

Council on American Indian Concerns

Regular Monthly Meeting, August 13, 2008
DNR Conference Room, Atlanta

Council members in attendance: Nealie McCormick, Marilyn McGaughey, Ralph Crews, Tom Gresham, Royce McCrary, JB Jones and Karen Burns

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

The June, 2008 meeting minutes, which had been emailed to members earlier, were approved with one correction, the addition of the words "by vote" after "agreed" in the first full paragraph on the last page.

The treasurer's report was presented by Pam Meditz as a two-page summary of FY 2008 expenses and a projection, based on past annual averages, of routine expenses for FY 2009. The summary showed that we need to carry over \$3,322.73 of FY 2008 expenses into FY 2009. After combining the carry-over with routine expenses and some identifiable upcoming expenses (such as those related to the anticipated adoption of rules and regulations), a balance remains of about \$10,595 for discretionary spending in FY 2009. Tom Gresham pointed out that our budget should include monies for occasionally hiring archaeologists to investigate reports of burials. Other possible expenses were mentioned. Council members agreed to think about and list possible upcoming expenses, but not commit to any of them until later in the fiscal year. However, the Council voted to appropriate necessary funds to obtain parking permits for all Council members for FY 2009 [which will total \$1,344]. Since the expenses incurred late in FY 2008 were too late to be recorded in the 2008 budget, and thus were carried over to FY 2009, Council members noted the necessity to make all purchases before June to insure they are credited to the current fiscal year.

Marilyn McGaughey asked about the annual written agreement between the Office of Planning and Budget and DNR concerning the funding of the Council. Nealie replied that the agreement has been executed each year by his signature. He agreed to provide Marilyn with a copy of the latest agreement.

Ongoing Business

Pam Meditz reviewed the previous two months' log of emails and telephone calls to the Council, which she had tallied in a two-page summary. All such inquiries were generally routine and either she, Linda Moye, Nealie McCormick, Vonnie McCormick or Sarah Hill took appropriate action, which usually involved a follow-up communication or reference to another resource.

Pam Meditz then reported on the current status of our rules and regulations, stating that Marilyn McGaughey and Sarah Hill have reviewed a draft that she edited and condensed from the 2005 version. Pam presented the Council members with a copy of the current draft and a copy of Sarah Hill's comments with actions taken (or not) for each of her comments. Pam asked that each Council member review the document and email her with any comments or concerns. Tom Gresham pointed out one minor issue and recalled that the Council was advised several years ago when he raised this same concern that the wording in the Rules and Regs cannot differ from the wording of the enabling legislation. Nealie McCormick repeated his earlier-expressed position that it seems pointless for the Rules and Regs to repeat verbatim the language of the code sections, and not include different wording that seeks to explain and interpret the code sections. Pam will look into the question of whether and to what degree the wording can differ. Tom provided Pam with a copy of our April 2004 minutes in which the Council formally adopted a Mission Statement. The Mission Statement will again be included in the introduction of the Rules and Regs.

Marilyn McGaughey read letters from Fernbank Museum president Susan Nugent and Fernbank archeologist Dennis Blanton thanking the Council for donating \$1,500.00 to help with the display and interpretation of Native American and archeological exhibits and programs.

Marilyn McGaughey reported that she recently visited Etowah Mounds State Historic Site and saw substantial progress on the replica Indian house project. She shared with the Council her photograph of the house in progress. Pam Meditz provided the Council with full color images of the interpretive panels that will be placed at Etowah, one about the Indian house project and one about the Native grasses project. The Council financially supported the two interpretive panels. Guest Judd Smith, a DNR interpretive specialist, told the Council about DNR's efforts to establish native grasses in several portions of the Etowah site. Native grasses will be propagated at the edge of the historic site and then transferred to the main part of the site, replacing introduced grass species. Some will be kept tall, and others will be mowed.

Regarding recent news stories concerning Indians, Marilyn McGaughey cited an *AJC* story about St. Catherine's Island sites, a *Science News* article on 40,000-year-old footprints in Mexico, and two articles about DNA and the movement of native populations in the western hemisphere. JB Jones mentioned an article about Lynch Mountain near Dahlenega and an article about an exposed rock mound in Lake Lanier.

Tom Gresham reported that he brought the 110 copies of *Frontiers in the Soil* that the Council purchased last month. After conferring with Marilyn McGaughey and Sarah Hill, Tom also purchased identifying stickers for the inside front covers and drafted a cover letter to be placed in each book. The letter states that the Council is providing the book as an educational benefit for schools, libraries and Native American programs. Council members concluded that the books should be distributed to schools, libraries and public entities that will reach children who are interested in Indian cultures. Each Council member will take as many copies as he/she can properly distribute, record where each book is placed, and report to the Council at the next meeting. The following numbers of books were distributed:

JB Jones	20
Ralph Crews	12

GA DNR	20
Nealie McCormick	10
Marilyn McGaughey	5
Royce McCrary	10
Tom Gresham	10
Dola Davis	<u>1</u>
Balance (held by Tom)	22

Pam Meditz announced that she brought boxes of the revised general Council brochure and the revised artifact collecting brochure and that Council members should take the number of each they need.

