

VERMONT
COMMISSION
ON
NATIVE
AMERICAN
AFFAIRS



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COMMISSION
Carol McGranaghan, Chair
Carol Irons, Vice Chair
Andrea Brett, Secretary
Cheryl Frobose
Paul Fassler
Rich Holschuh
Eugene Rich
Jennifer Morton-Dow



VCNAA November 14, 2018
Meeting Minutes

Members Present: Carol McGranaghan (Chair), Carol Irons, Paul Fassler, Rich Holschuh, Eugene Rich, Andrea Brett (Secretary), Cheryl Frobose, Jennifer Morton

Members Absent: None

Guests: Jess Robinson, VDHP.

The meeting was brought to order by Carol McGranaghan at 1:05 pm at 1 National Life Drive, Montpelier, in the Montpelier conference room.

1. Changes to Agenda

Commissioners agreed to add the discussion of tribal territories and a discussion of grants related to a heritage trail under Old Business.

2. Approve October 10, 2018 Minutes

Carol Irons requested that one correction be made to the unapproved October minutes. After this correction was noted, Paul Fassler moved to approve the minutes with that correction. Carol Irons Seconded. All commissioners agreed by consensus.

3. Housekeeping Rules

Carol McGranaghan suggested that as chair she should formally recognize speakers that aren't commissioners before they are allowed to address the commission outside of the public comment portion of the meeting. She suggested that if they are not formally recognized, they will be asked to remain silent. Carol further suggested that if a member of the public continues with their disruptions, they will be warned and then asked to leave the meeting. Commissioners agreed with the general approach but wanted to check with VCNAA's council about their potential rights and limitations in such a circumstance.

4. Recognition of Guests

There were no invited guests to recognize.

OLD BUSINESS

1. Election of Officers – Vice-Chair Candidates and Process

After the commissioners reviewed the minutes from previous years' meetings and the conversations that took place related to limiting elected officials to people of Native ancestry, the commissioners realized that the previous rule pertained only to the office of Chair. That being clarified, Eugene Rich nominated Carol Irons to be Vice-Chair. Paul Fassler nominated Rich Holschuh as Vice-Chair. After recognizing the two nominees, Carol McGranaghan asked who was in favor of Carol Irons as Vice-Chair. All commissioners except for Paul Fassler voted in the affirmative for Carol Irons. Rich Holschuh received Paul Fassler's vote. Carol Irons was voted into the Vice-Chair position by majority.

2. Action Plan

a. Commission's Responsibilities

Several commissioners asked that this item be added to the agenda because they had received numerous requests for help from Vermonters with issues that the commissioners felt were not appropriate or feasible for VCNAA to address. After some discussion centering around one individual in particular, the commission agreed through consensus to have Carol McGranaghan draft a letter expressing their sympathy but stating that the help the person requested was outside of VCNAA's authority.

b. Abenaki Cultural Regeneration Project

Although Carol Irons stated there were some problems collecting materials and documentation for the Lake Champlain Basin program grant, it is now being written and she was confident that the grant's 2-page pre-proposal would be completed by the November 26 deadline. She wished to make clear in her application that the Cultural Revitalization Project is up and running and is not merely aspirational. She hoped that that fact would work in the project's favor. In order to assist Carol and the commission, Andrea Brett passed out copies of the grant guidelines.

c. Tribal Inter-Communication

Eugene stated that inter-tribal communication has been very good recently; particularly among and between the chiefs. Mr. Rich stated that he is working with Chief Don Stevens to have the Missisquoi listed on the registry of tribes allowed to possess feathers from birds of prey.

3. Status Report

a. CT River Hydro Re-Licensing

Rich Holschuh stated that there is nothing new to report this month.

b. VT Public Utilities Commission – Vermont Yankee

Rich Holschuh stated that there was nothing substantive to report this month.

4. New Hampshire and Vermont Joint Commission Meeting & Agenda

The New Hampshire Native American Affairs commission expressed interest in having another joint meeting with VCNAA in the near-future. The commissioners agreed that a meeting in April would better accommodate their schedule and list of priorities for the upcoming legislative session. They stated that they would follow up with the New Hampshire commission to see if an April meeting was acceptable.

5. Territorial Maps

At the previous meeting, the issue of territorial boundaries was raised after Jess Robinson responded to a question related to tribal contacts. After some discussion, it was determined that defining hard boundaries for each state-recognized tribe was not something VCNAA or the representative tribes wanted to pursue. Rather, in cases where territories were a concern, it was decided that a representative from each tribe should be contacted.

NEW BUSINESS

1. Goals and New Directions Follow-Up – Commission Support Environmental Actions & Events

Jennifer Morton requested that this item be discussed because she noted that there are a number of environmental initiatives or actions that seek Native voices, input, or participation, and she was wondering if this was something with which VCNAA could or should get involved. While noting that generally the program would have to be compatible with VCNAA's statutory language, Paul Fassler stated that it is incumbent upon the organization to brief VCNAA on their initiative(s) and why they seek Native participation. Carol Irons further noted that some organizations seek Native participation only in a token manner so that they appear to have a diverse constituency but really don't want or appreciate Native input.

2. Educational Collaboration with Middlebury College

Rich Holschuh stated that he discussed the potential conference of a Middlebury College honorary degree to Jeanne Brink with anthropology professor Marybeth Nevins. As part of that discussion, Mr. Holschuh encouraged Dr. Nevins to expand their Native American outreach. He suggested that Middlebury could offer workshops, archive or exhibit spaces, or other programs. Dr. Nevins expressed interest in pursuing the discussion further.

3. Update on VTC Visit

Paul Fassler stated that he traveled to Vermont Technical College (VTC) to meet with Rachael Krevetski to discuss potential partnerships with VTC. Rachael is a laboratory technician and does not have overall authority for space allocation, use, or programming, but she is willing to work with and advocate for VCNAA and the tribes they represent with VTC, should VCNAA wish to pursue the partnership. The commissioners all expressed interest in moving forward.

4. Update on Missing Abenaki Recognition Items / Statehouse Display

Chief Don Stevens contacted VCNAA to let them know that plans are near-finalized for an exhibit space near the stairs at the Statehouse dedicated to the four recognized tribes. While the commissioners noted that this was positive news, several expressed frustrations that their efforts have essentially been ignored by the State Curator's Office in favor of communication directly with Chief Stevens. The commissioners agreed that they should draft a letter to the State Curator's Office seeking clarification about the exhibit and the items proposed for it.

5. Educational Presentations in VT Schools

Carol McGranaghan and Carol Irons stated that they travelled to Whitingham to provide Native educational programming to elementary students after a request was made by a teacher at that school. They raised this issue because while there they became aware of other Native individuals that were asking for significant sums of money to offer presentations at schools. They both felt that this was unethical. While they stated that reasonable requests for travel money are acceptable, they were upset that some were apparently regarding Native educational outreach as a money-making endeavor.

Jennifer Morton followed up by stating that she was also concerned that the people providing the education were qualified or knowledgeable enough to be offering the programs. Eugene Rich stated that he will ask the tribes if individuals would be willing and able to volunteer to provide educational programming to schools in their region.

6. Racial Equity Panel, VT Network for Domestic & Sexual Violence

Andrea Brett was appointed to the State's Racial Equality Panel and was also asked to be on a panel for the Vermont Network for Domestic and Sexual Violence. The commissioners congratulated her on the appointments.

7. Public Comment

There were no public comments.

8. Announcements

There were no announcements.

The meeting was adjourned at 3:26 PM.