

NEVADA INDIAN COMMISSION BOARD MEETING MINUTES

Thursday, December 3, 2015 - 9:30am

Nevada Indian Commission Office, 5500 Snyder Ave., Carson City, NV 89701

Commissioners Present:

Richard Arnold, Chairman
Kathleen Quasula, Commissioner
Dan Carpenter, Commissioner
Marla Williams, Commissioner

Staff Present:

Sherry L. Rupert, Executive Director
Chris Gibbons, Program Officer I
Denise M. Becker, Administrative Assistant III

Guests Present:

Scott Carey, Stewart Indian School Preservation Alliance (SISPA)
Alex Tanchek, Stewart Indian School Preservation Alliance (SISPA)
Larry Burton, Photographer
Melissa Melero, Great Basin Native Artists
Fran Maldonado, Tribal Liaison, Division of Child and Family Services
Theresa Rowe, Head Start Director, Washoe Tribe of Nevada and California
Wayne Howle, Senior Deputy Attorney General, Attorney General's Office
Julieta Mendoza, Tribal Liaison, Department of Health and Human Services
Rhonda Knight, Indian Education Specialist, Washoe County School District
Terri McBride, Board Member, Stewart Indian School Preservation Alliance (SISPA) and Vice-Chair Nevada Indian Commission Stewart Advisory Committee and Vice-Chair, Carson City Cultural Commission
Kostan Lathouris, Vice-Chairman, Stewart Indian School Preservation Alliance (SISPA)

I. Convene Meeting & Roll Call

Chairman Arnold convened the meeting at 10:34 am and asked Sherry to take roll. Four Commissioners were present, establishing a quorum.

II. Invocation

Richard Arnold provided the invocation.

III. Welcome and Introductions

Chairman Arnold asked all those present to introduce themselves and thanked everyone for attending.

IV. Initial Public Comment

There was no initial public comment.

V. Administration of the Oath of Office for New Commissioner

Chairman Arnold performed the Oath of Office for new Commissioners, Dan Carpenter and Marla Williams.

VI. Approval of September 4, 2015 Meeting Minutes

Chairman Arnold noted that the minutes were provided in advance of the meeting.

Commissioner Quasula motioned to approve the September 4, 2015 meeting minutes as presented, seconded by Commissioner Williams. The motion carried with a vote of 4 for, 0 against, 0 abstentions (1 absent).

VII. Commissioner Reports and Announcements

Commissioner Quasula is on the Board for the Stewart Indian School Preservation Alliance (SISPA) and commented that its establishment is moving forward, but funding continues to be an issue. She shared that she also worked on the U.S. Sentencing Commission Guidelines in Bismarck a month ago. Penalties for youthful offenders for juveniles tribes are getting some felony jurisdiction and against non-natives in the area of domestic violence. This report will be coming out around May 2016 in the Federal Register. They want comment and feedback on this. This will change things historically.

Chairman Arnold commented that he thanked the Commissioners for their participation at the Banquet. He thanked the staff for all of their hard work. Secondly, he said that he appreciated the commissioners supporting the banquet for something that is very worthy.

VIII. Executive Director Report – Sherry L. Rupert

Sherry briefly shared highlights from her report. She noted that the number of tours in the fall months has increased; they have doubled the number of tours at Stewart Indian School. Historically tours to the school have been given in the month of May to students from Southern Nevada. Sherry commented that she felt that because of the increased attention that has been given to the school, there are now more visitors.

Commissioner Quasula questioned whether there was an opportunity to partner with a school like The Meadows (in southern Nevada). She stated that Caroline Goodman is affiliated with the school. She thinks this would be a great opportunity for partnership. This could give the Stewart Indian School additional exposure and potential parental donors. Chairman Arnold said they offered scholarships to Native students at one point. Commissioner Quasula would like the Commission to look at private schools that can be partners. She also offered that she knows some people that went to Bishop Gorman (in southern Nevada). There may also be other private schools throughout the state that could become partners.

Sherry explained that state agencies are already beginning to build budgets for the next Legislative Session. The agency has been asked to come up with stretch goals to share with the Governor's Office. Sherry shared her draft stretch goals with the Commission. Sherry stressed that it is important to think about how the Commission can retain the Cabinet level seat for Indian Affairs and access to the Governor when a new administration comes on board.

Commissioner Williams commented that she has watched the progression of the Commission over the years and has recognized that the Commission has grown leaps and bounds from where it once was and that is a testament to the Executive Director's hard work. She also mentioned that it would be good to hear from the community on what they feel is important to them and for the Commission.

Chairman Arnold commented that there is a lot to consider. The Commission needs to make sure they are thinking along these lines even if this does not happen this session; especially now that the Commission has the support of the Governor. He would like Sherry to do some fact-finding and bring the information back to the Commission, keeping in mind the community that the Commission serves.

Commissioner Quasula motioned to approve the Executive Director report and additions as presented, seconded by Commissioner Williams. The motion carried with a vote of 4 for, 0 against, 0 abstentions (1 absent).

