

VERMONT
COMMISSION
ON
NATIVE AMERICAN
AFFAIRS



VCNAA Meeting Minutes
Wednesday, February 11th, 2015

Members Present: Lucy Cannon-Neel, Chair; Jeffrey Benay, Vice-Chair; Charlene McManis, Secretary; Walker Brook; Shirly Hook (by phone); and Trudy Ann Parker.

Guests: Peggy Fullerton, Koasek Traditional Band of the Koas; Carol Irons; John Moody, Sharon; Donald H. Parker, Lunenburg; Dale Azaria, VT DHCD; Charles D. Megeso; Annina Seiler, VT DHCD.

The meeting was brought to order by Chair Lucy Cannon-Neel at 1:16 pm at 133 State Street, Room 021.

1. Revisions/Changes

There were no additions or deletions to the agenda.

2. Public Comment

Lucy Cannon-Neel opened the meeting to public comment.

Peggy Fullerton, on behalf of the Voices of the Koas, extended an offer to the Commission for the signing group to perform traditional Abenaki songs at the opening of the March meeting. The Commission gladly accepted and thanked Peggy for the honor.

John Moody expressed strong disappointment in the process regarding the Commission's review of the application from the Koasek Traditional Band. He felt that the process lacked transparency and that actions were contrary to the spirit and purpose of the Commission. He noted that he would withhold final comments until the final report is made available to the public.

3. Cultural Environmental Conference – Charlie D. Megeso

Charles D. Megeso presented the Commission with an agenda for a proposed cultural and environmental conference. Charlene asked for specifics regarding the role of the Commission. Charles explained that he would serve in partnership with the Commission as the conference coordinator but that the Commission would be critical in handling logistics, including location, date and time, and in advertising and promoting the event. Jeffrey noted that the Commission has already taken steps, initiated at the January meeting, to engage youth and include their voices in the discussions of the Commission.

4. Approving January 11th minutes

Jeffrey Benay moved to delay the approval of the January 11, 2015 minutes allowing time for all Commissioners to review the draft minutes. Charlene McManis seconded and a roll call vote was



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COMMISSION

Lucy Cannon-Neel, Chair
Jeffrey Benay, Vice-Chair
Charlene McManis, Secretary
Andrew Beaupré
Walker Brook
Shirly Hook
Mark Mitchell
Trudy Ann Parker

taken. Ayes: Charlene McManis, Jeffrey Benay, Shirly Hook, Trudy Ann Parker, Walker Brook, and Lucy Cannon-Neel. Motion carried.

NEW BUSINESS

Lucy Cannon-Neel shared an email she received from Nathan Pero dated 2/10/15. Lucy noted that the communication had been shared with Dale Azaria, DHCD General Counsel who forwarded the materials to the Office of the Attorney General, which reviewed the email and retained a record but did not interpret it as a threat.

Lucy shared the formal letter of resignation from Patricia Johnson. Jeffrey Benay made a motion to accept the letter of resignation from Commissioner Patricia Johnson. Walker Brook seconded and a roll call vote was taken. Ayes: Charlene McManis, Jeffrey Benay, Shirly Hook, Trudy Ann Parker, Walker Brook, and Lucy Cannon-Neel. Motion carried.

1. Danville “Honoring Indian Joe”

Lucy raised the issue of the Danville High School mascot which seeks to honor “Indian Joe.” Following a lengthy discussion, members agreed that this is not an issue that the Commission needs to involve itself in and that though they appreciate the student’s interest in Abenaki history they cannot support the choice in mascot. Jeffrey agreed to write a letter to that effect, he will also offer an educational presentation to the students and share the draft with Commission members.

OLD BUSINESS

1. Action Plans

Members noted that this should be a standing agenda item to report on progress made on action plan items. Walker Brook provided members with general research relating to the rates of Native Americans pursuing college level education in Vermont. He continued that he would draft a letter to Vermont tribes in order to identify the level of interest within the communities before reaching out to potential College and University partners.

2. Abenaki Heritage Gathering

Jeffrey shared a recording of the 1993 performance at the Flynn Theater, which was part of the Abenaki Cultural Heritage Week, with Commission members. In regards to this year’s Abenaki Heritage Gathering at the Maritime Museum, Shirly reminded the Commission that a letter or email communicating the Commission’s support of the event is still needed. Charlene will send an email to Eloise communicating the Commissions support. She also noted that work continues on publicity and refining of the timeline.

NEW BUSINESS

2. Announcements

- Lucy Canon-Neel announced the Wabanaki Confederacy Gathering will be hosted this year at Shelburne Farms, August 19th-22nd. The Commission expressed an interest in supporting and participating in the organization of the event.

- Lucy asked that Commission members send her recommendations for the vacant Commission seat. The members generally agreed that they would like to recommend Carol Irons for the position.
- Jeffrey Benay shared with the Commission information regarding the proposed decision of Franklin County schools to grant Columbus Day as a holiday to its students. It was recommended that a letter be written which offers to provide the local leaders with a presentation on the subject and the member's general disapproval of the proposal.
- Lastly, members noted an interest in opening the lines of communication between the commission and the governor's office and requested that DHP staff investigate the opportunity for Commissioners to meet with the governor.

3. Next Meeting

The next meeting will be on March 11th, 2015 in the Basement Room 021, 133 State Street, Montpelier.

4. Adjourn

The meeting adjourned at 3:38 pm.

Respectfully submitted,
Annina Seiler