

Council on American Indian Concerns  
Regular Monthly Meeting, February 13, 2008  
Conference Room, DNR Office Complex, Atlanta

Council members in attendance: Nealie McCormick, Tom Gresham, Sarah Hill, Bobby Tuggle, JB Jones and Royce McCrary

The meeting was called to order by Chairman Nealie McCormick at 1:35 pm. Bobby Tuggle led the opening prayer.

The January, 2008 meeting minutes, which had been emailed to members, were approved as sent.

Sarah Hill led a brief review of our web site development. She noted that the address and phone number for the Council, in care of the Historic Sites Regional Office, has been corrected and that our minutes since October 2007 have been added. She urged Council members who are providing additional content to press on. Bobby Tuggle reported that he is developing a reading list. Tom Gresham suggested that he send in his current list and add to it later.

Pam Meditz reported on the current status of our Rules and Regulations (R&R) endeavor. She said that an electronic draft was found in DNR attorney Emily Hitchcock's office. The draft must now be correctly reformatted, and Pam will work with Emily's office and DNR staff person Janet Moore to get this done. Pam will then consult with Emily's office to accomplish the next steps. Tom Gresham cautioned that we need to make sure we are working with the final version of the R&R that passed review by attorney John Walden and the Attorney General's office in late 2004.

Nalie McCormick reported on his enquiries about ways the Councils or Commissions of neighboring states work with non-tribal groups. He has learned that Alabama is not currently working with non-tribal groups, but that North Carolina is, mostly in urban settings. The Council agreed that we need not pursue this further and that we will respond to specific requests for assistance and information on a case by case basis.

In regard to current legislation, there appears to be nothing that directly affects the Council or Native Americans. However, Marilyn McGaughey emailed a concern to the Council about HB 1096 regarding hospice care. The bill requires a 4-year degree of all clergy who are ministering to hospice patients, which would prevent many Native American healers from participating.

In news items, Bobby Tuggle cited recent articles from Macon newspapers about the destruction of the Browns Mount site near Macon. This important Native American site is on state land that is administered by the US Fish and Wildlife Service. The area on and around the site was recently timbered due to a pine beetle infestation and a logging deck was constructed at the heart of the site. Christine Neal of the State Archaeologist's office stated that their office is investigating the situation. They learned of the site's damage only three weeks ago and have not

yet fully assessed the damage or learned how communication about protecting the site failed among agencies that have jurisdiction over the property. It initially appears that there was a lack of communication among the state and federal agencies. State Archaeologist Dr. David Crass will be sending the Council a letter about the situation as soon as all the facts are gathered. He will also formulate and send to the Council a mitigation plan to address the damage and prevent any recurrence of such incidents.

Christine Neal informed the Council that pursuant to OCGA 12-3-621 the State Archaeologist will be notifying the Council of a planned excavation led by a professional archeologist on a prehistoric archeological site in Taylor County.

In new business, Nealie McCormick reported that the Council received an invitation from the US Department of Homeland Security to become a consulting party for a proposed National Bio- and Agro-Defense Facility in Athens. Tom Gresham stated that his company conducted an archeological survey of the tract and found several sites, only one of which was potentially significant. The letter explained that this one site was outside of the proposed impact zone for the project but that the State Historic Preservation Office has not yet concurred with the findings. Christine Neal said that their office will likely review the report very soon. The Council agreed that it will not be necessary to become a consulting party.

Tom Gresham raised the question of reprinting the general Council brochure and the artifact collecting brochure. The Council agreed that only a small number of general brochures is needed; that Tom will make the address and phone number changes in the brochure; and Tom will then make about 100 photocopies. We agreed that relatively large numbers of the artifact collecting brochure are needed, and that it is fiscally responsible to print them. Since there is no electronic copy of the brochure, the copy must be retyped. The Historic Preservation Division has already submitted a set of recommended corrections, mostly regarding minor changes in the laws about artifact collecting. Tom will solicit additional comments from collectors and other interested parties. Pam Meditz offered to get the brochure typed so that we can make the needed changes and get it reprinted in the coming few months.

Frankie Mewborn and Pam Meditz raised the issue of public communication with the Council. They pointed out that since the Council website lists their office phone number and email address, they must collect and forward the communications to Nealie. They noted that there are technical means to route phone calls and emails from public addresses directly to a Council member without revealing the member's personal contact information. The Council agreed that such routing would be more effective than the current system. Sarah Hill agreed to accept emails directed to the Council. She will then either respond to the question or forward the email to the most appropriate Council member. The Council will ask Marilyn McGaughey if she will accept the routed telephone calls. She will then respond to the question or pass the information on to the most appropriate Council member. Sarah will ask webmaster Michael Chadwell about routing the emails.

Frankie Mewborn informed the Council that DNR Parks and Historic Sites Division had received a request from Larry Mindler to use portions use of New Echota State Historic Site for a

Cherokee homecoming festival. Pursuant to the Park policies developed in conjunction with the Council a few years ago, DNR concluded that the proposed festival was not consistent with Park policy and the use was denied. Frankie plans to strengthen the policies that govern activities on heritage sites.

Bobby Tuggle asked if the Council wishes to make a brief presentation to the Georgia House of Representatives, similar to last year's presentation to the Senate. No conclusion was reached because of the presumed difficulty of assembling the information packets and medallions.

The Council thanked Pam Meditz and Frankie Mewborn for producing and distributing our new identification and access cards.

Tom Gresham announced that the forthcoming Society of Georgia Archaeology Conference will be at the Fernbank Museum on April 26, 2008 from 9am-4pm, and will focus on the Spanish-Indian contact period, including explorations and missions. Speakers will include former Council member John Worth, as well as Dennis Blanton and David Hurst Thomas.

There being no other business, the meeting was adjourned at 3:15 p.m.

Visitors: Frankie Mewborn, Pam Meditz, Christine Neal, Walker Dan Davis, Vonnie McCormick, Herman M.C. Prospere