



**VERMONT
COMMISSION
ON
NATIVE
AMERICAN
AFFAIRS**



vcnaa.vermont.gov

**COMMISSION
Carol McGranaghan, Chair
Carol Irons, Vice Chair
Hillary Hoffmann, Secretary
Patrick Lamphere
Beverly Little-Thunder
Lucy Neel
Douglas Bent
Jeffrey Benay**

Approved at March 9, 2022 meeting

Feb. 9, 2022

1:00 P.M. – 4:00 P.M.

GoTo Virtual Meeting

Weblink: <https://global.gotomeeting.com/join/832132725>

Conference Phone Number: (for those not using computer speakers)

1-571-317-3122

832-132-725 access code

Members Present: Carol McGranaghan, Chair, Carol Irons, Vice Chair, Patrick Lamphere, Beverly Little Thunder, Doug Bent, Jeffrey Benay, Hillary Hoffmann, Secretary (joined 1:30), Lucy Neel (joined 1:50pm)

Guests: Adrian Ivakviv (UVM Environmental Studies), Richard Whiting, Aaron Marcus (VT Fish and Wildlife), Rich Holschuh (Atowi Project), Ian Lower, Elodie Reed (VPR), Caroline Gordon (Rural Vermont), Paul Cillo (Public Assets Institute), Jennifer Bryne (White River Conservation District), Xusana Davis (joined 2:21pm), Ellen Flight (Keewaydin Foundation) (joined 2:54), Peter Hare (Keewaydin Foundation) (joined 2:54)

1. Commission members and guests introduced themselves.

2. Changes to the Agenda

Carol McGranaghan requested one change to the agenda. She noted that Pheobe Brown won't be able to attend the meeting as planned so she struck that agenda item and indicated that it will be moved to the March or April meeting.

3. Meeting Minutes – both January meetings

Carol McGranaghan made a motion to approve the meeting minutes as written. Adrian Ivakviv requested that the January 26 minutes be changed to reflect that Darryl Leroux will not be attending the conference. The commissioners agreed to that change. Carol McGranaghan revised the motion. Doug Bent seconded the motions. All commissioners voted in the affirmative.

4. Housekeeping

Carol McGranaghan briefly mentioned some logistical issues surrounding the meeting format and responses to emails.

5 and 6. Response to "Race-Shifting" Advocacy in Canada and Vermont UVM April presentation - communication from Dave Massell, UVM

The upcoming conference at UVM involving a discussion of indigenous peoples of Vermont was discussed. Commission members expressed interest in communicating with event organizers and attending the conference.

Rich Holschuh asked a question about UVM panelists discussing Vermont recognition of Vermont Abenaki, which is what the draft conference agenda proposes. Adrian Ivakviv responded to clarify that the conference will include some discussion of this topic because the Odanak speakers wish to address their own history and connections to Vermont.

Beverly Little Thunder commented that it makes sense to her that the Odanak speakers would address their own history and connections to Vermont because they are the first peoples of Vermont too.

Carol Irons made a motion to approve Carol M. contacting UVM organizers about VCNAA members being able to attend. Beverly seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

7. Tax Exempt Plan for Abenaki Lands.

Doug Bent attended the legislative hearing on this bill. Doug reported that some legislators were concerned about tribes opening casinos and that some legislators expressed a desire to limit the size of the land base that would be tax exempt.

Doug testified to the present uses of Koasek land, for farming and food production, for Abenaki people and others.

Carol M. mentioned that hearings about tax exemption are still ongoing. Carol M. has written a letter of support for this bill and for the land repatriation bill. All commissioners and chiefs have given permission to add their names to these letters of support. These will be sent to the committees considering these bills – House Ways and Means Committee and Housing and Military Affairs Committee.

Hillary Hoffmann commented that it was a legal impossibility for Vermont Abenaki to open casinos on their land given the current status of federal law. Federal law does not allow unrecognized tribes to operate casinos, and even recognized tribes need the permission and consent of the State before they can open a casino.

8. List of Items for Schools to Use to Develop their Curricula on Abenaki History

Carol Irons mentioned Maryella Squires' curriculum for k-12 schools, published in the 1980s. Carol has been in contact to see if the Commission could find copies of this curriculum. Carol M. has been in contact with Ann Squires, Maryella's sister, about obtaining reprinted copies of this curriculum, but funding is required to secure copyright permissions and for the printing costs.

