



**VCNAA October 10, 2018
Meeting Minutes**

**VERMONT
COMMISSION
ON
NATIVE
AMERICAN
AFFAIRS**



vcnaa.vermont.gov

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

Members Present: Carol McGranaghan, Vice Chair, Carol Irons, Paul Fassler, Rich Holschuh, Eugene Rich, Andrea Brett

Members Absent: Cheryl O'Neil, Jennifer Morton

Guests: John Moody; Jess Robinson, VDHP.

The meeting was brought to order by Carol McGranaghan at 1:15 pm at 1 National Life Drive, Montpelier, in the Montpelier conference room.

1. Changes to Agenda

Because Carol McGranaghan received a response from the commission about the reappointment process, she requested that the letter be read out in full and entered into the minutes during the *New Business* portion of the meeting.

Eugene Rich requested time during the New Business portion of the meeting to discuss the Vermont Racial Equality Committee and a Vermont Technical College opportunity that had been offered to the commission.

2. Approve September 5, 2018 Minutes

After requesting several changes or qualifications to the unproved minutes, Eugene Rich requested that the September 5, 2018 minutes be accepted as amended. The commissioners agreed through consensus.

3. Recognition of Invited Guests

There were no invited guests at this month's meeting.

OLD BUSINESS

1. Election of Officers

Carol Irons nominated Carol McGranaghan for Chair. Eugene Rich seconded the motion. All of the present commissioners voted in the affirmative.

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Paul Fassler originally nominated Rich Holschuh as vice-chair, but Carol Irons requested a clarification. She was under the assumption that all of the officers should be of Abenaki descent unless there were not enough suitable Abenaki candidates on the commission. After some discussion, the commissioners agreed to table the election of the Vice-Chair until the following meeting so that they could conduct more research and have a more informed discussion.

Carol McGranaghan then nominated Andrea Brett as Secretary and Paul Fassler seconded the motion. The commissioners present voted in the affirmative.

2. Action Plan

a. Abenaki Cultural Regeneration Project / Grant Money

Carol Irons stated that the people that have participated in past Abenaki Cultural Regeneration Project events and retreats have already begun to spread their knowledge outward into their respective communities. Mrs. Irons stated that if she could shepherd one more group of adults through the program next year she would feel that the overall initiative was a success. At that point, she was hopeful that it could be taken over by others.

Mrs. Irons then stated that raising money continues to be a problem, but the offer of the Northwoods Stewardship Center to be their grant administrator solves one large hurdle to accepting grant money and soliciting donations.

b. Tribal Inter-Communication

Eugene Rich stated that Roger Longtoe Sheehan (El Nu tribal chief) visited Missisquoi, spent the night, and participated in several activities. Mr. Rich stated that it was a very good inter-tribal experience. Mr. Rich also stated that upcoming events planned between Mr. Rich, Don Stevens and Roger Longtoe are also very encouraging. Mr. Rich then noted that a 15-year-old Missisquoi Abenaki tribal member is now in charge of tribe's Facebook, Instagram, and twitter pages. Mr. Rich thought that it was great for bringing a younger sensibility to their social media presence while also bringing young people into tribal life. Mr. Rich suggested that the other tribes establish a similar and varied virtual presence so that each tribe can cross-post and share in each other's activities, concerns and accomplishments.

c. Indigenous Peoples' Day

Rich Holschuh stated that the town of Hartford is voting tomorrow (October 11) to adopt Indigenous Peoples' Day as a replacement for Columbus Day. The measure was expected to pass.

Mr. Holschuh stated that he also attempted to elicit a comment about Indigenous Peoples' Day from Burlington Mayor Miro Weinberger, but he has not received a response. Eugene Rich stated that wanted to follow up on that in the coming year.

A formal proclamation was issued by Governor Scott declaring Monday, October 8, 2018 Indigenous Peoples' Day again this year. The commissioners were thankful and noted that there was some mention of it in the popular press.

3. Status Report

a. CT River Hydro Re-Licensing

Rich Holschuh stated that there was nothing new to report at this time.

b. VT Public Utilities Commission – Vermont Yankee

Rich Holschuh met with the president of *Northstar* two weeks ago about possible cultural mitigation work should the Nuclear Regulatory Commission agree to the sale and the Vermont Public Utility Commission concurs. Otherwise, Mr. Holschuh stated that planning is still is on hold.

