

Duluth Indigenous Commission  
Monday, October 7, 2024  
411 W 1<sup>st</sup> St, Room 430, City Hall

**Commissioners present:** Rene Ann Goodrich, Phoebe Davis, Lenelle Hrabik, Rebecca Graves, Amber Lightfeather

**Commissioners absent:** Ryan Clark

**Staff present:** Kathy Wilson, Hannah Figgins

*Note: per the request of the Indigenous Commission members, Ojibwe language words are used in the meeting minutes. Gedit is used to indicate that the Commission has come to a consensus in support of the motion.*

**1. Call to Order and Introductions**

- Commissioner Hrabik called the meeting to order at 5:34 PM

**2. Approval of September 16, 2024 Meeting Minutes**

- September 16, 2024 minutes. **Motion passed, with requested amendments: Gedit – All.**

**3. Public Comment**

- Commissioner Lightfeather reported a headline that St Louis County Jail implemented a new policy that will deny native inmates the right to smudge. The Commissioners would like to look into this more and determine if there is anything they can do to help.  
Update: On October 18<sup>th</sup> city staff received an email from a therapist who works with Indigenous People in the SLC jail raising concerns about this issue. City staff forwarded this email to Indigenous Commissioners for their consideration.

**4. City Reports and Updates**

- **Board/Commission Liaison Updates**
  - Duluth Citizen Review Board/Police Racial Bias Audit – no speakers
  - Duluth Public Arts Commission – no speakers
- **Other Updates/Comments from City Councilors or City Staff**
  - West Superior St Project (Senior Transportation Planner James Gittemeier presented the proposed West Superior Street Reconstruction Project, from The Point of Rocks to Carlton St.
    - Fixing utilities underneath, and reconstruct the
    - Fully funded with federal and state sources: RAISE Grants, and US Dept. of transportation
    - Project schedule began in 2022 when the grant was awarded. We are now at open house #3
    - One big thing he has heard over the years is there isn't enough trees in this corridor, so the grant included the building of a 'green corridor', they will have at least 350 trees added to contribute to shading the road and sidewalks. Transitioning from old US Highway to an enjoyable city street. Also adding rain gardens for added water filtration.

- Cross City Trail will continue to run through the area, but with many improvements.
- Improved pedestrian and multi-transportation amenities: curb bumpouts, bus stops,
- Construction will begin in summer 2025, and continue through 2028
- **The commissioners invited Staff member Gittemeier to return next year to present further on rain gardens and their uses for storm water filtration**

## 5. New Business

- **Smudging at Bethel** – no updates
- **Indigenous Peoples’ Day planning (October 14<sup>th</sup>)** – Commissioner Goodrich presented the flyer, which staff emailed to commissioners. She asked for feedback, before she sends it to the press. Goodrich will take out mention of the youth-led march, as they won’t be able to make that happen this year.
  - Babette Sandman and Ricky DeFoe will come out and support the event.
  - Duluth high schools and middle schools have the holiday off
  - The students Goodrich has been in contact with , Marshall School, and Harbor City School. They would like to have a community round-dance.
  - Youth-led art, but they need paint and poster board ; they have a “Bring them home” banner that the students can add to.
  - The Mayor’s office accepted the request to read the proclamation at the event.
  - There are other celebrations later on in the day as well. The commission sees their event as the kick-off to the day
  - There are hand-drummers and singers coming, but there is an invitation out to more drummers.
  - Goodrich reached out to Michelle Defoe to bring her art to share and speak about. The Indigenous Commission doesn’t have a budget to pay those that contribute to events, but rely on donations and community partners
  - Could ask Fond Du Luth for an in-kind donation for water
  - There will not be enough time to get a permit for a march, so the celebration will be held only at City Hall and in Priley Circle.
  - Renne VanNette Boarding School Resolution
  - Native Lives Matter Coalition may be willing to cover the cost of the permit, and the honorariums for hand drummers, singers, and the artists
  - Liish Kozlowski has been invited to speak this year
  - Moira has been invited to speak about the Chief Buffalo mural
  - There will be Staff carriers
  - Babbette will be invited
  - The invitation is on Facebook
  - Ivy could take photos if they find someone else to carry the Gimaajii Staff, or she may know someone else that could take photos.
  - To begin at 11am. City Staff will have sound equipment ready. The permit should include the request to turn on the outlets next to the stairs.
  - Commissioner Lightfeather agreed to speak.

- Commissioners would like more speakers to come of a variety of backgrounds. Mary Owen was suggested as a powerful speaker; she will be sent an invitation to speak.
- Names of speakers will be sent to Goodrich to be put on the agenda for the celebration.

## 6. Action Items

## 7. Subcommittees

- **MMIWR** – It has been challenging to find funding for families, but all are asking for financial resources to help with the search and getting boots on the ground. This has prompted mutual aid efforts including the Native Lives Matter annual fundraiser, which will be building a fund for families. Will be sending an email with quotes provided for Sheila St Clair and sharing press release at IPD. Still Offering an award for Sheila St Clair.
- **Art in Gichi-ode' Akiing** – no updates
- **Education** – no updates
- **Full Moon Ceremonies** – no updates
- **Housing** – no updates
- **Ojibwe Language Pronunciation Guide and Signs in City Hall** – City Staff presented the status of the project. All words are recorded, and there is a quote for the signs requested, which is only \$3,000. DPAC is willing to provide \$15,000 but want a proposal from the commission.
  - The Commission could request to add QR codes to the signs that link to the pronunciation audio file. They could also add a request to purchase art.
  - A few other city facilities could use language signs as well, such as the library or community centers. The Commissioners really like this idea, as well as the addition of the QR codes.
  - DPAC have more experience hiring local artists for specific types of projects and could help with finding someone if there is funds left after signs have been made for a few other city buildings.
  - QR Codes could be added to existing parks signs as well.
  - Staff suggested submitting the draft with these ideas to DPAC. The Commission approved. DPAC will offer thoughts in response.
- **Sobriety Feast** – no updates

## 8. Ongoing Business

- **Smudging at Bethel** – no updates
- **Decolonization and Visibility Ideas** – no updates // Speakers at Indigenous Peoples day could say something about the Chief Buffalo mural and the history.

## 9. Announcements

- **No meeting in November, and December city staff is working on scheduling a “special meeting” with City Councilors and IC. Staff will send updates as they come.**

## 10. Meeting adjourned at 7:12 pm