



VERMONT
COMMISSION
ON
NATIVE
AMERICAN
AFFAIRS



vcnaa.vermont.gov

COMMISSION
Richard Holschuh, Chair
Douglas Bent, Vice Chair
Melody Walker Mackin, Secretary
Jeffrey Benay
Hillary Hoffmann
Patrick Lamphere
Deborah Reger
Open Seat
Open Seat

VCNAA MEETING MINUTES

Approved May 10, 2023

April 12, 2023

1:00 P.M. – 4:00 P.M.

Calvin Coolidge Conference Room
6th Floor Davis Building, National Life
Montpelier, VT
and Virtually

Members present: Richard Holschuh, Chair; Douglas Bent, Vice Chair (online); Melody Walker Mackin, Secretary (online); Jeffrey Benay; Daniel Coutu; Patrick Lamphere (online); Deborah Reger

Absent: none

Guests: Tom Fennario (journalist aPTN), Jess Robinson (Vermont Division for Historic Preservation), Max Krueger (VT Department of Housing and Community Development Legal Counsel), David Savoie (CBC-Radio), Morgan Lamphere (Missisquoi), Mollie Klepack Flanagan (Green MT Club), Jane Barber (Abenaki, author), Shirly Hook (Chief – Koasek), Ben Gray (VT Law & Graduate School), Shalini Suryanarayana (Office of Racial Equity), Dale Manning (Nulhegan), Starla Thompson (Potawatomi tribe, aiding representative Tristan Roberts); Kate Frederick (VT Law & Graduate School)

Meeting called to order at 1:07 pm

1. Commissioners and Guests Sign In

2. Meeting Protocols and Expectations

Protocols announced include comments by guests will be at end of meeting, Be Kind and Civil.

3. Changes to the Agenda

As guest presenters arrive, we will allow their presentations.

4. Approval of February Minutes

Discussion was made about February minutes. including comments by legal counsel. Dan Coutu suggested minutes not be used as a diversion. Motion was made to take a letter from Mr. Gill out of minutes and seconded. The vote was passed 5-2 to leave minutes as they are. Footnote of objection amendment was added by minority opposition to this motion and noted as footnote because minutes were used as a diversion.

5. Approval of March Meeting Minutes

March Meeting minutes were approved with motion by Jeff, seconded, with all members approving.

6. Electing New Secretary, Melody Stepping Down

New Secretary was nominated and approved by motion by Doug Bent, seconded and approved by consensus to be Deb Reger.

NEW BUSINESS

7. VT Law & Graduate School (VLGS) landgrabu.org presentation (Kate Frederick) (15 min)

Presentation by Ben Gray, Sec.: NALSA (Native American Law Student Association) is a student-run organization supporting Native American law students and allies. They had a fundraiser for Koasek of Koas Abenaki and hold symposiums. They also have full scholarships for Abenaki and Native students at Vermont Law School. write: nalsa2022-2023@vermontlaw.edu for more info.

Presentation by Kate Frederick: She has written on the Land Grant Act that was written by Justin Morrill. (www.landgrabu.org). The Justin Morrill Homestead in Strafford, Vermont is run by the state and does not have the background information about the Land Grant Act and how that was used as a so-called land -grab and displaced the Original people when it was used to establish colleges and institutions we have today. Kate asks questions in her writings and is seeking support. kcfredricks@gmail.com A new state “Historic Sites Chief” will be looking into providing more information at that site that gives the whole history. The University of Vermont was given land originally to build the institute under this law.

OLD BUSINESS

8. Native Legislative Caucus 2023 discussions, bills in motion

Discussion was had on some of the bills from the weekly meeting of “Legislative Caucus” run by Rep. Sims. The Tribal Tax Law is being looked at. (passed 2022) Changes to trapping laws have been tabled. Effort to amend the tobacco law to include use for spiritual practices is being added.

9. Meeting with Governor Scott 3/8/23 – Report

Meeting with Gov. Scott included the Proclamation for Abenaki Heritage Week to be the first week in May. Chief Joanne Crawford and from Suryanarayana, Shalini (she/her). In regard to the Abenaki Recognition and Heritage Week,” I just submitted a Proclamation to the Governor's Office Our hope is that it will be released at least a week before May 1. Also, I understand that the AHS Abenaki Equity Workgroup that Joanne Crawford leads will be hosting a few events during the month.”

10. Act 182 (2022) Land Access & Opportunity Board report

Dan Coutu is the new representative for LAOB, Land Access and Opportunity Board. Dan tells us that the Vermont Land Trust is mapping land use and access on their properties.

11. Act 142 (2022) Racial Justice Statistics Advisory Council (Stacy Gould)

Stacey Gould is our representative that will examine racial statistics.

12. Act 154 (2022) Environmental Justice Advisory Council

Environmental Justice Advisory Council slowly starts with meetings next month.

13. Act 174 (2020) "Vermont State Parks - Abenaki signage" status

nothing new after short discussion about names are created based on what ancestors would have called the place.

14. Act 128 (2022) VT Truth & Reconciliation Commission -TRC (Melody Mackin)

Melody Mackin was appointed to the board and gave us a presentation. For questions about the TRC write to Melody at: melody.mackin@vermont.gov Melody says they are forming committees, hiring an executive director, and creating public hearings for people to tell their stories. Jeff Benay offered a resource that publishes a handbook; “Center For Transitional Justice”. Motion was made to send a letter of support to the TRC Board by Rich Holschuh, second and passed by consensus.

15. Act 152 (2022) Nondiscriminatory school branding/mascots – status

We had a short discussion emphasizing local control.

16. Seventh Generation Curriculum Grant Committee report (Jeff Benay)

A meeting will be held soon.

17. Odanak Council invitation to meet for dialogue – status

Odanak Council invitation to meet for dialogue was given to Tribal Leadership for consideration.

NEW BUSINESS

18. 3/30/23 repudiation of Doctrine of Discovery, local press release, VCNAA vote

Motion was made by Rich Holschuh to include VCNNA in this letter and was amended to add stronger language and include a press conference, seconded and approved by consensus. Rich and Jeff Benay will work on that and plan a press conference before the next Commission meeting.

19. Proposed June VCNAA meeting at Koasek Tribal Gardens

Motion was made by Doug Bent, seconded, and passed by consensus.

20. Tribal representative reports

Missisquoi will be meeting with UVM provost May 8. (Parent and teacher organization) Jeff (jeffbenay@gmail.com) for more info. Nulhegan is sponsoring a hunter safety course that will include spiritual practices. contact: coutu@snowy-owl.com Parent and baby group program is happening that includes drumming, parent support, supply gifts and monthly meetings at various sites. melody@atowi.org.

21. Announcements

Announcements were made.

22. Public Comment

Public Comments were made.

Jeff: Motion to adjourn, seconded, and passed by consensus.

Adjourned