

DULUTH INDIGENOUS COMMISSION

Meeting Minutes

Monday, June 15, 2015

Present: Victor St. George, Donna Newgren, Kassie Helgerson, Hannah Smith, Amber Lee Stewart

Absent: Babette Sandman, Coreen Roy, Jaron Smallwood, Carol Deverny

Staff: Suzanne Kelley, Jill Conniff

1. Call to Order, Introductions, and Welcome of New Members

Olson called the meeting to order at 5:40. Introductions were made.

2. Approval of May meeting minutes

Olson made motion to approve amended minutes whereas the date 'Monday, Oct. 20, 2014' would be amended to read 'May 20, 2015.' Newgren seconded, motion passed unanimously.

3. Public Comments

- Tom Starky spoke on behalf to amend the constitution to add 'money is not the same as speech and corporations are not people.' He asked for the Indigenous Commission endorsement for the cause and stated he would be going to the Duluth City Council to put statement on the ballot to allow people to vote on it.

Commissioner Olson stated that more information was needed. Starky recommended the webpage 'movetoamend.org' for more information.

- Bois Forte Band member Bobby Jo Potter was seeking advice and guidance from the commission. She stated that she had made multiple requests and received multiple denials on her right to smudge in her workplace. She works for the St. Louis County as a social worker.

She stated that she made a request to smudge in workplace, and it was denied with suggestion to enlist a medicine man or spiritual leader, or to smudge outside or in car. Request was made to smudge with spiritual leader on Friday's at end of day, and that request was denied. Request was made for smoke test to be done to see how smudging affects the air, request was denied.

There has already been a request by a judge to be allowed to smudge in the courtroom. Danny Man Guzo, the head of maintenance has been spoken to regarding the smoke from smudging setting off fire alarms.

The question was asked as to who was denying her requests. Potter responded that the request was sent to both the public health supervisor,

who is in support of Potter, and the county administrator Kevin Grey whom is denying her request.

It is to be reflected in the minutes whereas the Commission would like to be in support of Potter's case and would like to look into next steps in advancing issue, however more information was needed. Staff will forward any information regarding this issues that is received by Staff. This item is to be added to the next agenda.

- Commissioner Helgerson brought forward two resolutions. The first being to be sent to President Barack Obama as 'Resolution in support of clemency for Leonard Peltier.' The second being sent to the Duluth City Council as 'Resolution in support urging Duluth City Council to support Leonard Peltier's request for clemency and to support declaring June 26th Leonard Peltier Day in Duluth, Minnesota.'

Commissioner Olson makes point that although cannot dispute innocence or guilt, is willing to sign on grounds of human rights and compassion. Peltier has been in jail for forty years, now in his seventies and in failing health; his appeals have been denied.

Helgerson made a motion to sign both resolutions on grounds of human rights and compassion, Olson seconds. Motion passes unanimously.

4. New Business

Update Contact Information

Kelley asks if members have been made aware of files held in Community Development office, all members have not.

Confirmation was made between Olson and Kelley that all new members email lists are updated and sent out in most recent email from Mike Palermo.

Feast and Forum Planning

Discussion was has as to who will spearhead the planning. Decided on a cooperative collaboration between members. Olson is willing to take on fundraising, sending out letters. Smith volunteered to reach out to other UMD students and organizations. Donna is willing to look into food preparation and creating flyers.

Date of August 20th from 6-7 at Trepnair Hall was decided upon.

Election of Officers

Will be done at later meeting when Sandman is present.

5. Old Business

Staff Update

Ethnographic Study Review of Final Report

6. Announcements, Upcoming Events and Comments from Commission

June 27th Ethnographic Study Community Event at Trepanier Hall

Ojibwe Language Camp is June 17-21 in Fon Du Lac. Free to attend.

June 26th there is at 4:30 on the corner of Lake and Superior, rally is in support of clemency for Leonard Peltier.

7. Adjournment

St. George made motion to adjourn, Tina seconded. Motion passed unanimously.

Meeting was adjourned at 6:48.

8. Next Meeting: July 20, 2015