IX. Discussion on Representation on the Nevada Commission on Tourism

Sherry explained that according to NRS 231.161, the Chairman of the Nevada Indian Commission is an ex-officio member of the Nevada Commission on Tourism (NCOT). This happened a few sessions ago when the Nevada Indian Commission and the Nevada Arts Council and Division of Museums and History moved under the Department of Tourism and Cultural Affairs. She went on to further explain that participation on the Nevada Commission on Tourism is very important to the Nevada Indian Commission especially moving forward with the Stewart Indian School Cultural Center. The Tourism Commission needs to be kept aware of all the tourism-related items that the NIC works on and that the Stewart Indian School Living Legacy is going to be of importance and an added value to what the state of Nevada already offers to visitors.

Chairman Arnold commented that it is often challenging to make the meetings, especially when the meetings aren't scheduled out in advance. Many times his calendar is already booked. He further stated that there is no doubt that the Commission needs to be there, and he and Sherry have coordinated in the past. The statute says the Chair is the member, so there needs to be a presence there. He cannot attend the December meeting, but can attend the March date and he has already let NCOT know his availability. The Chairman offered that if any Commissioner is interested in attending these meetings when he is unavailable, to let Sherry know. Sherry also stated that she would be willing to assist in writing the report for the NIC representative and that she usually attends the meeting and can be available to answer any technical questions that should arise.

Commissioner Williams thought that receiving NCOT meeting minutes would be helpful to the NIC Commissioners. Sherry suggested she send a link for the NCOT meeting minutes to Commissioners as they are rather lengthy.

Chairman Arnold suggested also forwarding the NCOT meeting agendas to the rest of the NIC Commissioners so they could be aware of the topics of discussion and could attend if interested.

X. Update on Planning for the Traditional Ecological Knowledge Summit

Sherry explained that the dates for the Bi-State Traditional Ecological Knowledge (TEK) Summit have been confirmed for March 1-3, 2016 in the Stewart Indian School Gym. This is an opportunity to bring Western Science together with traditionalists so they can learn from each other and begin to work more collaboratively on the management plans that will affect shared public lands.

Commissioner Quasula would like to see the next NIC Board meeting coincide with the TEK Summit. This would allow the Commissioners to attend and have a showing of support that would emphasize the importance of this issue.

Chairman Arnold commented that the group should make sure that they are looking at the whole ecology and not just the pine nut trees, but how the cutting of the pine nut trees affects the whole ecology.

Terri thanked Sherry for coordinating this summit. She has been developing plans for Indian people on the pine nuts. This helps build on traditional knowledge, pine nuts are not the only thing that they learn. The U.S. Forest Service plan is wrong, and they did not talk to any traditional users. She is excited for this summit.

XI. Indian Education

A. Written Report on Indian Education Advisory Committee (IEAC) Activities

A written report was not received from the Committee.

Commissioner Quasula motioned to table the IEAC report, seconded by Commissioner Carpenter. The motion carried with a vote of 4 for, 0 against, 0 abstentions (1 absent).

B. Written Report on Current Indian Education Program Activities

Commissioner Quasula motioned to approve the Nevada Department of Education, Indian Education Program Professional's report as written, seconded by Commissioner Williams. The motion carried with a vote of 4 for, 0 against, 0 abstentions (1 absent).

XII. STEWART INDIAN SCHOOL

A. Approval of Report on Stewart History and Preservation Project

Chris went over her written report with the Commissioners.

Commissioner Quasula recommended that the NIC make the request to find out why the Underrepresented Communities Grant application was denied.

Chairman Arnold commented that the NIC should consider having the Stewart Indian School listed as a Traditional Cultural Property (TCP), Bulletin 38 NPS. This designation gives a tribal voice in the management; with a TCP, there has to be a tribal voice. The NIC could work with Terri McBride on this as she can provide the information on this process. Chairman Arnold is also willing to help.

The Commission will need to inquire of the National Historic Landmark office in Washington D.C. to see if this designation can be layered on top of the National Register. Richard thinks this would only help with the National Historic Landmark designation. This would be the first Indian School to have the TCP designation.

Commissioner Williams motioned to approve the Stewart History and Preservation Project report as presented and submitted by Chris Ann Gibbons, seconded by Commissioner Quasula. The motion carried with a vote of 4 for, 0 against, 0 abstentions (1 absent).

B. Report on 2015 American Indian Achievement Award Banquet and Silent Auction

Sherry thanked all of the Commissioners for attending and supporting the Banquet. She reported that the following were the night's awardees:

American Indian Community Leader of the Year: Joseph Holley
American Indian Youth Services/Role Model of the Year: Saundra Mitrovich
American Youth Ambassador of the Year: Alexandria Williams
Contributor/Supporter of the Year: John Ocegüera

Sherry reported that there were 135 in attendance, leaving just 5 seats unsold. The silent auction proceeds were outstanding this year. This had a lot to do with the native art that was donated. Total event proceeds were the highest it has ever been.