Doug mentioned a book by Trudy Parker, Aunt Sarah, a member of Koasek tribe, which is a good resource for k-12 schoolchildren. Also, Tom Stevens' presentation to the Vermont legislature on the eugenics policy should be included.

Patrick Lamphere mentioned that Fred Wiseman has written a number of books on Abenaki history and they are all good reference materials.

Beverly Little Thunder questioned whether the Commission is inquiring about reference materials written by Abenaki people. Carol Irons expressed that is her preference. Carol M. agreed. Both noted that there are many materials that are written by people who are not Abenaki and sometimes, those might be deficient in certain areas. Beverly mentioned that on her reservation, Standing Rock, there is a big push in recent years to find Lakota speakers and Lakota historians to develop resources for schoolchildren.

Jeff Benay mentioned Finding One's Way, a curriculum for k-12 schools, to help Abenaki children feel more accepted in public schools. The New Dawn, is another one, which includes a table of resources and references that might be used. Against the Darkness, a DVD developed by Missisquoi Abenaki tribe in partnership with Fred Wiseman, can be used by k-12 schools, but is only available on DVD and in hard copy. It is not digitized. Carol M. mentioned that there are a lot of Abenaki kids in the Huntington area and that at least one teacher is using Finding One's Way in the 4th grade classroom there. Jeff also mentioned the N'Dakinna Dictionary, which Missisquoi is disseminating and can be useful for teaching Abenaki language.

Carol McGranaghan mentioned Carol Irons' recent book of Abenaki history, published in 2020. Several Commission members have read this book and commented favorably on it, and several Commissioners and guests requested copies.

Carol Irons mentioned The Original Vermonters, which is not written by an Abenaki author, but it is the best resource covering the archaeological history of Abenaki in Vermont.

Item 9. Sacred Sites

Patrick Lamphere has done research since the January meeting about using zoning codes or local ordinances to protect Abenaki sacred sites. He has experience incorporating protections for archaeological resources and sacred sites/objects significant to indigenous peoples into town plans, although he noted that his work and these references had been removed from the plan he drafted (and which was adopted by the Town of Swanton). Patrick reviewed all town plans in Vermont and could not find any examples of other towns with any protections along these lines. He also reviewed several plans and zoning codes from other states and did not find anything that might be used as a model.

Carol Irons mentioned that it would be useful to have a model or sample ordinance to provide to towns interested in this type of legal reform.

Hillary Hoffmann mentioned that there may be resources at Vermont Law School to help with this effort. Hillary will follow up with Patrick about this.

Item 10. Mascots

Carol M. mentioned that the legislature is holding hearings right now on the draft bill to ban indigenous mascots. Don Stevens is testifying in favor of that bill. Carol M. mentioned the long history of indigenous mascots in Vermont and the fact that towns in Vermont can be powerful forces in the area of mascots and zoning alike.

Jeff Benay clarified that Don Stevens testified on the mascot bill on Tuesday, February 8. Jeff asked Carol M. if she had been asked to testify on this bill and she responded that she had not. Jeff commented that the legislature should consult with the Chair of the Commission on Native American Affairs on bills that relate to indigenous peoples in Vermont. Beverly Little Thunder expressed her views in support. Jeff Benay also clarified that there is a method of contacting the legislature through the Sergeant at Arms.

Carol Irons made a motion in support of Carol M. drafting a letter to the legislature seeking consultation on the school mascots legislation. Jeff Benay seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

Item 11. Funding for the Commission

Carol M. reported that she had asked Rep. Stevens to include a bill in the current session funding the Commission to allow it to more thoroughly carry out its statutory mission. The bill presently requests a funded position of Director of Native American Affairs. Commissioners expressed their views in favor and against a special office like this. Commissioners were supportive because it would take some of the burden off of the Chair, who is a volunteer. Some commissioners expressed concerns about there being one individual who is selected to be “the voice” of all Vermont Abenaki.

Item 12. Truth and Reconciliation

Carol M. reported that the legislature will be meeting with the International Center for Transitional Justice, for training on transitional justice methods and frameworks. This will be similar to the training the VCNAA received during summer 2021. Carol M. proposed tabling this discussion for the March meeting, so it can be discussed in more detail than today’s agenda allowed.

