

VERMONT  
COMMISSION  
ON  
NATIVE  
AMERICAN  
AFFAIRS



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

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**COMMISSION**

Lucy Cannon-Neel, Chair  
Melody Brook, Vice-Chair  
Carol Irons  
Cheryl O'Neil  
Paul Fassler  
Joelen Mulvaney  
Rich Holschuh  
Carol McGranaghan  
Eugene Rich



VCNAA June 14, 2017  
Meeting Minutes

**Members Present:** Lucy Cannon-Neel, Chair; Melody Brook, Vice-Chair; Carol Irons, Cheryl O'Neill, Rich Holschuh, Carol McGranaghan, and Eugene Rich.

**Members Absent:** Paul Fassler and Joelen Mulvaney

**Guests:** Kerry Renoud; Louisa Dillin; R. Duncan Mathewson III; John Record; Deb Reger; Jess Robinson, VDHP. Dr. Robinson recorded the minutes at the request of the commission.

The meeting was brought to order by Lucy Cannon-Neel at 1:15 pm at 1 National Life Drive, Montpelier, in the Montpelier conference room.

**1. Changes to the Agenda**

There were no changes to the agenda.

**2. Public Comment**

On the occasion of Lucy Cannon-Neel's last meeting as a commissioner and chair, Ms. Cannon-Neel opened the meeting with a traditional Abenaki song. Ms. Cannon-Neel then publicly thanked Carol Irons for her work organizing the Abenaki Cultural Regeneration Project (ACRP), and stated that it was an amazing and transformative experience for all the attendees. The commission also acknowledged Paul Fassler for his help in organizing the week-long event.

On behalf of Joelen Mulvaney, Jess Robinson read aloud a letter she wrote to the commission expressing her decision not to reapply for another term. She thanked the commission for the opportunity to serve. It was then noted that there are two open commission seats. Several commissioners stated they have encouraged people to apply, and it was also suggested that commissioners approach Abenaki from non-recognized tribes and ask if they would like to serve.

**3. Approve May 10, 2017 Minutes**

Consensus was reached to approve the May 10, 2017, meeting with one change noted by Carol Irons.

**OLD BUSINESS**

## **1. Action Plan**

### **a. Developing Teaching Materials / Abenaki Cultural Regeneration Project (ACRP)**

Carol Irons summarized the ARCP event and its goals for the meeting attendees. Thereafter, Mrs. Irons noted that the project met those goals, fostered relationships among the attendees, and inspired the attendees to bring the skills and knowledge they learned back to their respective communities. Several commissioners who attended the event reiterated and expanded on the success of the project. Mrs. Irons noted that all the attendees hoped that the project would continue and grow in the future.

Deb Reger was then asked to speak about her work recording portions of the event. She noted that she had seventeen hours of audio recordings and video footage and was working to edit the material down to several segments that will be hosted on the Moccasin Tracks YouTube channel.

### **b. Joelen Mulvaney**

Joelen Mulvaney was not in attendance and there was nothing new to report.

### **c. Improve Communication with Tribes**

Rich Holschuh stated that he will post a notice of commission vacancies and a request to apply on the VCNAA Facebook page.

### **d. Native Traditions Conference**

Lucy Cannon-Neel reported that while there is a good plan in place for the conference this year, and the first weekend in November has been selected as a tentative date, money to pay the instructors and for other miscellaneous expenses must be secured before Ms. Cannon-Neel can confirm the event. The Lake Champlain Basin Program, which provided grant funding for the 2016 conference, advised Ms. Cannon-Neel that they cannot award any grants this year due to proposed federal budget cuts. The commissioners then discussed several alternative funding sources that they will pursue over the summer.

### **e. CT River Hydro Re-Licensing**

Rich Holschuh stated that there has been no additional movement on the TransCanada's Traditional Cultural Properties (TCP) report since the last Commission meeting. He noted that Paul Pouliot and the Cowasuck Band of the Pennacook/Abenaki People have been accepted into the process as interested parties, however.

Regarding the FirstLight dam relicensing process, Mr. Holschuh stated that he is planning to meet with Richard Will from TRC, Inc. next month to discuss the Traditional Cultural Properties report Mr. Will drafted for that process.

