

**NATIVE AMERICAN COMMISSION  
MINUTES  
December 11, 2008**

**Members Present:** Scott Saterno, Dr. Tim Mahoney, Dan Fremling, Sandi Berlin, Jaclynn Davis Walette, Sharon White Bear, Donald Martin, Guy Fox, Gus Claymore

**Members not present:** all members were present

**Others present:** Willard Yellow Bird, Sandy Reynolds, Cleo Monette, Dr. Olivia Melroe and Jeff Brochert

**Item 1. Opening and Introductions** - Scott opened the meeting at 5:02 p.m. and introductions were conducted.

**Item 2. Approval of Agenda** – Sandi Berlin motioned to approve the agenda. Dan Fremling seconded the motion. Motion approved unanimously.

**Item 3. Approval of November Minutes** – Guy Fox motioned to approve the minutes. Sharon White Bear seconded the motion. Motion approved unanimously.

**Item 4. VA Medical Center Programs** – Cleo Monette, LCSW from the VA Medical Center in Fargo provided information regarding Native American programs at the medical center. She explained that she serves in multiple positions at the VA that provide services to Native American Veterans. Presently she is working on establishing a cooperative agreement with Indian Health Services (IHS) to provide mental health services to veterans on three northern Minnesota and four North Dakota reservations. Difficulty in accomplishing this is attributed to limited space available for the service within the IHS clinics. The Vet Center has two vans set up that may potentially be used for office space on the reservations. She has been involved with helping to assure Native American veterans who are historically underserved, get enrolled with the VA and receive the services they are entitled to. Outreach has been conducted on reservations recently to enroll the veterans in healthcare, provide medical assessment and accomplish service connected ratings, the goal being to have them rated within two weeks. The numbers of veterans served at each reservation are as follows: Turtle Mountain 177, Spirit Lake 77, White Earth 44 and Fort Berthold 144. In May they plan to go to Standing Rock and after that Leech Lake. The VA is providing a sweat every third Friday at 2:00. To participate, individuals must be veterans, have completed an orientation and been approved by their provider. Jaclynn asked how many Native American veterans there are in Fargo-Moorhead, Cleo responded that there are only estimates and she believes this is because many are not identified as Native American on their paperwork. She has been working to identify Native American Veterans and in the future hopes to be able to have an actual number available. She has a goal of developing a Native American Advisory Council in the future. She asks if anyone knows of anyone interested in the sweats that they have them contact her directly.

**Item 5. Mary John Recognition discussion** – Dr. Olivia Melroe explained that on November 27, 2008, Mary was awarded a National Native Elder Hero Award. She explained that this award is given by the National Administration on Aging in partnership with the UND Medical School. This is the first round for this award and Mary is one of 40 who were granted it. The next awards will be given in three years. The award is presented to individuals who help native elders, continue and promote traditions and help to build strong communities. A National reception will be held at a later date, the location is not yet known. She believes it would be appropriate to hold a reception in the community to acknowledge and recognize this great honor. She also wanted the commission to be aware that funds are not provided to the recipients to travel to the National reception.

Discussion was held regarding holding a community reception and possibly helping to provide assistance with the cost of attending the National reception. Don Martin, treasurer, stated that the current budget does not have a specific amount set aside for such things but possibly funds set aside for public awareness could be used. Next year's budget could potentially include a specific allotment for this type of need. Sandi and Sharon volunteered to work with Olivia on planning a reception and will report at the next NAC meeting. Sharon suggested the NAC consider a gift for Mary not paid for through the budget. Sandi suggested the NAC could consider presenting an annual award to deserving community members.

**Item 6. Discussion of Old Business –**

**1. Update on NAC Website** – A copy of the updated website was provided. Guy reported that he has met with Willard and the City of Fargo Communication Manager. The NAC is limited to the template that the City of Fargo has established for the website. The NAC page has been updated and minutes can be added as well as links to tribal entities. Pictures on the web page need to be updated and committee members may submit pictures for consideration.

