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VCNAA MEETING MINUTES

June 9, 2021

Beverly's Pavilion

Members present: Carol McGranaghan, Chair; Carol Irons, Vice Chair; Jeff Benay, Andrea Brett Doug Bent; Beverly Little-Thunder; Hillary Hoffmann, Secretary; Jennifer Morton-Dow; Miss Lucy Neel

Guests: Jess Robinson, Vermont State Archaeologist; Rep. Tom Stevens (Waterbury), Liz Schlegel, Chief Shirley Hook, Rep. Brian Cina (Burlington), Aaron Marcus (ANR), Rep. Tiffany Bluemle; Charlie Delaney (Nulhegan), Phillip Brett, Kim Noland, Pam Alexander, Gavin, Jessica Rubin

The meeting was brought to order by Carol McGranaghan at 1pm.

1. **Recognition of Guests.**

Chair McGranaghan asked the Commissioners and guests to introduce themselves.

2. **Changes to Agenda**

There were no changes to the agenda.

3. **Approve May 12 and May 25 Minutes.**

Chair McGranaghan asked for approval of the May 12 meeting minutes, noting that there was a need to strike the second sentence stating that the meeting was brought to order. Motion to approve made by Jennifer Morton-Dow, Andrea Brett seconded. The motion passed by unanimous vote.

Carol McGranaghan then asked for approval of the May 25 meeting minutes. A motion to approve the minutes was made by Jennifer Morton-Dow, and seconded by Miss Lucy Neel. The motion passed by unanimous vote.

5. Carol McGranaghan – housekeeping issues – Carol McGranaghan raised Robert's rules of order and mentioned that we don't need to use them because we are meeting in person.

NEW BUSINESS

1. Project Introduction – Jessica Rubin presented a project involving repatriation ceremonies; restoration of indigenous plants to be used in Abenaki basket-making.
2. Burlington City Resolution re Indigenous Peoples.
 - a. Charlie Delaney presented regarding a nonprofit organization he is working with, www.alnobaiwi.org, that is intertribal. The organization’s mission is to facilitate learning and reconnecting with Abenaki culture.
 - b. Charlie Delaney also presented regarding a Paletin (Burlington City) Council resolution to require an Abenaki ceremony to be performed at city council meetings. The initial proposal did not pass; and a counter-proposal was made that incorporates three tenets:
 1. land was never given away by Abenaki people in Vermont;
 2. from settler-colonial times to present, natural resources were taken and people were never compensated for that loss;
 3. rights of modern-day Abenaki Vermonters are not the same as other Vermonters.
 - c. Commissioners inquired about the resolution and the consultation with Abenaki tribal leaders and the Commission. The organization has consulted two chiefs, but has not yet consulted the Commission or the remaining Abenaki leaders. It was recommended that the Commission determine how best to provide consultation to the City Council. Discussion followed. Vice Chair Irons moved to table the matter of the precise scope of consultation until a future meeting. The motion was seconded by Miss Lucy Neel and passed by unanimous vote. A motion was made by Jeff Benay proposing that Mr. Benay would contact the City Council to obtain more information about the draft resolution. The motion was seconded by Hillary Hoffmann and passed with a unanimous vote.

OLD BUSINESS

1. Chair McGranaghan provided an update about the situation with the Danville public school mascot. At the Danville School Board meeting on June 1, the Commission provided consultation to the School Board about the impact of indigenous mascots on native children and the Board heard from other community members and interested parties, before voting to reaffirm the previous decision to eliminate the indigenous-themed mascot.
2. Chair McGranaghan provided an update on the Truth and Reconciliation process. The discussions on Truth and Reconciliation process and design continue within the Commission and in the broader Abenaki communities. Discussion ensued about the scope of truth-telling and the possibility of working with an outside nonprofit to facilitate the Commission’s proposal was raised, such as the International Center for Transitional Justice, which aided the Maine Truth and Reconciliation Commission. Commissioners agreed that

more information was needed about models for Truth and Reconciliation before a plan was finalized. Jennifer Morton-Dow commented that Truth and Reconciliation is happening in many places and becoming more common, even in indigenous communities. Doug Bent expressed optimism that momentum was shifting after the legislature voted to adopt the Apology Resolution and that it seemed like a good time to begin Truth and Reconciliation talks. Jeff Benay commented that Vermont has an incredible opportunity to make history with regard to social and racial justice and that Truth and Reconciliation would be a significant step forward for indigenous people in Vermont who have been marginalized and discriminated against. Representative Tom Stevens was asked for his perspective as a member of the Vermont legislature and he expressed optimism that the Apology Resolution was the beginning of a process, not the end. Rep. Stevens noted that the legislature supports a Truth and Reconciliation Commission for indigenous people, black Americans, and other people of color who have experienced discrimination in Vermont, but expressed that the legislature is committed to listening to the Commission and working with the Commission to determine what the best political path is.

Awards

Chair McGranaghan and Vice Chair Irons presented Rep. Tom Stevens with a plaque, and a letter from the Commission thanking him for his leadership on the Eugenics Apology Resolution. Rep. Stevens also received a ceremonial turkey feather, honoring his commitment to the earth and all its people.

Chair McGranaghan and Vice Chair Irons presented Jess Robinson, PhD, Vermont State Archaeologist, with a plaque and a letter, thanking him for his many years of service, allyship and support for the Commission. Dr. Robinson also received a ceremonial turkey feather, honoring his commitment to the indigenous people of Vermont.

The meeting was adjourned at 3:35.