Mr. Holschuh also stated that he attended a Vermont Public Service Board meeting and a Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC) meeting regarding the sale and decommissioning of Vermont Yankee. At the latter meeting, Mr. Holschuh conveyed to the NRC members the Abenaki's concern for the land, its traditional uses by the Abenaki and adjacent tribes, and for the archaeological resources potentially still contained in undisturbed portion of the site.

**f. Indigenous Peoples Day**

Rich Holschuh reminded the commission that the Brattleboro Select board adopted a resolution to observe Indigenous Peoples Day as a replacement for Columbus Day. Rich noted that indigenous people now needed to plan a celebration for that day in the Brattleboro town park and potentially at other venues. It was agreed that the planning should be designated as a new goal for the VCNAA 2017-2018 session.

**g. Statewide Title VII**

Lucy Cannon-Neel stated that she and colleagues have produced a coloring book featuring animals important to the Abenaki (with associated Abenaki words) with Title VII funds awarded to the North Country Supervisory Union. Ms. Cannon-Neel brought several examples to the meetings for the commissioners to examine. All the attendees were impressed with the product.

**h. Native Student Recognition**

Melody Brook stated that no Native Student essays have been received by the commission to date. As such, the project will be put on hold. Mrs. Brook also suggested that Abenaki graduating seniors receive a congratulatory letter from the commission. She noted that the VCNAA has sent congratulatory letters to graduates in the past. Commissioners stated that they would check with their tribes to see if any members had recently graduated high school, and draft congratulatory letters to those that had on behalf of the VCNAA.

**2. Update on Potential Meeting with Charlie Delaney & Associates**

Lucy Cannon-Neel and Rich Holschuh stated that despite numerous attempts to reach Charlie Delaney to schedule a meeting, he has not responded. The commissioners stated that they will redouble their efforts to contact Mr. Delaney to discuss their disagreements regarding Indigenous People's day and other issues.

### **3. Meeting with New Hampshire Commission on Native American Affairs (NHCNAA)**

Eugene Rich and Melody Brook stated that despite several attempts to contact members of the New Hampshire Commission on Native American Affairs (NHCAA) to suggest a joint meeting, they have been unable to reach anyone. It was suggested that a committee member travel to New Hampshire to attend the next NHCAA meeting in July and inquire about a joint meeting in person.

## **NEW BUSINESS**

### **1. Announcements**

Lucy Cannon-Neel stated that the coloring books she produced were on sale for \$5.00.

### **2. State Archaeologist Report and Vermont Archaeology Month Update**

Jess Robinson updated the commissioners on the cleanup and rehabilitation of Winooski's Memorial Park (the location of the well-known Winooski archaeological site) over the last several months, which culminated in its grand reopening several weeks ago. Dr. Robinson noted that the Winooski Parks crew had been very respectful of the archaeological resources in the park, and that they were happy to be the stewards of such an important cultural site.

Dr. Robinson also updated the commission on the planning for Vermont Archaeology Month in September. He encouraged the tribes and/or the VCNAA as a whole to contact him with any events they might be willing to place on the calendar. Several suggestions were made and Dr. Robinson stated that he would follow up over the next several weeks.

### **3. Abenaki Heritage Celebration at the Lake Champlain Maritime Museum**

Melody Brook encouraged everyone to attend the Abenaki Heritage Celebration at the Lake Champlain Maritime Museum on June 24-25, where she and others will be giving presentations.

### **4. Brainstorming for the 2017-2018 VCNAA Session**

- a. Eugene Rich noted that the VCNAA and the recognized tribes needed to leverage multiple methods of communication to reach Abenaki tribal members and others. Mr. Rich also suggested that each recognized tribe place a link to the websites of the other recognized tribes on their websites as a means to increase communication and mutual awareness.

**DRAFT**

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- b. Melody Brook stated that now that many of the recognition processes are done with, some tribal members have lost their direction and focus. Mrs. Brook and Rich Holschuh stated that VCNAA and other individuals needed to take it upon themselves to energize tribal members to work for the Abenaki's benefit. Mrs. Brook also suggested that the commission get a regular update from the Abenaki Artists' Association.
  
- c. Several commission members discussed the feasibility of acquiring Mark Mitchell's Vermont Commission on Native American Affairs external web page. Commissioners discussed who would run it and the possibility of generated regular content.

**Adjourn 3:10 p.m.**