

Duluth Indigenous Commission
Monday, May 17, 2021
Virtual WebEx Meeting

Commissioners present: Phoebe Davis, Roxanne DeLille, Kassie Helgerson, Rochelle Goodrich, Amber Lightfeather

Commissioners absent: Babette Sandman, Carol Deverney, Moira Villiard, Cayla Bellanger DeGroat

Staff present: Kathy Wilson, Suzanne Kelley, 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 Helgerson called the meeting to order at 5:51 PM, introductions were made.

2. Approval of April 19, 2021 Meeting Minutes

- Commissioner Davis bezhig/Commissioner Delille niizho to approve. Motion passed 5:0.

3. Public Comments

- Christina Woods from the Duluth Arts Institute introduced herself as the President of the Duluth Arts Commission and discussed project the Commissions could work together on. Specific discussion topics included:
 - Correcting the falsehoods regarding the Leif Erickson statute, including removing or covering the plaque where it states “discovered”.
 - Working on renaming places
 - Providing more Indigenous artwork throughout the City of Duluth
 - Encourage communication and more art work from the BIPOC community
 - Possible work together on the Watershed Art Plan

4. City Reports and Updates

- Deputy Chief Marquardt and Councilor Gary Anderson explained the Duluth Police Department is creating a committee to draft a proposal to hire an independent contractor to perform a racial bias audit on the police department. They are asking African Heritage Commission, Human Rights Commission, Disability Commission, NAACP, AICHO, and other BIPOC groups for members to join this committee. This committee will develop the request for proposals, review the proposals from the contractors, select the contractor and then review the contractor’s findings in the racial audit. These committee meetings would be held once to twice a month. The racial audit would review the practices, policies, training, recruitment, and procedures to identify areas that need improvement. Deputy Chief Marquardt provided her contact information for potential members and asked for additional recommendations.
 - The Commission members requested this item to be on the agenda for discussion at the next meeting.
- Councilor Gary Anderson informed the Commission that the Public Safety Committee Chair and is available at any time for any comments, questions or concerns regarding Public Safety.

- City Attorney Rebecca St. George discussed updating the bylaws. Commissioners Helgerson, DeLille, and Goodrich volunteered to be on a subcommittee to discuss the update. City Staff will coordinate a meeting for next week.

5. New business

- Duluth Waterfront Collective (Jordan van der Hagen)
 - Mr. Van der Hagen discussed the concerns for pedestrian crossing I-35 Corridor and discussed design idea to make it more pedestrian friendly and reinforce the connection to Lake Superior.
 - Commission members agreed and discussed how many of the current travel patterns followed the Indigenous patterns. They also discussed the underground waterways that need attention and recognition. Members stated that education about the history of the Indigenous tribes need to be shown with plaques, artwork, and language.
- New Applicant to the Commission(City staff)
 - Commission members unanimously agreed of having Lenelle Hrabik appointed to the Commission. City Staff will follow up with City Administration.
- Duluth Ojibwe Language
 - This project is continuing. There should be an increase on having the language displayed throughout City Hall and other businesses in the City. Commission members asked for this to be on the agenda for next meeting.

6. Action Items

- No discussion

7. Subcommittees

- AIM/Opioids/Sweat Lodge/Sobriety Feast (Helgerson)
 - AIM Update- the cost of the yurts has increased from \$500 to \$2000 due to the increase in lumber. Also it difficult to find locations for the yurts. It was mentioned that there could be some funding with tourism dollars, City Staff will research.
- Art in Gichi-ode' Akiing (Villiard)
 - Duluth Public Arts Commission is working with Indigenous Commission member Moira Villiard on increasing art opportunities and visual awareness.
- Bylaws
 - Discussion was provided during City Reports and Updates.
- Education (Lightfeather)
 - No discussion
- Police
 - Discussion was provided during City Reports and Updates.
- Sacred Sites (Davis)
 - No updates
- Spirit Mountain (Sandman)
 - There is an opportunity to coordinate and have a celebration of the spirits at Spirit Mountain.

8. Old Business

- Indigenous Calendar
 - No discussion
- Decolonization and Visibility
 - Commission Davis spoke in Ojibwe for a radio show.
 - Commissioner Helgerson spoke about how her granddaughter was able to display her heritage by dancing.
 - Having Christina on the Duluth Public Arts Commission will provide increased opportunities.
 - There are concerns about systematic racism being faced by Tribal Colleges for their accreditation.

9. Announcements

- Kathy Wilson will be sending a city survey for boards and commissions.
- The end of this week is Red Dress Project with Natives Lives Matter Coalition.

10. Next Meeting June 21, 2021

- Meeting adjourned 7:37 PM