Chairman Arnold would like to see side conversations during the presentations be minimized; they are distracting. He further suggested that the caliber of silent auction items should continue to be increased.

Commissioner Carpenter said that increased authentic items would be sought after and should be pursued.

Kostan Lathouris requested a copy of the banquet program.

C. Report on Executive Director Visit to Carlisle Indian School, Carlisle, PA

Sherry explained that when she was in Washington D.C. last, she made a special trip to Carlisle, PA to visit the former Carlisle Indian School. Carlisle is now the War College for the Army and has very limited

access for visitors. They do not have access to the buildings for interpretation like we do here, they have access to one building at this point; the farmhouse. The group is now going to purchase a separate piece of land and build their own interpretive center. The disadvantage that this group has is that there aren't any tribes in Pennsylvania, the state tourism budget is very minimal and the historical society has minimal interest in their efforts. Sherry stated that she feels very fortunate to have the support and connections that the Commission has here for the Stewart Indian School.

Chairman Arnold stated that this is precisely why it's so important to have an Indian voice. If Carlisle used the Executive Order for sacred sites on the federal lands, the native people would be able to have access there. There are creative ways to get onto these sacred/tribal areas using federal laws.

Commissioner Quasula mentioned that that school has benefited off of Jim Thorpe's name; it would be nothing without Jim Thorpe.

D. Update from the Stewart Indian School Preservation Alliance (SISPA)

Scott Carey presented on behalf of the SISPA and provided a written report. He stated that the sole purpose for the new non-profit is to raise funds for Stewart Indian School preservation and to support the NIC's efforts. They would like the Commission's help in securing contacts of folks who would be interested in assisting with fundraising. Scott thanked the Commission for their support. He also mentioned that the NIC staff has been excellent to work with. They will continue to work very close with the Commission.

Chairman Arnold mentioned that many people want write offs at the end of the year and could be good to solicit. They also could look to the Secretary of State listing of businesses, targeting those with native names. They could be contacted for potential partnerships and donations.

Commissioner Quasula has requested tribal affiliations of students from Stewart, so those tribes can be contacted as well.

Chairman Arnold mentioned that people can buy a brick or a plaque. Some people will contribute more to a tangible thing, and they want to know what exactly they are contributing to.

XIII. Report on Indian Territory Projects and Activities

Chris Gibbons, Treasurer for the Indian Territory provided the Commission with a written report. She briefly went through the highlights of her report.

XIV. Update on Combining the Tribal Early Childhood Advisory Committee (TECAC) and the Indian Education Advisory Committee (IEAC)

Sherry explained that both the TECAC and IEAC committees did not meet over the summer, so there have been no written reports submitted and there has been no resolution to the merger.

Chairman Arnold could see how there could be some concerns; how do you blend these two groups? He believes this needs further discussion among the groups.

Commissioner Williams suggested revising the by-laws to include language in regard to meeting attendance.

Chairman Arnold recommended sending a letter to the TECAC group asking if they're still interested in having this committee and that the NIC is looking at blending the committee.

Commissioner Quasula would like Sherry to check to see if the Commission can merge the two committees on their own.

Commissioner Williams commented that the Commission needed to follow the by-laws, and she thinks revising the members would be the way to go.

Chairman Arnold suggested sending a letter to see if the TECAC still wants to be involved; if there is no response, then the Commission may need to merge.

XV. Agenda Items for Future Meetings

Suggestions for future agenda items included: Election of Vice-Chair, report back on TECAC and IEAC merger, an update on the Stewart non-profit, report on TEK summit and meeting minutes. Any other requests for agenda items can be forwarded to Sherry.

There was a brief discussion on starting times for the next NIC Board meetings. The group decided that a 10:00am start time would be more convenient. There was also some discussion about having the Board meetings at various locations across the state to encourage more tribal participation. The Board would like to see a summer meeting in Ely, NV, along with a tour of the area by the local tribes. Videoconferences should also be considered for future meetings even though it is always better to have face to face meetings.

XVI. Scheduling and Location of Next NIC Meeting

The next Nevada Indian Commission Board Meetings were *tentatively* scheduled for February 29, 2016 to begin at 10:00am to accommodate travel.

XVII. Final Public Comment

Sherry pointed out that there is an article about the American Indian Achievement Award Banquet in the Reno-Sparks Indian Colony's newsletter, The Camp News.

XVIII. Adjournment

Commissioner Quasula motioned to adjourn the meeting, seconded by Commissioner Williams. The motion carried with a vote of 4 for, 0 against, 0 abstentions (1 absent). Meeting was adjourned at 1:00 pm.

CERTIFICATION

It is hereby certified that these Meeting Minutes were approved at a meeting of the Nevada Indian Commission with a vote of 4 for, 0 against, 0 abstentions, 1 absent, at a meeting duly held on March 24, 2016.

Certified by:



Sherry L. Rupert, Executive Director
Nevada Indian Commission