

**DULUTH INDIGENOUS COMMISSION**  
**Monday, February 26, 2018**  
**City Hall, Room 303**

**Present:** Babette Sandman, Phoebe Davis, Bob Miller, Larry Heady, Mary Owen, Kassie Helgerson, Donna Newgren-Isaacson

**Absent:** Amber Lightfeather, Carol DeVerney, Melissa Deverney

**Staff:** Suzanne Kelley

*Note: Per the request of the DIC members two Ojibwe language words are used in the meeting minutes – bezhig (“one”) indicates who made the motion and niizho (“two”) indicates who seconded the motion.*

**1. Call to Order, Introduction**

- Sandman called the meeting to order at 5:45 pm. Introductions were made.

**2. Approval of meeting minutes**

- Davis bezhig/Miller niizho to approve the January 22, 2018 meeting minutes. **Motion passed 7:0**

**3. Public Comment**

- Mike Casey explained his concerns about the Lower Spirit Mountain Riverside Park Plan, also known as Kayak Bay. Specifically, he was concerned about the extension of infrastructure for the boat launch and the permanent impacts to the environment. He also expressed concern about the project using the word, “spirit”. He told the Commission he would provide additional information.

**4. New Business**

- Duluth Public Arts Commission (DPAC): Laurel Sanders and Ashley Kolka from DPAC spoke to the Commission.
  - DPAC would like to work with DIC to have a piece of art in Duluth that is visible and represents the native community. It was determined that a subcommittee would be the most appropriate next step.
  - DPAC spoke about the incorrect wordage on the plaque at Leif Erickson park. DIC members provided recommendations regarding removing the statue.
  - DPAC spoke about one of their initiatives which was performing a sensitivity audit of art in Duluth. DIC members wanted to know about the audit and how the information would be used.

**5. Action Items**

- Gitchi O’de Consultant Preparations/Site Visit– Phoebe Davis will schedule the site visit when the weather is better. City staff has been talking with a consultant about Gitchi o’de.
- Local Designation of Sacred Sites Resolution- Babette Sandman will follow up with Councilor Gary Anderson.
- Eagle Staff Resolution- Miller bezhig/Owen niizho to approve the resolution that was included in the packet, which was, “A Resolution Recognizing And Honoring The Eagle Staff As The First Flag

Of The Americas, Representing The Sovereign Indigenous Nations And Communities of North American.” **Motion passed 7:0**

- This resolution will be presented to City Council at a future meeting.
- Skip Sandman will be making the Eagle Staff.
- Opioid Forum/Teach-In- The Opioid Forum will be at Gimaaajii on February 27. There will be the 3<sup>rd</sup> Opioid Summit that involves the State and 11 Tribes in Fond Du Lac in February or March.

## 6. Subcommittees

- Education –
  1. Owen informed the Commission that the School District has reallocated the Compensatory Funds from 50% to 80% to the students that need it. The Compensatory Funds will increase 5% annually until it reaches 95%. The Subcommittee will be tracking the funds to make sure they are spent appropriately.
  2. Amber Lightfeather was appointed to the Indian Educational Parent Committee.
  3. The graduation rate from Duluth Schools for Native children is still at 37%, so effort and work is still needed.
  4. Denfeld and Lincoln Park will offer after school tutoring for Native children to learn about their history and culture. Members of the Commission expressed interest in tutoring.
  5. Disparities in the schools still needs to be addressed, especially with regard to bullying and suspension rates.
- Ni Mi Win – The Pow Wow is planned to be at Denfeld this year. The subcommittee is looking at dates. Fund raising will be very important for this event. There was discussion about maintaining the documents from the earlier Ni Mi Win Pow Wows.
- Opioids/Natives Against Heroin (NAH)- The first NAH event at the Central Hillside Community Center was successful, over 100 people attended, including the Mayor. Progress is being made on the sweat lodges.

## 7. Old Business

- Why Treaties Matter Exhibit- The exhibit was very successful and very well attended.
- Ojibwe Language Signs Update- None given at the meeting. We will wait for an update from Adam Fulton.

## 8. Announcements/Adjournment:

- Babette and Skip Sandman will be recognized on May 3 for an Honoring Ceremony by the Center of American Indian and Minority Health.
- The meeting adjourned at 7:53 pm.

## 9. Next Meeting:

Next meeting is March 19, 2018 at 5:30 PM.

