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VERMONT

VCNAA January 8, 2019
Meeting Minutes

Members Present: Carol McGranaghan (Chair), Carol Irons (Vice Chair), Joanne Crawford, Hillary Hoffmann, Rich Holschuh, Eugene Rich

Members Absent: Andrea Brett, Jennifer Morton, Beverly Little Thunder

Guests: Jess Robinson (VDHP), Rep. Brian Cina (Chittenden 6-4), Adin Buchanan (Sexual Assault Crisis Team of Washington County), Phoebe Brown (Middlebury College)

The meeting was brought to order by Carol McGranaghan at 1:10 pm at 1 National Life Drive, Montpelier, in the Montpelier conference room.

1. Changes to Agenda

Carol McGranaghan stated that the Andrea Brett's agenda item would be postponed because Andrea could not attend the January meeting. Joanna Crawford also requested that her agenda item be expanded to include a diabetes prevention discussion. Finally, the commissioners agreed to accommodate Rep. Brian Cina whenever he arrived due to his busy legislative schedule.

2. Recognition of Guests

The guests and commissioners introduced themselves and were welcomed.

3. Approve June 12, 2019 Minutes

The commissioners agreed to accept the November minutes as written by consensus.

OLD BUSINESS

1. Cultural Regeneration Project

The cultural regeneration project is no longer associated with the VCNAA. Carol Irons is still trying to recruit more children to participate in the programs, but she stated that she may not see results this year.

2. Permitting and Legislative updates - Rich Holschuh

Rich Holschuh briefly stated that there was no new news to report on Connecticut River dam relicensing or Vermont Yankee decommissioning.

NEW BUSINESS

1. Process review for State and Federal statutes for Historic Resources - Jess Robinson

At the request of the commission, Jess Robinson gave an overview of the Vermont Division for Historic Preservation's project review process, including how the team conducts cultural resource reviews under various Federal and State statutes, including Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act, Vermont's 10 VSA Chapter 151 (Act 250), 30 VSA Chapter 5, Section 248 (Public Service Board's Certificate of Public Good), and 22 VSA Chapter 14 (Vermont Historic Preservation Act). Because the summary request was precipitated by VCNAA's preparation for introduced legislation, Dr. Robinson stressed that the State's remit does not specifically include landscapes or non-archaeological areas sacred to the Abenaki or other indigenous groups.

2. UVM Rubenstein School Land Grant project – Rich Holschuh

Rich Holschuh stated that in December seniors in the University of Vermont's (UVM) Rubenstein school presented their findings about the sale of Federal land grants to benefit the University of Vermont during a public presentation. They also produced a website that graphically depicts the Federal lands that were conferred to Vermont and subsequently sold to fund the establishment of UVM's extension service. Mr. Holschuh stated that the Rubenstein School has expressed interest in continuing the student-lead research on this topic, and it was his hope that the research would soon be acknowledged by the wider UVM community.

3. Indigenous Baby Bags and Health Disparities Advisory Council grant and Diabetes Prevention - Joanne Crawford

Joanne Crawford stated that the Vermont Department of Health and Department of Mental health received a grant to develop strategies to combat maternal depression. A portion of this grant funding is being used to create baby moss bags, songs and recordings for expecting mothers that wish to raise their newborns in an indigenous tradition. She stated that she has already recruited a volunteer group willing to create some of these items. Mrs. Crawford also stated that she is hoping that the Vermont Department of Health will receive another grant to fund a "family spirit initiative", which would involve training health professionals to be conscious of indigenous needs during home visits. Finally, as part of the National Diabetes prevention program (chronic disease division of the Vermont Department of Health), she is interested in working with Abenaki on diabetes prevention and control.

4. Representative Brian Cina (Chittenden 6-4)

Representative Cina began by stating that the previous day's statehouse representative chamber devotional featuring Abenaki woman Carol McGranaghan, Carol Irons, and Lucy Cannon-Neel was very touching and very well-received by his fellow legislators. Rep. Cina then summarized the content of the three bills he requested be drafted on behalf of VCNAA and the tribes they represent. The first requires that the Vermont Department of Forest, Parks, and Recreation replace English-only signage with text that also adds Abenaki place names where appropriate during the normal replacement/rehabilitation cycle of these signs. The second is a comprehensive religious freedom bill that includes access to sacred sites, possession of tobacco regardless of age for religious/ritual purposes, and the exemption of real property designated as sacred from taxation as are other religious sites (i.e. churches, mosques). The final bill creates a taskforce to explore and/or identify a process by which people might be able to voluntarily donate, set aside or conserve lands for Abenaki ritual purposes.

Rep. Cina was attempting to solicit legislative co-sponsors before formally submitting the bills. He suggested that VCNAA commissioners and tribal members contact their legislators and request that they co-sponsor the bills. Impressionistically, Rep. Cina stated that the signage bill seems to have generated the most positive response from fellow legislators thus far.

5. Announcements

- a. Amin Buchanan (Sexual assault crisis team of Washington County) requested that the commissioners provide him with talking points he could bring to his sexual violence prevention group regarding sexual violence in indigenous communities. A short discussion ensued thereafter.
- b. Jess Robinson reminded the commissioners that Dale Azaria (Vermont Department of Housing and Community Development General Counsel), who acted as VCNAA counsel, had recently left Vermont State government to take a job in the private sector. Dr. Robinson stated that he would let the commission know when someone had been hired to fill the position.

The meeting was adjourned at 3:45 PM.