

Duluth Indigenous Commission  
Monday, August 16, 2021  
Virtual WebEx Meeting

**Commissioners present:** Moira Villiard, Phoebe Davis, Roxanne DeLille, Amber Lightfeather, Babette Sandman,

**Commissioners absent:** Carol Deverney, Cayla Bellanger DeGroat, Lanelle Hrabik, Kassie Helgerson, Rochelle Goodrich

**Staff present:** Suzanne Kelly, Phillis Webb

*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 5:43 PM, introductions were made.

**2. Approval of July 19, 2021 Meeting Minutes**

- Davis bezhig / Villiard niizho to approve the July 19, 2021 meeting minutes.
- **Motion passed 5:0.**

**3. Public Comment**

- Summary of Public Comment
  - A member of the community received an article about a developer putting in 32 tiny homes within Duluth. The approval of this project will come if coverage of utilities is granted. The project will not displace the homeless, but rather, the new homeowners will be stationed near the homeless. There is a feeling of attempts to price long time community members out of Duluth itself. The previous notion was when there was discussion of tiny homes, it was going to be affordable, and assist the homeless.

**4. City Reports and Updates**

- Updates/Comments from City Councilors or City Staff
  - No new updates or comments

**5. New business**

- PhotoVoice Planning
  - Photovoice is a visual representation of a community-based research design. Participants were asked to express what it means to be indigenous through a photo. The commission enjoyed how innovative Photovoice is. The commission would like to invite Jim Amell to come and assist further with this community research. However, AICHO has growing concerns with COVID-19. The commission has also agreed to wear a mask if any future event were to take place. There is also an idea of having Photovoice done virtually. Commission will reach out to Jim Amell to get his thoughts on these ideas. Commissioner Villard will assist with this in the future as well.

## 6. Action Items

- Declaration

The commission members would like to write a declaration regarding the child graves that were found at the boarding school(s) in Canada to present to city council in order to bring awareness to this 100-year-old incident and others. They would also like to acknowledge the incident with a three-minute moment of silence in remembrance of those lost. Commissioner Villard would like to work on this project. Commission would also like each other to have something tangible before the next meeting. Commissioner Lightfeather stated that the library is making an effort to bring awareness through their newsletter, which is sharing background information and description of boarding schools, along with providing links & resources for more information. She is working closely with the library.

- Duluth Ojibwe Language Project next steps (Sandman, Helgerson)

- Commission is working to get the list of labeling buildings around Duluth of native language. Commissioner Sandman to bring a list to city hall and staff will distribute to the rest of the commission.

## 7. Subcommittees

- AIM/Opioids/Sweat Lodge/Sobriety Feast (Helgerson)

- Sobriety Feast grant for drummers is ready for use once meeting in person is allowed.

- Art in Gichi-ode' Akiing (Villiard)

- Maintenance agreement went through to city council. There is also a \$25,000 grant from AICHO to use on the Chief Buffalo mural. Commissioner Villiard explained that if the mural is painted over, it will be seen as hostile; and if it needs to be painted over, do so in medicine colors. Commissioner Villard is also working on a project piece to create on Chief Buffalo, along with the steps of crafting the wall.

- Bylaws (Sandman, Helgerson, Davis, DeLille)

- No discussion

- Education (Lightfeather)

- In addition to language in the libraries, Commissioner Lightfeather would also like to put Ojibway language on buses. Commission members also talked about still having a cultural place in Edison.

- Police/Racial Bias audit task force (DeLille)

- Waiting for the racial bias audit task force to start up, commissioner DeLille to be on the task force.

- Sacred Sites (Davis, Bellanger-Degroat)

- Commission members are on a protective stance with the allocating the whereabouts of sacred sites to developers. They do not want these sites to be desecrated, want to communicate to let developers know.

- Spirit Mountain (Sandman)
  - Commission is working with members of the community to preserve the memories of events at Spirit Mountain.

#### **8. Old Business**

- Decolonization and Visibility Ideas (Sandman)
  - Commission would like to keep on the agenda for continuous thoughts of decolonization in mind, as well as how their ancestors would handle issues. Commission wants to have continuous visibility, and discussion of leadership development.

#### **9. Announcements**

- Discussion on the new tourism tax grant.

#### **10. Next Meeting September 20, 2021**

- Meeting adjourned 7:00 PM