



## VCNAA MEETING MINUTES

Approved January 10<sup>th</sup>, 2024

November 8, 2023

1:00 P.M. – 4:00 P.M.

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

VERMONT  
COMMISSION  
ON  
NATIVE  
AMERICAN  
AFFAIRS



[vcnaa.vermont.gov](http://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:** Rich Holschuh, Doug Bent, Dan Coutu, Jeff Benay, Deb Reger, Deanna Edwards; online Commissioners: Patrick Lamphere

**Absent:** Melody Mackin

**Guests:** Shirly Hook (Chief Koasek of Koas), Jess Robinson (Vermont Division for Historic Preservation); Guests online: Elodie Reed (VT Public), Shalini Suryanarayana (Office of Racial Equity), Morgan Lamphere, David Savoie (Canada Radio), Christopher Roy, Richard Whiting, Alana Ojibway

**Meeting called to order at 1:05 pm**

### 1. Introductions

The guests introduced themselves.

### 2. Changes to the Agenda

There were no changes to the agenda.

### 3. Approval of October Minutes

The minutes were approved by consensus with two changes: Morgan Lamphere is not a member of the Missisquoi tribal council and Patrick Lamphere was absent from the meeting.

### 4. Meeting Protocols & Expectations, Consensus Voting

Chairperson shared quotations.

### 5. Commissioner's Annual Priorities, Goals, & Suggestions

No one had suggestions.

## **OLD BUSINESS**

### **6. Act 182 (2022) Land Access & Opportunity Board report**

Dan Coutu gave an update that jobs have been filled and in December work will continue.

### **7. Act 142 (2022) Racial Justice Statistics Advisory Council**

No update.

### **8. Act 154 (2022) Environmental Justice Advisory Council**

No update.

### **9. Act 174 (2020) "Vermont State Parks - Abenaki signage" status**

No new sign development.

### **10. Act 128 (2022) VT Truth & Reconciliation Commission -TRC (Melody Mackin)**

Because Melody Mackin was absent, there was no update on this agenda item.

### **11. Act 152 (2022) Nondiscriminatory School Branding/Mascots – Status**

No update.

### **12. Act 33 (2021) VT Health Equity Advisory Council (HEAC) Ongoing**

No update. Deb Reger is applying for the Racial Equity Advisory Panel that is appointed by Jill Krowinsky, Speaker of the House, and will be representing Koasek of Koas and VCNAA.

### **13. Seventh Generation Curriculum Grant Committee report (Jeff Benay)**

Dan Coutu is working on the website. Structure is being developed to navigate the site and logo is being designed.

### **14. Vermont Mental Health Professional Licensing Update**

Vermont Mental Health Professional Licensing group has a representative from Missisquoi, Felicia Coat, who is a tribal council member and a therapist in the community. She will cover the meetings and Jeff Benay will be available to sit in when necessary. The group is trying to find the time to meet as many cannot meet at mid-day.

## **15. Completed Support Statement for State Tribal Recognition**

The support statement was sent to legislators.

## **16. VCNAA Part-Time Staff Position, Job Description, Posting**

VCNAA part-time staff suggestions were developed by Deanne Edwards, Rich Holschuh, Jeff Benay and Dan Coutu. Jess Robinson will be setting up a meeting to finalize the job description.

## **NEW BUSINESS**

### **Native American Grave Protection & Repatriation Act (NAGPRA), Section 106, State Law: Presentation/Explanation**

Presentation by Jess Robinson on NAGPRA (Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act) and the section 106 state laws. Jess says the law pertains to Vermont if museums that have human remains receive federal funding. There is a federal registry that is used. It is the responsibility of the federal government to contact tribes or individuals. The laws apply to unmarked graves/burials on Federal Land where Native Nations/Groups are Federally recognized. He mentioned the Historic Preservation Act that oversees the National Register of Historical Sites. There is an advisory list which includes how burials should be treated that include; treat with dignity and respect, always use consultation, use the expertise of Indian tribes, do not disturb, remove carefully, contact federal agency responsible and the federal process should start with tribes. The Department of Historic Preservation is the consulting party. Vermont passed an unmarked burial law in 2011. There is an established fund for enforcement and dealing with these burials held by the Department of Housing. There are laws about all the processes; removing bodies etc. Jeff Benay talked about the sites that became exposed when housing excavation was happening in the 1990's. Jess talked about the state buying the properties that stipulates the Abenaki would be the stewards of the land in perpetuity.

## **17. VT Agency of Education Representative to Discuss Curriculum Inclusion**

Agency of Education Presentation Postponed until January.

### **Ongoing recognition Politics/Press Coverage**

Chairperson made comments about individuals making media presentations.

## **18. Tribal representative reports**

- There will be a Abenaki (Missisquoi) flag raising ceremony at the Chamberlain Elementary School in So. Burlington, Nov 14. Contact [jeff.benay@mysdschools.org](mailto:jeff.benay@mysdschools.org) 802-371-7334.
- Elnu continues to work on their site
- Koasek of Koas has put away the vegetables.

## **19. Public Comment**

- Moccasin Tracks has invited Commissioners to make a PSA (Public Service Announcement) submit your written scripts, contact Deb to make an appointment to record. [moccasintracksradio@gmail.com](mailto:moccasintracksradio@gmail.com). Deb Reger played a PSA by former Commissioner Charlene McManis, “Native American is A Culture Not A Costume” which we played in the month of Oct. Let us know if you want a copy of the PSA or more info.
- Shalini Suryanarayana is planning an event for Nov 29 in Burlington to commemorate Native American Heritage Month.  
([Shalini.Suryanarayana@vermont.gov](mailto:Shalini.Suryanarayana@vermont.gov)).
- <https://www.alnobaiwi.org> Morgan Lamphere made announcements about events they are sponsoring.

Meeting Adjourned