

Duluth Indigenous Commission
Monday, March 15, 2021
Virtual WebEx Meeting

Commissioners present: Kassie Helgerson, Babette Sandman, Moira Villiard, Cayla DeGroat, Phoebe Davis, Amber Lightfeather, Roxanne DeLille

Commissioners absent: Carol Deverney, Rochelle Goodrich

Staff Present: Suzanne Kelley, 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 began the meeting at 5:47. Introductions were made.

2. Approval of January 25, 2020 Meeting Minutes

- Helgerson bezhig/Villiard niizho to approve. Motion passed (6:0) One Commissioner wasn't present for the vote.

3. Public Comment

- City Staff updated the Commission that no comments were received prior to the virtual meeting.
- Duluth Police Department Staff, Deputy Chief Nick Lukovsky and Deputy Chief Laura Marquardt, were in attendance at request of Commissioners. Discussion items included:
 - Concerns about the Derek Chauvin trial in Minneapolis. Commissioner Davis mentioned she is doing some work related to diversifying local juries.
 - Commissioners requested getting regular updates from DPD at their meetings.
 - Information about collaboration efforts in the community, i.e. native groups like AIM to address mental health and drug trafficking in the area.
 - A Commissioner had concerns about police interacting with the homeless, specifically when they are camped on public property. There was a specific instance of a person who showed up to a camp claiming to be an officer but not giving their name. Another Commissioner brought up an issue with an Officer dealing with a domestic violence call. Who should community members contact to report issues?
 - Deputy Chief Murkovsky and Marquandt said that anyone experiencing an issue should get in contact with them so they can gather more details. They provided their phone numbers and email addresses. They also mentioned other ways to file

complaints via the DPD general email, phone number and the Civilian Review Board.

- A Commissioner asked how DPD handles mental health calls.
 - Deputy Marquardt said that Officers receive mandatory critical incident training, DPD leverages partnerships in the community on how to better approach these events, DPD works with City Attorney's office to not criminalize those who had an interaction with the police while having a mental health crisis, DPD has a robust mental health unit with embedded social workers
 - Deputy Chief Marquardt mentioned that they could request someone from the Opioid Response Team or other special units within the Department could come to upcoming meetings. Commissioners agreed and thought that would be helpful.

4. City Report and Updates

- Updates/Comments from City Council
 - No discussion

5. New Business

- Discuss and finalize resolution to support Rights of Nature Group
 - Tabled until next month's meeting
 - Commissioners requested that Staff send out copy to everyone again so they can review before next meeting

6. Action items

- City staff to send contact information for Greater Downtown Council to Co-chair Sandman to discuss support of Chief Buffalo mural project.

7. Subcommittees

- Opioids/AIM/Sweat Lodge/Sobriety Feast
 - Co-chair Sandman summarized DIC efforts and ideas from the past that were taken over and continued by community members.
 - Co-chair Helgerson updated Commissioners that AIM continues to work on the yurt village project for people experiencing homelessness. Within the next year they will build one yurt to be used by a couple. They are looking for other private property owners to sponsor yurts. The next couple looking to get housed has some accessibility requirements so that is being considered in placement. AIM has open zoom meetings if anyone is interested in attending to learn more. AIM is also working with All Nations Indigenous Center to do some fundraising.
- Art in Gichi-ode' Akiing
 - Commissioner Villiard gave the update that after going through numerous review processes the Chief Buffalo mural project should be

ready to begin this summer. An immediate next step is to submit sketches to the Public Arts Commission for approval. There is still one wall missing from the project plan that the Chief Buffalo family would like to have as part of the mural. Intention is to include this in a phase II of the project. Commissioner Villiard mentioned that she has a familial connection to Chief Buffalo after doing some genealogy research.

- Bylaws
 - No discussion
- Education
 - Commissioner Lightfeather has been working with the Library on the Every Child Ready initiative to better include Native kids and make them feel welcome. She provided some outreach ideas for them.
 - Commissioner Lightfeather is also working with Edison schools to get a new superintendent/head of schools. She is on the steering committee with the intent of choosing someone who is open minded and driven. The outdoor native education class at Edison is moving forward.
 - Duluth Public Schools will be hosting a spring equinox feast for kids on Friday, March 19 at 5:30 PM. The feast will be drive through style at the parking lot outside of historic old central.
- Police
 - Discussion held during public comment
- Sacred Sites
 - Commissioner Davis had written a short proposal announcing Lake Superior a sacred site. Co-chair Sandman said that this could connect to the Rights of Nature resolution. Davis has been collaborating with a couple other groups and would like to bring them in to discuss further at a meeting.
- Spirit Mountain
 - Co-chair Sandman stated that this spring there are plans to put on a big feast at Spirit Mountain. Co-chair Sandman and Commissioner Davis will coordinate with Commissioner Helgerson to start preserving memories from Ni-Mi-Win Powwow to display at the feast. Commissioner Davis has also started putting together a wikipedia page for Ni-Mi-Win Powwow.

8. Old Business

- Indigenous Calendar
 - Co-chair Sandman recommended that the Commission switch out the images on the calendar with images that document local, Indigenous Commission-related work. She mentioned sobriety feast, indigenous peoples day, and mural images from Gichi-ode' Akiing to name a few.
- Decolonization and Visibility Ideas (Sandman)

- Commissioners discussed some visibility and decolonization ideas they had been working on recently.

9. Announcements/Adjournment

- March 22 is world water awareness day. Commissioner DeLille will be recognizing this at the Park Point beach entrance off of 12th at 5pm.
- Commissioner Villiard announced an animation art opening down in Minneapolis that was projected on the waterfall by the Mississippi river. She is working on bringing this installation to Duluth.
- Co-chair Sandman announced that a piece written by herself and her daughter will be published in the Thunderbird Review. A release party is happening on April 15.
- U.S. Representative Deb Haaland was confirmed as Secretary of the Interior
- Adjourn: 7:06 PM

10. Next meeting April 19, 2021 at 5:30 PM via WebEx

- Commissioners requested that City Staff send meeting link out each month