Item 13. School Librarian Email

Carol M. drafted a letter in response to the school librarian email regarding Abenaki people in Vermont. Jeff Benay made a motion to send the letter on behalf of the Commission to all school librarians. Beverly Little Thunder seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

New Business

Item 14. ANR – Discussion of Semi-Agricultural and Rare Plants

Aaron Marcus joined the meeting to discuss ANR research into semi-agricultural and rare plants. Encountering computer difficulties, his item was postponed until the March meeting.

Item 15. Payment for Ecosystem Services Report

Jennifer Byrne and Caroline Gordon presented on behalf of the Payment for Ecosystem Services Working Group, which is funded by farmers coalitions, and organized pursuant to a mandate from the Vermont legislature. The timeline for the working group has been extended since 2019, and is now a 2023 deadline. The working group meets biweekly. An interim report has been drafted and shared with the legislature, noting achievements and areas for future improvement. Jennifer and Caroline have been asking for indigenous perspectives to be added to this group. A new seat has been added to the working group in response and Rich Holschuh, of Elnu Abenaki has been selected for this seat. He

attended his first meeting in January. The working group is currently determining how to measure ecosystem outcomes that would be entitled to payment pursuant to this initiative. Some are in favor of a computerized modeling approach, and others are in favor of a less quantitative, more holistic approach.

Jennifer Byrne presented regarding her work with both the White River Conservation District and the Payment for Ecosystem Services Working Group. She shared the perspective that payment for ecosystem services has traditionally been very commodity-based and that there is increasing pressure to change this model towards outcomes. Measuring progress by the health of a farm, versus the practice used on the farm, for instance.

Commissioners commented favorably on continuing a dialogue with the working group and expressed an interest in the working group continuing to present to the Commission. Carol M. invited Jennifer and Caroline to return to the next Commission meeting in March.

Item 16. Keewaydin Foundation

Pete Hare and Ellen Flight from Keewaydin Foundation presented on the summer camp opportunities for kids ages 8-18 at their camps on 450 acres near Lake Dunmore, Vermont. The camps are rustic, simple tents and cabins, and campers use canoes, paddles, balls, hiking shoes, and their imagination. The camps are tech-free. Camps are 4 weeks or 8 weeks. Keewaydin has established scholarships for Abenaki children to come to camp and they would like assistance in spreading the word through Abenaki communities in the event that children would like to apply for these scholarships. Two spaces are set aside in each age group, so that children could come with a friend from their community.

Ellen Flight explained the canoeing opportunities for kids, involving multi-day trips in the Canadian wilderness with age-appropriate leadership and skills training, increasing in lakes and intensity as the campers age.

Commissioners commented favorably on the opportunities for Abenaki children to attend these camps and noted that they will pass the word amongst their communities.

Update on legislation. Abenaki sacred sites – pictographs and Brunswick Springs sites need to be part of any bill.

Carol updated Commission on the status of draft bills.

Carol proposed office of Native American affairs. Jeff suggested that the person could be supervised, or report to the Commission. Hillary mentioned that an indigenous hiring preference is not unconstitutional and that federal agencies use indigenous hiring preferences.

Hunting/trapping licenses bill. Miss Lucy Neel stated that she had been contacted by an attorney who sought input on what Abenaki people think of Abenaki hunting/fishing because he thinks that this bill is designed to benefit sport hunters and trappers. Miss Lucy stated that she was not sure who the bill was designed to benefit.

Carol M gave update on repatriation bill. Pat L asked whether Commission had decided whether to use zoning to protect sacred sites. Hillary will coordinate with a colleague at the law school.

Announcements: Hillary mentioned a panel discussion at VLS about sexual violence and intimate partner violence. Student groups had requested that she mention this panel at the Commission meeting because students would like to include one or more indigenous voices on the panel.

Public comment: Aaron Marcus from ANR mentioned several initiatives ANR is working on and asked for Commission members' input. Wetland plants, riparian zones, sign replacement effort, endangered plants and threatened plants, growing in plain view (not in distant wilderness area). Jesse Bruchac has provided Aaron with the names of several plants that are showing up in archaeological sites in historically occupied areas of the state.

Patrick made a motion to adjourn, seconded by Doug Bent. Unanimous vote to adjourn – motion passed and meeting was adjourned at 4:04.