

Duluth Indigenous Commission Minutes
Monday, October 20, 2025
411 W 1st St, Room 430 City Hall

Commissioners present: Phoebe Davis, Rene Ann Goodrich, Lenelle Hrabik, Natalie Smith

Commissioners absent:

Commission applicant: Amber Lightfeather

Guest: , Alexis Goodrich, Ellie Johnson, Kaeden Beach, Markus Edgette

Staff present: Suzanne Kelley, Phillis Webb, Marsha Lue – Human Rights and Equity Officer

Note: Ojibwe language words are used in the meeting minutes. Gegit is used to indicate that the Commission has come to a consensus in support of the motion.

1. Call to Order and Introductions

- Chair Davis called the meeting to order at 5:30pm. Introductions were made around the room.

2. Approval of September 15, 2025 Meeting Minutes

- September 15th, 2025 minutes were approved with changes
Motion passed: Gegit-All

3. Public Comment

- Markus Edgette from the Human Right commission stated that the commission would like to show up for the Indigenous commission and be supportive.
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4. City Reports and Updates

- Board/Commission Liaison Updates
 - Duluth Public Arts Commission: Commissioners attempted to go to the DPAC meeting on 10/20/25, but there was no one in attendance. And Indigenous Commissions have attempted to find someone to communicate with about the funds and the project.
 - Commissioner Goodrich has been asking about the status of the grant fundings and the project.
 - . Added comments to the previous minutes. Commissioner Goodrich stated that DPAC has already allocated money for the Indigenous Commission's art project. DPAC's minutes were also approved, and in their budget, it showed that the project money was allocated. The Commission would like a memo on the grant money that is earmarked for their project.

- Other Commissions
None
- Other Updates/Comments from City Councilors or city staff
None

5. New Business

- **Recap of Indigenous Peoples Day event**

- The Commissioners recapped that the work that was done for Indigenous People's Day. Commissioner Goodrich stated that it was the biggest turnout they ever had. Superior Mayor was in attendance, along with Superior High School Students. Harbor City High School students also showed up. Essentia Health Foundation in-kind donation for a port-a-potty for the event. Tribal honor guard from Fond-Du-Lac was in attendance. 1854 Treaty tabled the event, along with Harm Reduction Sisters and CASDA. Art from Michelle DeFoe was present and was the featured artist and was sponsored by Native Lives Matter, through in-kind donation.

-Commissioner Smith did Smudging of everyone. Human Rights Officer Marsha Lue stated that UMD students were in attendance, and appreciated being included at the round dance. She received a lot of good feedback. The whole event was youth led and was a great turnout. Enger Tower was also lit orange in celebration of the day at the request of the Indigenous Commission. Many community sponsors were in support. The Commission leverage their resources with no budget, and able to honor relatives. Babette Sandman was mentioned with her doing a lot of positive work on the Commission for many years.

- **Vote on whether to stay a Commission or become a subcommittee of the Human Rights Commission**

The Commission asked to be presented with the proposal in writing. The proposal in tonight's agenda is the first time of the Commission seeing the physical proposal copy as of 10/20/25 from Councilor Awal. Commissioner Goodrich stated that at the last Councilor meeting on 10/9/25 she was in attendance. Chair Davis read the ordinance from Councilor Awal. Chair stated that the Commission has a unique perspective, and the work that they do is still being done despite being a small group. Commissioner Hrabik looked at the first sentence of the ordinance stating that the issues the Indigenous Commission deal with is not human rights issues. Chair Davis read the Respect for Distinct Identity and spoke on the "Risk of Dilution" which concerned diminishing of "consolidating all cultural and ethnic groups into one commission implies we are all one for the color of our skin".

-Commissioner Goodrich also asked to add the mission statement from their bylaws to the "Respect for Distinct Identity", and also to add a link that shares the bylaws and the work/project that the Commission does. Chair Davis also read the ordinance to incorporate the Duluth Projected Class Commission.

Vote for consensus to stay Sovereign
Motion passed: Gegit-All

6. Action Items

- **Ojibwe Language Pronunciation Guide and Signs in City Hall (Goodrich, DPAC)**
 - Update on discussions with DPAC. Discussed earlier to get formal communication with DPAC, and commissioners attempt to attend their meeting on 10/20/25.

