon, Bellows Falls and Wilder hydro dams. He provided the

commission members with an understanding of what the study hearings entail and advised any input regarding the re-licensing needs to happen now while these hearings are going on.

John Moody advised there is currently discussion in both Vermont and New Hampshire to change the names of rivers and the Bellows Falls dam back to their original native names. John also commented on the re-licensing process for the hydro dams. He indicated these companies can be difficult to work with and encouraged the commission to become more involved. Additionally, John spoke about the wind farm projects in southern Vermont and the Green Mountain forest. He advised signs are indicating that they are not continuing with the project, but he and others are still doing walks in the area. Lastly, John discussed strengthening the anti-looting laws and advised that the four recognized tribes in southern New England have come together to protect sites specifically for this purpose.

#### **4. Approve September 9, 2015 Minutes**

Commission members reached a consensus to accept the September 9, 2015 minutes.

### **OLD BUSINESS**

#### **1. Rich Holschuh – Website**

Lucy Cannon-Neel and Jeff Benay expressed there had been talk recently about creating a website for the commission separate from the one run by the State, and Rich Holschuh had graciously volunteered to help. Rich has created a Vermont Commission on Native American Affairs Facebook page. The hope is that this page will help reach a younger native demographic and will provide a central location for outreach, questions and concerns from the native community. Joelen Mulvaney raised concerns about the potential for negative feedback on a site such as this. After thorough discussion, commission members agreed to view the site and table the decision about the site until next month.

Lucy Cannon-Neel moved to break at 2:26 pm. The meeting reconvened at 2:40 pm.

### **NEW BUSINESS**

#### **1. Election of New Officers**

Carol Irons requested that anyone interested in becoming an officer, gives a brief statement about how they plan on leading and their vision for the commission. Walker Brook stated he has been pleased with the current officers and would like them to remain. Lucy Cannon-Neel indicated she would be happy to remain as the commission's chair. She summarized the accomplishments of the past couple years and provided her thoughts on the future. Jeff Benay also indicated he would be happy to remain on as vice-chair. Consensus was reached to keep the current chair and vice-chair in their respective positions. Joelen Mulvaney recused herself from the final decision.

#### **2. Goal Setting**

Lucy Cannon-Neel advised the commission of the meeting that she and Jeff Benay had with Superintendent Castle of the North Country Supervisory Union. She indicated that she will be having another meeting with Superintendent Castle, but all signs indicate that all thirteen schools

in the union will be incorporating the Title VII program. This would then bring all of the schools in Orleans County involved in the program.

Jeff Benay discussed with commission members extending an invitation to Andrew Beaupré, former commission member, to become an honorary member of the current commission. Jeff indicated that Andy did quite a lot of work in his four years on the commission and there are still a couple pieces of legislation he created that are yet to be completed. After discussion, consensus was reached to extend the invitation to Andy. Joelen Mulvaney recused herself from the final decision.

Jeff Benay led the discussion of creating new goals for the commission to work on this year. Commission members each stated two goals they would like to work on, creating a comprehensive list of ideas and topics. Members discussed each option and then voted to narrow down the list to the following goals:

1. Train the trainer
2. Developing teaching materials (traditional skills)
3. Native based programs with the Department of Health. Specifically Native style treatment and recovery of opiate and alcohol addiction in Swanton.
4. Higher Education Scholarships
5. Statewide Title VII
6. Improve Communication, including current events with the tribes.

#### **2a. Abenaki Heritage**

Topic tabled until next month.

#### **3. Action Planning**

Topic tabled until next month.

#### **4. The Vermont Dignity in Schools Coalition**

Jeff Benay due to time constraints, briefly spoke about the Vermont Dignity in Schools Coalition meeting he attended. A report came out last year showing that native youth have a higher rate of suspensions and expulsions than non-native youth. He will discuss this topic in greater detail next month.

#### **5. Announcements**

Time did not allow for any announcements.

#### **Adjourn**

Meeting adjourned at 3:58pm.

Respectfully submitted,  
Jennifer Lavoie