



VCNAA MEETING MINUTES

Approved May 8th, 2024

April 10, 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: Deb Reger, Patrick Lamphere, Melody Mackin

Guests: Jess Robinson (Vermont Division for Historic Preservation); Kathryn Mills

Guests attending virtually: Christopher Roy; Elodie Reed (Vermont Public); Marhsall Rich (Vermont Division for Children and Families Coordinator for Indian Child Welfare), George Martin

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 March Minutes

The March 13, 2024 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 budget has not been accepted to date. The committee is still sorting out issues.

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

No new Abenaki signage has been suggested recently.

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

April 24 will begin the TRC educational series. Write to vtrc@vermont.gov for information and also refer to the Facebook page. Volunteers are needed.

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

No update.

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

Discussions at the last monthly meeting brought up concerns about policy and ongoing access to healthcare, social determinants of health, housing, and education. The sub-committees are now beginning to work and need volunteers. They are 1. relationship building and administrative issues; 2. Statutory duties of HEAC; and 3. Community outreach and investment. Deb Reger is asking tribes to coordinate concerns and issues. There may be a consultant hired. for the HEAC.

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

A consultant has been hired.

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

Work is ongoing. Hard copies may be available when the curriculum is completed. The new timeline for completion is end of summer, 2024.

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

12 applicants have applied for VCNAA administrative position. The process is ongoing.

12. Ongoing Dialogue with Education Justice Coalition of VT re: Indigenous Community Relationship

Dan Coutu and Rich Holschuh are taking up continued dialogue.

NEW BUSINESS

1. Tribal representative reports

- **Missisquoi:** Chief Brenda Gagne has been recognized as an Outstanding Woman of the Year.
Pow Wow - May 25-26, Swanton, Vt Recreation Fields
- **Nulhegan:** annual gathering August 24-25 at the scout camp
- **Elnu:** Land is not open to the public yet.
- **Koasek of Koas:** Will have an annual meeting in May, which will include garden planting with possible programs at the garden including food preservation.

2. Announcements/Upcoming Events

Maritime Museum Abenaki Heritage gathering is the June 29 weekend.

3. Public Comment

Deb Reger thanks Marshall Rich for being available to Abenaki families. This is the first time there has been an Indian Coordinator with DCF.

Meeting Adjourned

Motion to adjourn passed by consensus.