**2. Three Affiliated Tribes Satellite Office Template Budget** – Willard provided a copy of a template budget he requested from Dan Mahli, City Planner. He states this is a template that could be expanded or depreciated as needed, it is a starting point only. Discussion was held regarding potential locations and what needs to be done next. Potential locations could include property owned by the City of Fargo or possibly property currently utilized by Yoke-Sim's Cultural Diversity project. The location must be in the City of Fargo and Dan Mahli is checking into possible locations. Willard stated that the purpose, goals and budget need to be written, like a grant, to be presented to the Three Affiliated Tribes at a future council meeting regarding funding. The sub-committee in charge of this will meet before the end of the month and in an effort to get other community members involved, it was suggested each of them bring 3-4 members from the community to the meeting. A NAC member from another tribe should also be involved to provide input, since the long range goal is to have other tribes involved in this project.

**Item 7. Sub Committee Updates** – The updated list of sub committees is not ready. This item will be included on the next agenda for discussion.

**Item 8. Financial Report** – Don Martin reported there is no change from last months report. There are some items to pay and he will have a new report next month.

**Item 9. New Business** –

Scott reported he has been in contact with Vonnie Alberts, Three Affiliated Tribes, and she has pictures and presentations from the meeting last month to share with the NAC.

Sharon asked if there is any interest in the NAC supporting a visit to the community from Alyssa Alberts, Miss Indian Nations from New Town, ND. She suggested, April 17 and 18 might be good dates as it would allow her to present in the community on Friday the 17<sup>th</sup> and be in attendance at the Tri College Pow Wow on Saturday the 18<sup>th</sup>. Cost would include travel, lodging and honorarium. It was decided Sharon would discuss it with the Pow Wow committee at their next meeting and report back to the NAC.

Sandi reported that drum practice is being held at Roosevelt School in room 206 but more participants are needed and transportation has been a problem. Sharon asks if non-native and adults are allowed to participate. Sandi stated that it is intergenerational. Tim thought this would be a good item to include on the NAC website.

Sandi reported that an artist open house will be held next Wednesday at the Native American Ministry.

Tim asked how the NAC would feel about going forward with the Mayor to discuss the water project with the Three Affiliated Tribes, possibly in January. The NAC feels this is a good idea, Scott will coordinate.

Scott reported he is working with Pat on a letter regarding the Family Healthcare liaison and he will report on this at the next meeting.

Status of the sweat lodge – Jeff Brochert, Co-Chair of the Inipi Committee, updated the commission. Due to misunderstanding and miscommunication the sweat lodge was destroyed and disposed of. Volunteers have put the framework back up and there are some leads on obtaining a new buffalo skull. Jeff is asking the NAC to fund the remaining needed replacement items. Don reported that according to the previous budget, the cost of the items was \$945 and there is enough money left in the budget to fund the purchase. Dan motioned to approve \$945 to be spent on the necessary items. Guy seconded the motion. Motion approved unanimously. Willard will get the items, have the receipts certified and paid by the NAC.

Discussion was held on how to prevent similar problems with the sweat lodge in the future. Jeff reported that all departments have been notified of the existence of the sweat

lodge so there shouldn't be future misunderstandings. Don suggested, with the exception of significant items that should not be defaced, all other items be labeled "NAC" to limit confusion regarding ownership. In the future, a fence and shed will be constructed to protect the site and items. A city project needs to be completed first.

Sandi suggested this presents an opportunity to get out in the community to share information about the sweat lodge and other traditions, with police and schools for example. Discussion was held regarding this and it was decided that Sharon, Sandi and Tim will meet with Willard and Pat Zavoral to discuss the possibility of having someone Native speak at annual trainings. Jaclynn said she has made a request through the public schools Indian education program to get children who are willing to speak about their experiences. She would like speakers who are current students as well as those who are no longer attending school.

Sandi reports that she has put together a DVD for the Native American Christian Ministry that has a lot of information and could possibly be used on the NAC website.

**10. Public Comment** – no public comment.

**11. Next meeting** - January 8, 2009, 5:00 p.m., Fargo City Hall, Commission Room

Sandi motioned to adjourn. The meeting adjourned at 6:02 p.m.