



VCNAA MEETING MINUTES

Approved April 10th, 2024

March 13, 2024

1:00 P.M. – 4:00 P.M.

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

VERMONT
COMMISSION
ON
NATIVE
AMERICAN
AFFAIRS



vcnaa.vermont.gov

COMMISSION
Richard Holschuh, Chair
Daniel Coutu, Vice Chair
Deborah Reger, Secretary
Doug Bent
Melody Walker Mackin
Jeffrey Benay
Pat Lamphere
Deanna Edwards
Open Seat

Members present in-person: Rich Holschuh, Deanna Edwards, Dan Coutu, Jeff Benay

Commissioners attending virtually: Doug Bent, Deb Reger, Patrick Lamphere, Melody Mackin

Guests: Jess Robinson (Vermont Division for Historic Preservation); Roland Bluto (Nulhegan); Fred Wiseman; Gavin MacNeille; Kayla Loving; Alyssa Chen

Guests attending virtually: Shirly Hook (Chief Koasek of Koas); Christopher Roy; Elodie Reed (Vermont Public); Morgan Lamphere; Elizabeth Brewster; Guy Maguire; Jane Mekkelsen

Meeting called to order at 1:09 pm

1. Commissioners and guests introduction and sign-in

The guests introduced themselves.

2. Changes to the Agenda

No changes.

3. Approval of February Minutes

The February meeting minutes were approved by consensus.

4. Commissioner's annual priorities, goals, & suggestions

No comments.

OLD BUSINESS

1. VT Legislature in session; Native Caucus participation

No comments.

2. Act 182 (2022) Land Access & Opportunity Board report (Dan Coutu)

The Land Access group is beginning to meet with other state agencies, set up work groups, and continue the work.

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

No update.

4. Act 154 (2022) Environmental Justice Advisory Council

No update.

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

A little discussion, but no actions have taken place recently.

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

Melody reported that there will be an educational series that will begin soon.

7. Act 152 (2022) Nondiscriminatory School Branding/Mascots – Status

No update.

8. Act 33 (2021) VT Health Equity Advisory Council (HEAC) Ongoing

Report by Deb included the budget is moving forward to the Senate committee on Appropriation and if passed a new office will be established with Director position to be established with office at the Vt Health Department. Work groups are forming.

9. Act 126 (2023) Community Resilience & Biodiversity Protection - focus groups (10 min)4

Act 126 is forming working groups.

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

7th Generation and Abenaki Curriculum is setting up a website.

11. VCNAA at State House Card Room – 3/12/2024 report (10 min)

VCNAA at the statehouse resulted in some confusion around boxes, parking and lack of communication and support. Results were positive and all legislators received a packet of Jeff Benay's writing, "Road To Recognition" after the confusion was explained.

12. Native American Law Clinic at Univ of CO student research on state tribal recognition processes & commissions (10 min)

Native American Law Clinic at University of Colorado has finished their perspective and legal brief on the process of State Recognition in Vermont.

13. VCNAA Part-Time Staff Position, Job Description, Posting

12 applicants have applied for VCNAA administrative position.

NEW BUSINESS

1. Guest dialogue with Alyssa Chen & Kayla Loving, Co-Coordiators – Education Justice

Education Justice Coalition presentation/discussion had with Alyssa Chen and Kayla Loving who came representing themselves. They are interested in hearing the Odanak side of so-called conflict, which Commissioner Dan Coutu and Commission Jeff Benay tried to correct and in the education quality standards. No conclusions were made.

2. Guest presenter: Fred Wiseman annual cultural & community research report (30 min)

The presentation by Fred Wiseman included a description of some of his new courses at VT Historical Society, Wildlife Center, mental health seminars in Franklin Co, a presentation to be given at Odanak, presentations at Indigenous Center and other workshops and book publications. Of interest will be an immersion course free to Abenaki at end of July on Abenaki Culture.

3. Dan Coutu – VCNAA support for LAOB budget request (5 min)

Support was given to the LAOB budget by Dan Coutu.

4. Tribal representative reports

None.

5. Announcements/Upcoming Events

None.

6. Public Comment

None

Meeting Adjourned

Motion to adjourn passed.