

**VERMONT  
COMMISSION  
ON  
NATIVE AMERICAN  
AFFAIRS**



**VCNAA Meeting Minutes  
April 19, 2011**



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

**COMMISSION CHAIRMAN**  
Luke Willard  
(802) 754-2216

**COMMISSION**  
Charlene McManis, Secretary  
Melody Walker Brook  
Dawn Macie  
Takara Matthews  
Shirly Hook  
David K. Vanslette  
Fred W. Wiseman

**Members Present:** Luke Willard, Chair; Melody Walker Brook; Charlene McManis; Nathan Pero; David Vanslette; Fred Wiseman

**Absent:** Dawn Macie; Shirly Hook; Takara Matthews

**Guests:** Gwendolyn Hallsmith; Chief April St. Francis Merrill; Fred Wiseman; John Moody; Judy Dow;

A public potluck, forum, and discussion were held at the Swanton Village complex prior to the regular VCNAA meeting. Luke welcomed guests, and the Commission turned the forum over to the public for discussion.

Luke brought the Commission meeting to order at the Swanton Village Complex at 2:00, Swanton, Vermont.

**1. Approve minutes of April 7, 2011**

The minutes were reviewed and corrections were noted. Charlene moved to accept the minutes with corrections. Melody seconded and all agreed.

**2. 13 Indigenous Grandmothers – Overview & Testimony**

Luke introduced and welcomed Gwendolyn Hallsmith. Gwen extended an invitation to all tribes to attend the first Council of All Beings that will be held all day at the Vermont State House on June 20<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup>. Prior to this event, the 13 Indigenous Grandmothers, elders and spiritual leaders from all indigenous communities throughout the world, will be convening the program and providing a blessing for the event.

The Grandmothers are touring the world with the intention of reconnecting humanity with each other and the planet and will be in Montpelier June 1st, 2nd and 3rd offering workshops to youth and adults at Vermont College. Their message is unity, and they believe that all people, including our youth, the impoverished, and the voices of nature should have a voice in legislative issues. A meeting to plan for the events will be held at City Hall in Montpelier on May 1, 2011.

**3. Heritage Week in May - How can the Commission assist and promote?**

Charlene presented information on the Abenaki Heritage Week that has not been promoted since 1994. Charlene asked the Commission and guests to encourage promotion of this kind of event for next year; especially with the fourth grade level students where Vermont history curriculum is established. Guests mentioned that, in the past, artists that presented at this event received funding from the Commission. Luke felt it would be wise to appoint someone from each community to work with a Commission sub-committee to try and create an event that includes

all tribes/bands in Vermont. Luke asked for a copy of the 1993 Proclamation. Luke quoted statute from Act 107 section 852 giving the Commission authority to address the needs of Native Americans in state policy, programs, and action; and therefore the educational needs of native children. Luke suggested that education be addressed at each monthly meeting. Charlene will be inviting representatives from all tribes to attend a meeting with a Commission sub-committee.

#### **4. St. Francis-Sokoki Band of Missisquoi Commission Report – Update**

Luke noted, that on April 7, 2011, the Commission agreed to recommend the St. Francis-Sokoki Band of the Missisquoi be recognized by the state. The Commission will now create a report to send to the Legislators. Chief April questioned Commission members who may have to recuse themselves because of tribal affiliation, and the lack of quorum. An addendum to the application will be submitted. Luke assured April that once the report has been written, there will be a quorum for approval. There was a discussion about new appointments that will soon be made since 4 members terms will expire in August. It was noted that an appointment can be made to individuals with no tribal affiliation.

#### **5. New Business**

David has sweet grass to distribute to members and guests. Nathan also has native sweet corn.

The meeting was adjourned at 3pm.

Respectfully submitted by Diane McInerney