**Meeting Minutes**

**Indiana Native American Indian Affairs Commission (INAIAC)**

August 19, 2020, 1:00 pm

Video/Teleconference call

Indianapolis, Indiana 46204

Call to Order: 1:02 PM – Chair Scott Brewer

Invocation: Chair Scott Brewer

Roll Call: Director Lisa Welch

Voting Members Present:

Chair Scott Brewer, Felica Ahasteen Bryant, Antoniette Holt, Anthony Jones, Gabrielle Koenig, David Liebel, Pete Magnant, Dorene Red Cloud, Secretary Paul Strack, Vice Chair Sally Tuttle, J. Matthew Walsh

Voting Members Regrets:

Gabrielle Koenig, Secretary Paul Strack (Secretary Strack experience technical issues which prevented him from joining the virtual meeting space).

Voting Members Absent:

 John Adams, Cam Clarke

Non-Voting Members Present:

Non-Voting Members Absent:

 Representative Daniel Leonard

 Senator Greg Walker

Guests:

A quorum was declared with ten (10) voting members present via video/teleconference in accordance with Executive Order 20-09 issued by Governor Eric J. Holcomb.

**Old Business**

1. **Approval of Agenda,** Motion was made and seconded to approve the agenda for the 8/19/20 meeting. Agenda were unanimously approved via roll call vote.
2. **Approval of Minutes,** Request for corrections for the 6/17/20 meeting and 8/6/20 conference call. No corrections were submitted. Minutes were unanimously approved via roll call vote.
3. **Director’s Report,** Director Lisa Welch submitted the director’s report, updating the commission on changes happening due to the coronavirus pandemic and the status of ongoing initiatives, including scholarships, planning for Native American Heritage Month in November, and the CAIRNS Grant program.

**New Business**

1. **Fall 2020 Native American Heritage Month,** Commissioner Ahasteen-Bryant and Commissioner Dorene Red Cloud submitted events program, potential partners, program dates and budget. A week of themed days is proposed featuring Native American history and art to coincide with Art Museum Day, Native American stories and legends, Veterans, health and fitness, and earth advocacy. Additional content would be produced featuring cooking segments with commissioners, and partners. Proposal was approved unanimously via roll call vote. Commissioner Liebel excused himself from the meeting.
2. **Scholarship Contract,** Commissioner Ahasteen-Bryant proposed Director Welch will meet with students once per semester, either in person, but considering current circumstances these meetings could take place by phone or virtually. A motion was made and seconded to approve the change in the scholarship applications. Motion carried by unanimous roll call vote conducted by Secretary Strack.
3. **Scholarship program/Haley Begay,** Director Welch explained that an application was received during the prior director’s absence but within the deadline for submissions, and was not directed to the new director upon her arrival. Felica Ahasteen Bryant explained that the scholar, Haley Begay, is a current student and scholarship recipient, and recommended on behalf of the education subcommittee that the scholarship be awarded for $1500.00, as she is graduating in December 2020. Motion was made and seconded, and carried via unanimous roll call vote.
4. **Commission statement on the use of Native American Indian names, imagery, and symbols,** Vice Chair Tuttle requested discussion and approval of a commission statement drafted by Director Welch, in response to media interest in conversations taking place between the Indianapolis Indians and the American Indian Center regarding consideration of changes in team name. Vice Chair Tuttle explained that the commission could have a statement ready should there be opportunities to offer support in the larger community conversation. Chair Brewer provided comment that this is subjective as to the notions surrounding different terms, such as “redskin” which is generally thought of as derogatory, as opposed to terms such as “Indians” which is more subjective. Vice Chair Tuttle shared changes that the Indianapolis Indians baseball team has already made (removal of teepee, requesting Native Americans to wear regalia), and that there was interest expressed in having a community discussion regarding other changes. Commissioner Red Cloud noted that the name “Indians” was first used in the 20th century when it was a more common term, steeped in the history of teams using Native American terms as mascots. Current changes in culture makes it an appropriate time to revisit this remnant of an older time. Commissioner Ahasteen-Bryant pointed out that this is the only ethnic group singled out for this kind of treatment, and this is an opportunity to change stereotypes. Chair Brewer noted that offering encouragement of these discussions is appropriate. Commissioner recommended clarifying wording in one phrase of the draft. Commission approved the draft via roll call vote with one commissioner dissenting.
5. **Manual High School,** Vice Chair Tuttle recommended that Director Welch send out a letter of acknowledgement and appreciation of their name change. Chair Brewer shared that terms such as “warrior” could be considered appropriate to some.

**Discussion**

1. **New Castle Correctional Facility,** Secretary Strack inquired if there was an update available. Chair Brewer said that it was referred over to the appropriate tribal representative at the Pokagon Band of Potawatomi.
2. **Land Acknowledgement,** Commissioner Ahasteen Bryant wanted to table the discussion on this item pending more follow up input from the Pokagon Band of Potawatomi.
3. **Suffrage,** Vice Chair Tuttle brought up the centennial celebration of women’s sufferage, and the fact that not all citizens were able to vote. At that time, Native Americans ability to vote was left up to the states. Commissioner Walsh recommended that this be pointed out and acknowledged by the centennial celebration commission.

**Public Comment:** Sheila Bobay Singh, Region 10 coordinator for the Indiana Trafficking Victims Assistance Program presented information and resources about the network of programs working to fight human trafficking in the state. While this is a serious issue, and is also an alarming problem with missing and murdered Native American women, a great deal of misinformation, myths, and recently formed groups planning local marches have made these efforts more difficult. This is damaging and hurtful to victims and survivors, and taxing on resources of veteran service providers. An invitation was extended to provide human trafficking education and awareness. A presentation focusing on Native Americans and Native Communities is available. Chair Brewer shared another presentation related to missing and murdered Native American women and Commissioner Ahasteen Bryant

**Announcements:**

**Adjournment –** Motion was made and seconded to adjourn. The meeting was adjourned at 2:21 pm