

VERMONT
COMMISSION
ON
NATIVE
AMERICAN
AFFAIRS



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VCNAA March 9, 2017
Meeting Minutes

Members Present: Lucy Cannon-Neel, Chair; Melody Brook, Vice-Chair; Carol Irons, Carol McGranaghan, Joelen Mulvaney, Rich Holschuh and Eugene Rich.

Members Absent: Paul Fassler, Cheryl O'Neill

Guests: John Moody, Sharon; Jess Robinson, VDHP; Jenni Lavoie, VDHP. Ms. Lavoie records the minutes at the request of the commission.

The meeting was brought to order by Lucy Cannon-Neel at 1:00 pm at 1 National Life Drive, Montpelier, in the Montpelier conference room.

1. Changes to the Agenda

Lucy Cannon-Neel requested that two additional items be added to the agenda under New Business: 1a, concerns regarding non-natives selling crafts as "Abenaki-made", and 3, Vermont Commission on Women.

2. Public Comment

John Moody reported that on Town Meeting Day the towns of Sharon, Royalton, Strafford, and Tunbridge voted in non-binding resolutions against a proposed future development that would bring over 20,000 people to the rural area.

3. Approve February 8, 2017 Minutes

Consensus was reached to approve the February 8, 2017, meeting minutes with no changes noted.

OLD BUSINESS

1. Action Plan

a. Developing Teaching Materials

Carol Irons provided commissioners and attendees with several copies of her application for the Abenaki Cultural Regeneration Project (ACRP). ACRP seeks to educate interested Abenaki adults about woods-lore and other Native traditional knowledge during a week-long immersive training session. Those who attend will be expected to bring what they learned back to their native communities. Ms. Irons asked commissioners to disseminate the applications within their respective

tribes.

b. Dept. of Health – Native Style Treatment & Recovery Program in Swanton for Alcohol & Opiate Addiction.

Topic tabled until next month.

c. Improve Communication with Tribes

Rich Holschuh stated that he continues to maintain the commission Facebook page. Mr. Holschuh also noted that the agenda and meeting minutes that get sent to each tribe assist with increased inter-tribal communication.

d. Native Traditions Conference

After noting the success of the previous conference, commissioners reached consensus to hold another conference at some point in the future. Discussion focused on its potential length and the season in which to hold the event. Commissioners stated that they will gauge interest on these details within their respective communities and bring information to the next meeting.

e. CT River Hydro Re-Licensing

Rich Holschuh stated that the TransCanada re-licensing process continues to move forward slowly. He had no new substantive information to report. Mr. Holschuh also stated he has entered into preliminary dialog with First Light, which operates the Turners Falls and Northfield, Massachusetts dams. They are also going through relicensing processes.

John Moody stated that he has asked TransCanada to draft de-commissioning plans for the dams under their control.

f. Indigenous Peoples Day

Lucy Cannon-Neel reported that she spoke with her local representatives in Orleans County who told her that there did not appear to be enough support for the Indigenous Peoples Day bill (H. 488) to pass this year. Discussion then turned to a separate constituency that was interested in the State of Vermont changing Columbus Day to Abenaki Indigenous Peoples Day instead of Indigenous Peoples Day. Rich Holschuh stated that they gave legislative testimony to that affect. Commission members agreed that they would continue to support the bill as it is currently drafted. They also expressed their desire to have a meeting with the other constituency to discuss the legislation further. Mr. Holschuh volunteered to initiate communication with them.

Mr. Holschuh stated that on Town Meeting Day, the town of Marlboro, VT voted to change Columbus Day to Indigenous Peoples Day within their municipality.

g. Legislation for Native Scholarships to be funded by Native License Plates

Lucy Cannon-Neel stated that on Town Meeting Day she was asked by her local senator to give testimony related to this proposed legislation (H. 399). She will provide further information at the April meeting.

h. Statewide Title VII

Lucy Cannon-Neel reported that new a curriculum is being created for the North Country Supervisory Union.

i. Native Student Recognition

Melody Brook and Carol McGranaghan provided commissioners with revised criteria on their native student recognition essay project, including edits generated at the February VCNAA meeting. Commissioners reached consensus on the edits, with distribution information to be disseminated in April.

2. Brattleboro West River Petroglyphs – Update on Potential to Acquire and Preserve the Riverfront Land.

Rich Holschuh stated that the only update on this topic was that he engaged in a brief email correspondence with the Vermont Land Trust. Commissioners discussed potentially reaching out to the Vermont Department of Fish and Wildlife and also suggested the idea of a land purchase as a potential TransCanada mitigation strategy.

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

Melody Brook stated that she sent an email to the New Hampshire Commission via their public email address, but she did not hear back from them. John Moody provided Melody with alternative contact information.

NEW BUSINESS

1. Vermont Artisan Association Business – Vera Longtoe Sheehan

Vera Longtoe Sheehan, director of the Vermont Abenaki Artists Association, contacted Melody Brook and Lucy Cannon-Neel to request a letter of reference from the VCNAA to assist in future grant applications for Native arts education. Commissioners reached consensus to provide Mrs. Sheehan with the letter of reference. Mrs. Brook presented to commissioners a draft letter in preparation for their agreement. Consensus was reached for Mrs. Brook to make the edits noted at the meeting and send the final letter to Mrs. Sheehan.

1a. Concern Regarding Non-Native Selling Abenaki Made Goods

Lucy Cannon-Neel stated that she had been contacted by a native woman who believed that a consignment store was selling crafts labeled as “native” made, but which were not in fact made by a native person. Discussion focused on the VCNAA’s ability to investigate and respond to these types of situations.

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2. Meeting with Governor

Lucy Cannon-Neel, Melody Brook, Carol Irons, Joelen Mulvaney, Carol McGranaghan, Eugene Rich, and Rich Holschuh all reported that they had a very pleasant and positive meeting with Governor Phil Scott earlier in the day. Commissioners spoke with the Governor about tribal and Commission successes, on-going projects, pending and aspirational legislation, and future goals.

3. Vermont Commission on Women

Lucy Cannon-Neel and Melody Brook read an email forwarded to them by Nulhegan Chief Don Stevens about the Change the Story VT initiative; a groups whose mission is the improvement women's economic status in Vermont. They were seeking information regarding Abenaki women in leadership roles. Ms. Cannon-Neel Lucy and Mrs. Brook agreed to respond to the request.

Adjourn 2:50 p.m.