

VERMONT
COMMISSION
ON
NATIVE
AMERICAN
AFFAIRS



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Eugene Rich
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VCNAA March 13, 2019
Meeting Minutes

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

Members Absent: Jennifer Morton

Guests: Jess Robinson (VDHP), Joanne Crawford (Alnóbiawi), Alice Maynard (Act 264 advisory board), Ward Nial (Department of Mental Health standing committee on children and families), Matt Wolf (Act 264 advisory board)

The meeting was brought to order by Carol McGranaghan at 1:08 pm at 1 National Life Drive, Montpelier, in the Montpelier conference room.

1. Changes to Agenda

Commissioners agreed to move the Act 264 discussion to the first item in New Business

2. Approve November 14, 2018 Minutes

Carol Irons asked for a single change to an item in the minutes. Paul Fassler moved to adopt the minutes as amended. Andrea Brett seconded the motion. All other commissioners concurred.

3. Recognition of Guests

Carol McGranaghan (Chair) requested that all the commissioners and guests introduce themselves. Afterward, all the guests were welcomed to the meeting.

OLD BUSINESS

1. Abenaki Cultural Regeneration Project

Carol Irons stated that she and a colleague had completed their grant application to the First Nations granting agency and are hopeful that they will be successful. If the grant money is secured, Mrs. Irons plans to host a week of programming in June at the Northwoods Stewardship Center. If they do not receive any grant money, the programming will likely be limited to three days.

2. Tribal Inter-Communication

Eugene Rich stated that inter-tribal communication continues to be quite good between tribal members and the chiefs. Mr. Rich stated that now the most pressing concern is to engage the hundreds of youth and adolescents of Abenaki descent that do not care to become tribal members or engage in tribal activities. Mr. Rich stated that the Missisquoi have debated crafting a Facebook message that engages them through their potential curiosity about their ancestry and traditions. They have also discussed gifting a drum to Abenaki youth in the hope that it will encourage them to participate in tribal activities.

3. Proposed Legislation

Commissioners discussed legislation of interest to or introduced on behalf of VCNAA and the tribes it represents. Rich Holschuh stated that H.3 (An act relating to ethnic and social equity studies standards for public schools) had passed out of committee and was going to be voted on in the House that afternoon. H. 119 (An act relating to Indigenous Peoples' Day) was being discussed in committee that afternoon and Mr. Rich was hopeful that it would be moved out of committee for a vote. Mr. Rich was also cautiously optimistic that S. 68 (An act relating to Indigenous Peoples' Day), the Senate counterpart, would be moved out of committee for a vote.

4. 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 the Vermont Yankee nuclear power plant has been officially purchased by the Northstar group for decommissioning. Per the request of the El Nu and Missisquoi tribes, Northstar has hired Goodwin and Associates to conduct an archaeological investigation on portions of the property during the upcoming field season. Mr. Holschuh was invited to participate in a coordinated tour of the facility grounds on Friday and he planned to attend.

c. Statehouse Display

Carol McGranaghan stated that Carol Irons and she had been placed on the Statehouse exhibit planning panel. Andrea Brett asked if all of the tribal chiefs had been contacted about the exhibit? She expressed frustration in how the exhibit planners and panelists had been chosen. Paul Fassler requested that the panel put together a summary of the exhibit opening's date, time and other details so that it could be announced on social media.

5. Native American Support for Inmates

Commissioners still needed to follow up on this item.

6. Abenaki License Plate

Although this item is not going to be pursued by VCNAA this year, commissioners briefly discussed the possibility of utilizing a small percentage of Vermont lottery money for Native scholarships.

7. A Screening of Dawnland

Lane Fury asked if there was any entity related to VCNAA that had liability insurance and could co-sponsor the event. The venue where she hoped to screen the film was requesting that the event have liability insurance. The commissioners were curious as to why the venue, which presumably regularly hosts community events, would request insurance in this instance. Carol McGranaghan stated that she would follow up with Lane Fury.

NEW BUSINESS

1. An Introduction to Act 264

Alice Maynard (Act 264 advisory board), Ward Nial (Department of Mental Health standing committee on children and families), and Matt Wolf (Act 264 advisory board) came to the meeting to give a short summary of Act 264 in the hope that they could inform their constituents. Act 264 was passed 30 years ago. In recognition of that date, the guests were taking the opportunity to educate constituents about the provisions of the act, which are various but include the right of eligible Vermonters to have the coordination of services through a dedicated Coordinated Services Plan, and support from a Parent Representative who understands the process of living with a child with special needs. The commissioners thanked the guests for their thoughtful presentation and assured them that they would pass on the information they provided to their constituents.

2. Discussion of Abenaki Interstate or Rest Stop Welcome Signs

Andrea Brett noted that a number of interstate signs in Vermont have French bilingual text and she wondered if the commission should advocate for Abenaki text on select signs as well. The commission noted that it would probably be a long, bureaucratic process to get wording on interstate signage, and that placing welcome signs or plaques in rest areas might be a better avenue to pursue. The commissioners agreed to follow up on the latter initiative.

3. Proclamation for Abenaki Heritage Week

Fred Wiseman asked the VCNAA if they could ask the governor to proclaim a week in June Abenaki Heritage Week, as had been done in the past. Rich Holschuh agreed to fill out the forms to request the proclamation.

4. Commission Seat Application Review

The commissioners inquired of Jess Robinson if there have been any applications to join VCNAA submitted recently. Jess stated that he had not heard of any applications being received at the Office of Boards and Commissions, but that he would check again for them.

5. Public Comment

Joanne Crawford stated that she has recently had problems with applications and appointments on the State Place standing committee

8. Announcements

There were several public announcements, including:

- an El Nu are sponsored a fishing event at Turner's Falls in June,
- the Chaffee Museum in Rutland are hosting an upcoming exhibit on Abenaki materials, and Carol McGranaghan and Carol Irons loaned some items to them.
- The Strolling of the Heifers Slow Living Summit is hosting Winona LaDuke of the White Earth Anishinaabe
- The Lake Champlain Maritime Museum Abenaki Heritage Weekend is occurring in June
- The UMASS-Amherst and Dartmouth Powwows are occurring later in the spring.

The meeting was adjourned at 3:25 PM.