

DRAFT

VERMONT
COMMISSION
ON
NATIVE
AMERICAN
AFFAIRS



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COMMISSION

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Walker Brook
Trudy Ann Parker
Carol Irons
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Paul Fassler
Joelen Mulvaney
Rich Holschuh



VCNAA April 13, 2016
Meeting Minutes

Members Present: Jeffrey Benay, Vice-Chair; Carol Irons, Cheryl O'Neill, Joelen Mulvaney, Paul Fassler, Walker Brook, Rich Holschuh and Trudy Ann Parker.

Members Absent: Lucy Cannon-Neel, Chair

Guests: Kate Kanelstein, Vermont Workers' Center; Will Bennington, Vermont Workers' Center; Charlie Megeso, Nulhegan John Moody, Sharon; Donald Parker, Lunenburg; Deb Reger, Community Radio; Duncan Matthewson, CCV; Jess Robinson, VDHP; Jenni Lavoie; VDHP.

The meeting was brought to order by Vice-Chair Jeff Benay at 1:05 pm at 133 State Street, Room 410.

1. Changes to the Agenda

There were no changes to the agenda.

2. Public Comment

Kate Kanelstein and Will Bennington, of the Vermont Workers' Center, joined the meeting. They gave a brief overview of the work of the Vermont Workers' Center and encouraged feedback from the commission and tribes, on ways they can be more supportive and helpful to the Native Community. Additionally, they extended an invitation to the upcoming Vermont People's Convention, which will be held on April 30 and May 1 at the Montpelier High School.

John Moody discussed the proposed Iberdrola wind project in Southern Vermont. The project, previously thought that interest was dwindling on, has regained momentum due to the renewed Federal tax credit for renewable energy.

Speaking for Lucy Cannon-Neel who was absent, Jeff Benay advised commission members of an Elnu Tribe teenager who was recently awarded a scholarship to Dartmouth College. Consensus was reached amongst commission members to draft a letter of congratulations to the teen. Walker Brook will draft the letter.

3. Approve March 19, 2016 Minutes

Consensus was reached to approve the March 19, 2016 minutes with one noted change.

OLD BUSINESS

1. Action Plan

a. Developing Teaching Materials

Carol Irons advised that the committee is still reaching out to potential interested parties and is working with the Nulhegan Chief. Jeff Benay mentioned potential grant opportunities he would like to work with the committee on. Joelen Mulvaney advised that the Missisquoi are currently working on curriculum racism.

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

Joelen Mulvaney advised that the Vermont Department of Health is looking to put a treatment facility in St. Albans. The committee is interested in having a satellite office in Swanton that has a focus on culturally relevant treatments. Additionally, the committee is working on an application for a potential grant opportunity.

c. Statewide Title VII

Jeff Benay advised that in recent talks with Lucy Cannon-Neel, she's advised that applications are being completed to be sent in by the beginning of May. This topic was tabled until Lucy's return.

d. Improve Communications with Tribes

Commission members noted the increase in communications with the tribes. Jeff Benay noted these increases were helped by Deb Reger's radio programs, Rich Holschuh's maintenance of the Facebook page and the emails to the tribes with meeting agendas and meeting minutes.

e. Native Traditions Conference

Lucy Cannon-Neel sent a handout in her absence of the grant recently awarded to help fund the Native Traditions Conference from the Lake Champlain Basin Program. Discussion focused on the need to for the commission to develop policies and procedures specifically in the handling of grants. Charlie Megeso spoke of the good work of the committee in securing the venue and lining up potential speakers and guests. Jess Robinson volunteered for the event to be included on the Archaeology Month calendar if there was interest.

f. Bullying and Harassment in Vermont Schools Study

As a newly created action item, Joelen Mulvaney advised that the goal of this committee is get together during the summer and continue their work through next year. Tentative discussions of involving the Vermont Workers' Center have just started.

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Jeff Benay moved to break from 2:33pm – 2:55pm

2. CT River Hydro Re-Licensing

Rich Holschuh provided a brief summary of the re-licensing process, his outreach to the state recognized tribes, Speaker of the House and Governor. He also advised commission members that TransCanada has put all of their Northeast properties on the market, to which the Governor has formed a working group to look at the feasibility of the state potentially purchasing some of these properties. Discussion focused on the feedback from the tribes and the potential legality of the commission becoming more involved in the process. Jess Robinson advised it would be wise to consult with Dale Azaria, Legal Counsel for the VDHP, regarding this topic and the legality of the commission's involvement. Rich will consult with Dale and this topic will be put on the next month's agenda to discuss further. John Moody provided commission members with a handout regarding TransCanada placing their Northeast properties for sale.

a. Discussion Regarding Joining NHCNAA for a meeting

Paul Fassler discussed a potential meeting with the New Hampshire Commission on Native American Affairs. Commission members thought that would be a wise idea.

NEW BUSINESS

1. Maritime Museum Heritage Day

Jeff Benay discussed that there was confusion if the commission were still going to be actively participating in this event. Discussion focused on ways to support this event, while the commission also organizes the Native Traditions Conference. Rich Holschuh advised that he is the administrator of the Museum Heritage Day Facebook page, formally run by Rebecca Bailey. Consensus was reached that Rich would assist this event with marketing through the Facebook page.

2. Discussion - Dr. Bill Roberts, Cultural Recovery Support

Jenni Lavoie advised she had received an email from Dr. Roberts, inquiring if there was any interest from the prior conversation he had with the commission. In Lucy's absence, Jenni advised that Lucy had indicated a letter be drafted to Dr. Roberts advising that there did not seem to be interest at this time. Consensus was reached and Paul Fassler volunteered to draft the letter.

3. Discussion – Commission Secretary

Jess Robinson explained to commission members his idea of a commission communication secretary. Commission correspondence has been on the rise and he thought it may be useful to have a point person for communications. Jeff Benay and commission members advised that their current process of having a commission member volunteer to draft a letter is working well currently.

4. Announcements

There were no announcements.

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Adjourn

Respectfully submitted,
Jenni Lavoie