4. New Hampshire and Vermont Joint Commission meeting & Agenda

Plans for a joint meeting have not been made yet but the commissioners stated that they are still in favor of a meeting and that planning should commence soon.

NEW BUSINESS

1. Goals and New Directions Follow-Up

Eugene Rich stated that Rachael Krevetski from Vermont Technical College (VTC) reached out him to alert him that VTC has space that they would potentially like to offer to the Abenaki for a mural. Additional space may also be available for exhibits and VTC may have staff and funding to facilitate it. Mr. Rich suggested that a representative should go to VTC to discuss this offer more thoroughly and the commission agreed.

2. Discussion of Endorsement of Presentations by the Commission

With regard to people soliciting VCNAA's endorsement for activities, several commissioners suggested that a significant amount of lead time should be allotted for VCNAA to make their decision. Eugene Rich also stated that the person seeking an endorsement submit or present to VCNAA a summary of the presentation to that they can understand the topic and perspectives they are endorsing,

3. Update on the Process for Applications

Carol McGranaghan stated that she received a written response for the Governor's office regarding the Commission's concerns about the recent appointment/reappointment process. She read the letter aloud and then asked that it be entered into the minutes. It is reproduced in full below:

Dear Carol: Thank you for reaching out to discuss the appointment process for recent reappointments by the Governor to the Vermont Commission on Native American Affairs (Commission), on which you serve.

Foremost, thank you for your service to the Commission. We are grateful for the passion and experience you bring to the table, and value your expertise on such an important topic. Our understanding from your letter is you feel the Governor's Office has not been consulting with the Vermont Division for Historic Preservation (Division) on recent appointments/reappointments to the Commission, ultimately leading to confusion about whether the process was meeting the statutory requirements.

It is important to make clear, all appointments made by Governor Scott were made from the recommendation of the State Historic Preservation Officer, Laura Trieschmann. For reference, we have enclosed a memo submitted from the Division which details the recommendation of the four recent candidates for reappointment.

In the most recent round of appointments, each of the four applicants, including yourself, were current members of the Commission, and were familiar enough to Ms. Trieschmann that she felt she had enough information to compile recommendations for the Governor's consideration. As you are likely aware, there is one member not seeking reappointment at this time. To fill this seat, the Governor's Office will share any applications sent to this official with the Division, in order that the Division can move forward with the statutorily required vetting and interviewing process to determine a recommendation for appointment to the Governor.

Additionally, during the period of time between the end date of the prior term, and the first date of a reappointment, the member is considered to be an active member of the Commission until a successor has been appointed and qualified, or in this case, the member has been reappointed or replaced.

Thank you for expressing your concerns to the Governor's Office, and again, I am pleased to assure you all statutory requirements are being met at this time and there has not been a change in process. We hope this communication has helped ease your concerns, and we will work to eliminate any factors that may have caused confusion in the first place.

Thank you again for your service.

Sincerely,

Kendal Smith

Director of Policy Development and Legislative Affairs

4. Update on Missing Abenaki Recognition Items / Statehouse Display

Although all items except for the large wampum belt have been rediscovered at the statehouse or in the state's archives, Carol McGranaghan said that there is still no firm date or plan regarding their display at the statehouse. She has plans to follow up again with the Statehouse curator.

5. Cultural Heritage Trail / Center – Grant Money

Carol Irons stated that Jim Brangan from the Lake Champlain Basin Program seemed receptive to the idea of awarding grant funds for a Native American Heritage Trail, and potentially for other initiatives. The commissioners agreed to discuss this opportunity at the next meeting.

6. Andrew Beaupre

Andrew Beaupre did not attend the meeting.

7. Public Comment

Eugene Rich stated that he was contacted by the Speaker of the House about an appointment she is charged with making to a commission on racial equality. Mr. Rich was under the assumption that the speaker intends to turn the appointment over to the VCNAA, and for them to make an appropriate choice that will represent Natives on the commission. This item will be discussed further at the next meeting.

As part of a nation-wide project highlighting indigenous people, a billboard was designed by an artist for display in Vermont. Because Vermont does not allow roadside billboards, the billboard is being presented as outdoor art on the grounds of the Vermont College of Fine Art in Montpelier. Some commissioners expressed their surprise that it was produced without any consultation with Vermont's indigenous community. Several commissioners stated that they want to go view the piece.

8. Announcements

None

The meeting was adjourned at 3:36 PM.