

VERMONT
COMMISSION
ON
NATIVE
AMERICAN
AFFAIRS



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COMMISSION

Lucy Cannon-Neel, Chair
Melody Brook, Vice-Chair
Carol Irons
Cheryl O'Neil
Paul Fassler
Joelen Mulvaney
Rich Holschuh
Carol McGranaghan
Eugene Rich



VCNAA April 12, 2017
Meeting Minutes

Members Present: Lucy Cannon-Neel, Chair; Melody Brook, Vice-Chair; Carol Irons, Paul Fassler, Cheryl O'Neill, Joelen Mulvaney, Rich Holschuh and Eugene Rich.

Members Absent: Carol McGranaghan

Guests: John Moody, Sharon; 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 1:12 pm at 1 National Life Drive, Montpelier, in the Montpelier conference room.

1. Changes to the Agenda

There were no changes to the agenda.

2. Public Comment

There were no public comments.

3. Approve March 9, 2017 Minutes

Consensus was reached to approve the March 9, 2017, meeting minutes with no changes noted.

OLD BUSINESS

1. Action Plan

a. Developing Teaching Materials

Carol Irons reported that planning continues for the Abenaki Cultural Regeneration Project (ACRP) week-long retreat. Abenaki adults that are interested in the retreat can still submit applications. Ms. Irons is currently creating the curriculum for the training sessions.

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

Joelen Mulvaney stated that this action plan goal has shifted its focus from treatment and recovery of alcohol and opiate addiction to educating youth about the dangers of addictive substances. The Women's Circle group at Missisquoi is developing an anti-tobacco themed dance aimed at middle school students. The group is also in discussions to create a dance with a similar theme for high school students.

c. Improve Communication with Tribes

Rich Holschuh stated that he continues to maintain the commission Facebook page. Eugene Rich reported that the Missisquoi tribe is currently creating a shared Gmail calendar as a resource for the community. Discussion then focused on potential opportunities for the commission and/or other Abenaki tribes to join the Missisquoi calendar or to create a similar platform to assist with the dissemination of documents, commission meeting information, and other resources. Mr. Rich stated that he will inquire further about these possibilities and report back at a later meeting.

d. Native Traditions Conference

Lucy Cannon-Neel stated that the commission will sponsor another conference this year at the Boy Scouts Reservation in Eden, VT. Ms. Cannon-Neel indicated that she is planning for a two-day, overnight event with a tentative date of November 4 and 5. Discussion then focused on increasing the opportunities for hands-on activities and demonstrations, obtaining additional supplies for these demonstrations, potential grant opportunities to assist with funding, and marketing strategies.

e. CT River Hydro Re-Licensing

Rich Holschuh reported that since the last commission meeting nothing new has transpired regarding tribal involvement in TransCanada's Connecticut River dam relicensing process. John Moody reported that an entity named Great River Hydro is pursuing the purchase of the dams from TransCanada. Mr. Holschuh and Mr. Moody also reported that FirstLight, which had until recently operated several dams just over the border in Massachusetts, was purchased by a Montreal based-company.

f. Indigenous Peoples Day

Rich Holschuh stated that on Town Meeting Day, the residents of Brattleboro voted unanimously to adopt Indigenous Peoples Day as a replacement for Columbus Day. Mr. Holschuh has been collaborating with town leaders on the language in the draft resolution, the text of which he handed out to the assembled commissioners. If the town agrees to the revisions in the language, the resolution should be signed and formally adopted at the Brattleboro select board meeting on April 18, 2017.

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

This topic will be discussed in conjunction with New Business item #1.

h. Statewide Title VII

Lucy Cannon-Neel stated that she has an upcoming meeting with John Castle, Superintendent of the North Country Supervisory Union, to discuss starting Title

VII programs in that district. She will report back on the outcome of the meeting in May.

i. Native Student Recognition

Melody Brook stated that she and Carol McGranaghan will soon begin disseminating the Native Student Recognition essay contest information via Facebook, radio (courtesy of Deb Reger), emails directly to the tribes, and any other means that they think are appropriate.

2. Update on Potential Meeting with Charlie Delaney & Associates

Rich Holschuh stated that he's had a preliminary email conversation with Charlie Delaney, who responded positively to the idea of meeting about his constituency's objections to Indigenous Peoples Day. Mr. Holschuh and Joelen Mulvaney will work together to coordinate further with Mr. Delaney and attend the meeting once a date and location are selected.

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

Melody Brook reported that she sent an email indicating the commission's interest in holding a joint meeting with the NHCAA at some point in the future, but received no response from them. John Moody stated he had attended the NHCNAA meeting held on April 11, 2017, in Durham, NH and relayed the commission's interest in a joint meeting. He received positive feedback at the suggestion. Paul Fassler and Eugene Rich will work to further coordinate with their NH counterparts.

NEW BUSINESS

1. Legislative Bills Update

Commissioners discussed the three legislative bills they supported this legislative session; the Indigenous Peoples Day bill (H. 488 & S.83), Vermont Native American Scholarship Program funded with specialty Vermont Native American License Plates bill (H. 399), and Exempting Sacred Lands held by a State-recognized tribe from taxation bill (H. 478). None of these bills made it through the legislative cross-over, and therefore will not pass this year. Commissioners expressed hope for further progress on these bills in the next year of the biennium.

Adjourn 2:42 p.m.