7. Ongoing Business

- None

8. Subcommittees

- **Education (Lightfeather):** 10/23/25 is an APAC meeting, online and in person from 4:30-6pm. Duluth Public School Parent Committee has information on the website. 10/28/25 is another meeting at Denfeld. She was selected Chair at Harbor City School.
- **Full Moon Ceremonies (Davis):** Chair been working with Commissioner Smith to organize the dates and fire pit for the ceremonies.
- **Housing (Hrabik):** No Update
- **Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Relatives (MMIWR) (Goodrich):** Close to the \$10,000 and still sharing the donation link, along with the history and origin. Also, May 5th David Storbakken has recently gone missing he was last seen May 11th, 2025 in the Twin Cities. The Gaagige-Mikwendaagoziwag award fund is close to the \$10,000 goal. Continue to look for Sheila St. Clair, who has been missing over 10 years.
- **Sobriety Feast (Smith):** Will be at One Roof Starting November 21th. They have six months' worth of speakers and some funds from Essentia to assist.

9. Announcements

- 10/23/25 1-3pm AICHO will be holding an American Indian Cancer Foundation Focus group

10. Next Meeting: November 17, 2025.

- The Commission would like to develop a Land Acknowledgment Statement. The Commissioners asked Marsha to assist the Commission.
- The Commission has concerns about the City not hiring a Sustainability Officer and would like to learn more information.
- Meeting adjourned at 7:25 pm
- Motion passed: Gegit-All



DATE: October 20, 2025

FROM: Duluth Indigenous Commission

TO: Duluth City Council

RE: AN ORDINANCE TO INCORPORATE THE DULUTH PROTECTED CLASS COMMISSIONS AS COMMITTEES WITHIN THE HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION AND FURTHER ALLOWING THE ADDITION OF OTHER COMMITTEES WITHIN THE HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION

At a regular meeting of the Duluth Indigenous Commission on October 20, 2025 Commissioners voted by consensus *Gegit (all)* to remain a sovereign Indigenous Commission. The Indigenous Commission was created by the Duluth City Council pursuant to Ordinance 9529, amending Chapter 2 of the Duluth City Code, 1959, as amended. The Commission serves in an advisory capacity to the City Council and Administration. The purpose of this commission is to ensure that the views of the Indigenous community are incorporated in the decision making, future planning, and stewardship of the city of Duluth. The commission will endeavor to act as a guide in the development of public policy, planning and services so that the Indigenous community is adequately represented in these processes. The commission will also endeavor to increase understanding and acceptance of the Indigenous community and culture and to increase Indigenous community involvement in all aspects of community affairs in Duluth.

Phoebe Davis
Chair

Rene Ann Goodrich
Vice Chair

Rene Ann Goodrich MMIWR SubCommittee Updates:

Sheila St Clair 10th year missing in Duluth MN.

In Recognition of the 10th year of the Missing Sheila St Clair in the City of Duluth MN we are sharing the "first of its kind in the state of MN" and beyond reward fund that was created in Sheila St Clair's honor.

“[Gaagige Mikwendaagoziwag Reward Fund](#) was created with the City of Duluth in partnership with Native Lives Matter Coalition and Mending the Sacred Hoop. [Formally approved by Duluth City Council January 10, 2022](#). Committee members further worked to expand the local reward fund, and MN MMIR Office with a reward account with the state of Minnesota. More information can be found [here](#).”

We are sharing the history and origin of the Gaagige-Mikwendaagoziwag Reward Fund": An Indigenous Led grassroots model created with MMIW/R Families, Survivors and Elders with the City of Duluth, Mending the Sacred Hoop and Native Lives Matter Coalition 2022. To include Indigenous Commission of Duluth 2023

Duluth Gaagige-Mikwendaagoziwag - Grassroots

<https://updateandnews.wixsite.com/gaagige-mikwendaag-1>

This grassroots reward fund was further expanded upon through collaborative efforts with committee partners and state representatives to establish a statewide reward fund named "Gaagige Mikwendaagoziwag" in recognition of the grassroots efforts.

Minnesota Lawmakers Establish A Gaagige-Mikwendaagoziwag Reward Account with the State during the 2022-2023 legislative session 5/19/2023

<https://www.revisor.mn.gov/laws/2023/0/52/laws.5.24.0...>

Gaagige Mikwendaagoziwag Committee (Duluth) Report 2022-2024

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10/04/2025

Family Duluth Search for Missing David Storbakken - Missing Person

A case being serviced by the MN MPS MMIR Office, He is known to travel between Saint Paul ,
Duluth, Bemidji and So MPLS

Duluth Police Department shared public request for information, Last seen in Duluth May 5,2025

Sain Paul PD shared- Last Seen Roseville MN May 11,2025

Please contacts with any information about David Storbakken : Crime Stoppers 800-222-TIPS

St Paul Police Department 651-291-1111