Onigamiinsing

"at the little portage"



Duluth Indigenous Commission

**A RESOLUTION RECOGNIZING AND HONORING THE EAGLE STAFF AS THE  
FIRST FLAG OF THE AMERICAS, REPRESENTING THE SOVEREIGN INDIGENOUS NATIONS  
AND COMMUNITIES OF NORTH AMERICA**

**WHEREAS**, the Duluth Indigenous Commission (Commission) was created by the Duluth City Council (City Council) pursuant to Ordinance 9529, amending Chapter 2 of the Duluth City Code, 1959, serving in an advisory capacity to the Mayor, City Council, and Administration; and

**WHEREAS**, among the duties of the Commission is to guide in the development of policy, planning and services, to ensure that the Indigenous community is incorporated in the decision-making, future planning and stewardship of the City of Duluth; and

**WHEREAS**, The Eagle Staff, acknowledged as the first flag of the Americas, represents the stature and honor of American Indian-Alaska Native tribal nations and communities; pre-dating colonization and the establishment of the United States, an indicator of a tribe's accomplishments and the honor and integrity of its people; today, used to represent tribal communities, American Indian-Alaska Native and First Nation governments and organizations, honor societies and medicine societies; and

**WHEREAS**, The Eagle Staff represents the indigenous attributes of unity, solidarity and tradition, and reflects the honor bestowed upon an individual, tribal elder, or tribal organization, and is typically carried by American Indian-Alaska Native veterans of the United States Armed Forces, who have served in greater numbers per capita than any other ethnicity across all military branches; and

**WHEREAS**, The Eagle Staff is adorned with eagle feathers symbolizing remembrance of the fallen warrior; it symbolizes the proud legacy of the American Indian-Alaska Native peoples; it is the embodiment of the warrior spirit and the strength, courage, and fortitude which has enabled the Tribal Nations to survive policies intended to extinguish their race and culture; and

**WHEREAS**, The Eagle Staff is recognized and honored by all American Indian tribes and Alaska Native villages, Canadian First Nations, the National Congress of American Indians and other Native American organizations, and the State of Illinois House of Representatives and is welcomed into all indigenous communities with a flag song, honor song, or victory song, and always precedes other flags in procession;

**NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED**, that the Duluth Indigenous Commission, in its role as Advisor and Councilor to the Mayor, City Council, and Administration of the City of Duluth, does hereby honor and recognize The Eagle Staff as the first flag of the Americas, representing the Indigenous Peoples of North America including the Duluth Indigenous Community and shall have equal standing alongside the flags of the United States of America and the State of Minnesota wherever these flags are flown or displayed in the City of Duluth.

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, that the Duluth Indigenous Commission, does hereby request that the Duluth City Council pass a substantially similar resolution recognizing and honoring The Eagle Staff as the first flag of the Americas, representing the Indigenous Peoples of North America, including the Duluth Indigenous Community.



Onigamiinsing  
"at the little portage"



Duluth Indigenous Commission

CERTIFICATION

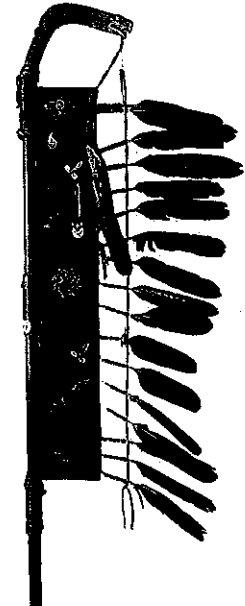
I hereby certify that the foregoing was considered by the Duluth Indigenous Commission and adopted this 26 day of February 2018 with a vote of 7 yes, 0 no, and of 0 abstaining.

  
BABETTE SANDMAN, DIC Chairperson

  
Attested by: CITY STAFF



**EAGLE STAFF DESCRIPTION.** The Eagle Staff represents the stature and honor of a particular tribe or tribes. It commonly looks like a shepherd's staff and is often wrapped in either otter skin or buffalo skin and exhibits eagle feathers (mainly tail feathers from a golden eagle) that indicate the Ogichidaa honor of that tribe. Ogichidaa is an Ojibwe language word for a warrior or leader who has earned distinction through service to the tribe in combat or some other fashion. Among the plains tribes, it was also used to identify a figure of authority. Today, it is used to describe a member of an honor society, a service veteran, or the tribal nation itself. The Eagle Staff is always presented ahead of any other flag and is more important and meaningful. It was the indicator of a tribe's accomplishments in battle and the integrity and honor of its people.



The tradition of the Eagle Staff has been passed down from generation to generation. In Aboriginal cultures, the Eagle Staff represents various meanings, spiritual entities, nations, clans, languages, medicines, and healing. It is believed that eagles communicate directly with the Creator, making eagles themselves, their feathers, and their images highly revered by Indigenous Americans. From a non-Aboriginal perspective, the Staff can be compared to a national flag: it represents people, states, governments, regiments and battle honors. Thus, it is an honored and sacred symbol.

