

Duluth Indigenous Commission
Monday, September 21, 2020
Virtual WebEx Meeting

Present: Babette Sandman, Roxanne DeLille, Moira Villiard, Kassie Helgerson, Amber Lightfeather, Rochelle Goodrich

Absent: Larry Heady, Carol DeVerney, Phoebe Davis

Staff: Kathy Wilson, Mollie Hinderaker

Note: per the request of the Indigenous Commission 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 and introductions

- Co-chair Sandman Called the meeting to order at 5:40 PM, Introductions were made.

2. Approval of August 17, 2020 Meeting Minutes

- Co-chair Helgerson bezhig, Commissioner Villiard niizho to approve the Duluth Indigenous Commission meeting minutes form August 17, 2020.
- **Motion Passed 6:0**

3. Public Comment

- Summary of written comments received prior to the meeting
 - City Staff stated that no comments were received.
- Virtual public comment via WebEx
 - No discussion.

4. New Business

- Spirit Mountain Task Force
 - Spirit Mountain Task Force requested to attend a future meeting – they will coordinate with City staff.
- Rights of Nature
 - The group had a last-minute scheduling conflict and requested to attend October meeting instead.
- AIM update
 - Co-chair Helgerson gave an update on AIM’s work to support people experiencing homelessness. Right now the group’s efforts include providing supplies, winter clothing, and housing assistance for people who are experiencing homelessness. AIM also held a successful

basketball tournament fundraiser this past Saturday that will help them continue these efforts.

- Virtual Indigenous Peoples Day planning- October 12, 2020
 - Commissioners discussed various ways to celebrate Indigenous People's Day including:
 - Offering of tobacco and a song to Lake Superior as an individual way to celebrate Indigenous People's Day during the pandemic.
 - Initiative to discourage Columbus Day sales- set up meeting to discuss with Greater Downtown Council.
 - Turn the "Why Treaties Matter" exhibit at Fond Du Lac Tribal and Community College into a virtual exhibit for the public to view via phone app.
 - City Staff to email Commissioners a follow up on who will work on above planning items.
- Decolonization and visibility ideas
 - Ideas and examples discussed include:
 - One Commissioner gave the example of building a wigwam in their backyard to make teaching traditional medicine easier
 - Another Commissioner shared that they sing outside during the full moon so the Spirit (and neighbors) can hear them.
 - One Commissioner shared that they will soon be moving into a yurt.
 - Another Commissioner shared the following resource:
<https://illuminatives.org/>
 - Another experience shared included a story on Indigenous invisibility: they were part of a committee to address BIPOC access to employment. At the committee meeting they were viewing a video about this country's history that spoke about slavery and red lining but ignored Indigenous Peoples.
 - Commissioner DeLille suggested that it would be worthwhile for the Commission to define invisibility as well as colonized thinking/decolonization. Defining these could help in turning feelings and words into action.

5. Action Items

- Letter on visibility and Indigenous Commission role as advisory commission to the Mayor and City Council
 - No discussion due to Commissioners being absent. To be discussed at next meeting.

6. Subcommittees

- Art in Gichi-ode' Akiing
 - Commissioner Villiard updated the commission that she reached out to Duluth Public Arts Commission about the approval process for continuing

the Chief Buffalo mural and other art in Gichi-ode' Akiing next year. She is scheduled to present to the Commission next month.

- Commissioner Villiard also mentioned a mural she completed in West End/Lincoln Park. She worked with Michelle DeFoe on this and will work with her on art in Gichi-ode' Akiing for next year.
- Education
 - Commissioner Lightfeather explained that she had a meeting with the school board and spoke about Native children and their opportunities/visibility in the school system. At the meeting she emphasized how this invisibility can impact Native kids and that it continues to be an issue. Commissioner Lightfeather said she was asked to be part of the School Board's "brain trust" committee to continue to address this.
- Police
 - No discussion
- Ni Mi Win- Collaboration with Historic Preservation Commission for Ni Mi Win preservation
 - Co-Chair Sandman and Co-chair Helgerson agreed that they should work on digitizing the box of documents so they can send them to the Historic Preservation Commission. They requested City Staff get them on the agenda for an upcoming Historic Preservation Commission meeting.
- Opioids/AIM/Sweat Lodge
 - Co-chair Sandman stated that they could not have a sobriety feast due to COVID19, however they have tried to have outdoor gatherings when possible to keep the event going.
 - Co-chair Helgerson stated that AIM is beginning to work on changing the narrative to include sobriety stories and not just stories of addiction. The organization has gotten many people into treatment. AIM members carry Narcan with them to respond to any overdose they might encounter but there's a lot more work to be done.
 - AIM also works on cleaning up needles in the park and any stashes they might find hidden throughout the neighborhood. Co-chair Helgerson noted that one day at Central Hillside Park she found 67 needles.
 - Commissioner DeLille asked why there weren't more needle/sharp boxes throughout the community. Co-chair Helgerson explained that the Commission had inquired about this before but found that the boxes needed intense security so people could not break into them. This extra security creates makes the containers very expensive.
- Policy
 - No discussion

7. Old Business

- No discussion

8. Announcements/Adjournment

- Meeting adjourned at 7:03 PM

9. Next Meeting October 19, 2020