

Duluth Indigenous Commission
Monday, July 20, 2020
Virtual Webex Meeting

Present: Babette Sandman, Kassie Helgerson, Larry Heady, Rochelle Goodrich, Moira Villiard, Amber Lightfeather, Phoebe Davis, Roxanne DeLille

Absent: Carol DeVerney

Staff: Suzanne Kelley, 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

Chair Sandman called the meeting to order at 5:35, introductions were made.

2. Approval of meeting minutes

Commissioner Davis bezhig Commissioner Heady niizho to approve the Duluth Indigenous Commission meeting notes from May 18, 2020. **Motion Passed 8:0**

3. Public comment

- Summary of comments received prior to the meeting
 - City Staff, Kathy Wilson, gave summary that no comments were received prior to the meeting
- Virtual public comment via Webex
 - No discussion

4. New Business

- Discussion about City Council resolution to remove the word “chief” from city titles
 - City Councilor Renee Van Nett gave explanation that the resolution intended to remove the word “chief” from city titles, for example, the title of Chief Administrative Officer would be changed to City Administrator. She explained that the resolution originally came from City Administration, was passed at the City Charter Commission, and then tabled at a recent City Council meeting due to disagreements among Councilors on the necessity of the resolution.
 - Alicia Kozlowski, Community Relations Officer, gave further explanation that the resolution was brought forward by City administration as part of its efforts to make the City a more inclusive, comfortable place to

work and live for employees and residents. An additional reason behind the resolution was to better align the City of Duluth with other public entities and professional organizations, who more commonly use this language.

- After much discussion, Indigenous Commission members were in agreeance that they support the passing of this resolution and that the word “chief” should be removed from city titles. Points of discussion on this topic included: whether or not the word chief belonged in non-Native environments, whether it is culturally appropriate to have chief in city job titles, how the word chief has been assigned to Indigenous Peoples by colonizers based on the perception of Indigenous governing structures, the use of the word chief as a derogatory term or stereotype of Indigenous people.
- During the discussion Commissioner Helgerson noted that she invited City Councilor Derek Medved, who was questioning the necessity of this resolution, to attend the Indigenous Commission meeting and be part of this discussion but he failed to respond to her request. In turn, Commissioners had concerns that there was a misunderstanding of the role of the Indigenous Commission in ensuring that the views of the Indigenous Community are incorporated in the decision-making, future planning, and stewardship of the city of Duluth.
- Information about attending City Council meeting
 - City staff, Kathy Wilson, explained that later tonight at the City Council meeting, Indigenous Commission members will have a chance to address City Council on the topic of removing “chief” from city titles. She explained that Commissioners can address the Council via Webex during the Reports from Boards and Commissions item on the agenda.
- Updates on cultural space at Edison
 - Commissioner Lightfeather updated the commission that after years of planning, the cultural space at Edison was going to be implemented. It will be a cultural space with the flags of Indigenous Nations from Minnesota, a circular gathering space, and a garden.
- Meet applicants to commission
 - Cayla DeGroat introduced herself as an applicant to the Commission. She said that she grew up on the White Earth reservation but has lived in Duluth for more than 10 years. She would like to work on elevating Indigenous voices in City processes and focus on domestic abuse issues and childcare if she were appointed.
- Decolonization ideas
 - Chair Sandman explained that for this item of the agenda she would like to hear stories from Commissioners on how they are working to decolonize thoughts, processes, etc. in their daily lives.
 - Decolonization ideas discussed included: assuming positive intentions, reframing historical traumas and victimhood, challenging dominant

narratives and processes in education, taking care of community members through food access, elder care, and needle pickups.

- Chair Sandman stated she'd like to continue this discussion at other meetings and hear other people's stories.

5. Action items

- Proposed virtual meeting protocols
 - Commissioner Heady gave a summary on an update to the bylaws that would allow for virtual meetings in light of disaster, snow emergencies, pandemics, etc. Commissioner Heady will send to City staff to send to all Commissioners for review.

6. Subcommittees

- Art in Gichi-ode' Akiing
 - Commissioner Villiard gave update that the Anishinaabe fund awarded \$6,000 dollars to continue the Chief Buffalo project in Gichi-ode' Akiing. Currently they are working on acquiring the correct permits and they continue to fundraise, work with Zeitgeist, and consult with Chief Buffalo's decedents.
- Education
 - No discussion
- Police
 - No discussion
- Ni Mi Win- Collaboration with Historic Preservation Commission to preserve Ni Mi Win
 - No discussion
- Opioids/AIM/Sweat Lodge/Sobriety Feast
 - No discussion
- Policy- Local Designation of Sacred Sites Resolution, Bylaws
 - No discussion

7. Old business

- No discussion

8. Announcements/Adjournment

- Meeting Adjourned at 6:55 PM in time for Commissioners to attend and address City Council at their meeting at 7 PM

9. Next Meeting

- Next meeting is August 17, 2020 at 5:30 PM via Webex