New Business

Nealie McCormick asked if any visitor wished to speak. Christine Neal introduced new DNR archeologist Ryan Kennedy to the Council.

Tom Gresham reported that the Council had received telephone calls and a burial study request from members of the Prater's Mill Foundation regarding burials that they believe exist on and possibly adjacent to property they lease near Dalton, in Whitfield County. The submitted information is not clear about the appearance and nature of the suspected graves and does not confirm that graves, if present, are Indian. It states that some people believe the graves extend onto adjoining property that is owned and is now being developed by the Whitfield County school system. Christine Neal informed the Council that the office of the State Archeologist was consulted about the burials but they have not investigated. After some discussion of whether we should send an archeologist to the site, the Council decided that Tom Gresham will write a letter to the County Commission and County School Board alerting them of the citizens' concerns and asking the Commission and Board to look into the issue and advise us on the results.

The Council discussed whether to re-establish agreements with several consulting archeologists to perform services for us. Tom Gresham agreed to write four or five established archeological consulting firms around the state to seek bid prices for conducting work for us. Pam Meditz reminded us that we cannot establish standing, on-call contracts as we did in previous years, but instead will engage a firm and then pay the invoice on a project-by-project basis.

The Council asked Karen Burns, who has been working in Colombia for over a year, to share some of her experiences. She said that while she accomplished a great deal in establishing a forensics laboratory in Medalin, Colombia continues to have great needs. In spite of many frustrations and impediments, she felt good about the progress made.

Karen Burns announced that she has accepted a position at the University of Utah in Salt Lake City and will be moving there in a few weeks. She tendered her resignation as the physical anthropologist on the Council, but offered to continue to assist the Council in any way that she could.

Karen Burns also informed the Council that while sorting through belongings at her home and office for her impending move, she came across an unlabeled box of human remains of unknown origin. There are at least three individuals represented amid the assortment of various bones. There are no associated artifacts or documentation. She believes these are probably Native American, are probably from Georgia or a nearby state, and probably are not remains that were transferred to the Council. She requested the Council's input on the best course of action. After some discussion, the Council approved a motion to accept the box of remains and deposit it with the other Council holdings at the University of West Georgia. Karen will submit to the Council a short written document stating all that she knows about the remains, primarily in regard to the timing and circumstances of her possession of the box. Tom Gresham took the box and will deliver it and Karen's accompanying documentation to the University of West Georgia curation facility on September 10, 2008.

Frankie Mewborn informed the Council that he attended the 50th anniversary ceremony at the Chief Vann House. It was a well-attended and wonderful affair.

The Council discussed the eroding burials at the south end of Ossabaw Island that were brought to our attention by State Archeologist David Crass several months ago. At the May meeting the Council had tabled Dr. Crass's request for financial assistance with remote sensing because the annual budget was nearly depleted. Now revisiting the issue, the Council asked Marilyn McGaughey to write to Dr. Crass about possible collaborations. Tom Gresham reminded the Council that in the past DNR has exhumed eroding remains from the site and reburied them without markers near the center of the island, in an open field at Middle Place. The Council had designated the Middle Place field as the reburial location for future eroding burials and agreed that such reburials would be attended by a Council member. It seems that this could be done again without great expense, but that the proactive remote sensing to locate other burials will require some discussion.

Tom Gresham pointed out that our Annual Report to the Governor is now due. There being no volunteers to work on it, Nealie McCormick asked Tom and Sarah Hill to prepare the report.

Tom Gresham reported that in mid-June the Council was asked by a local citizen to write a letter of concern to the City of West Point about a proposed housing development on the bank of the Chattahoochee River within the city limits. The matter was urgent since the City Council was meeting soon to discuss the issue. The citizen cited nearby archeological surveys that suggested the presence of Indian graves in the area. Tom verified the cited archeological studies and agreed that there was some reasonable chance that Indian burials could be present. He conferred with Nealie McCormick and the two agreed that we could write a broadly worded letter of concern patterned closely after one written in a similar situation in Forsyth County four or five years ago. Tom composed and sent the letter to the West Point City Council on June 27, 2008.

Tom Gresham reported that the Council received an email from Dr. Erv Garrison, UGA archeologist, on June 18, 2008 expressing frustration about the burial notification protocol we

established in May of 2007. Mainly, Dr. Garrison could not get the Chatham County Police Department to respond and act on his reports of exposed human remains. The police officer identified in the protocol as the contact person has been transferred and the new person knew nothing about the process or the protocol. Tom reported that he discussed Dr. Garrison's concerns with Nealie McCormick and Christine Neal and that two options seem viable. One is to suggest to Dr. Garrison that he notify local law enforcement (County Police) as required by law and as presented in the protocol, but that he also immediately notify the coroner. Thus, the coroner could come out and make his determination of "no crime scene" without having to wait on notification from law enforcement. The second option is for Dr. Garrison to notify DNR law enforcement, which is headquartered further away in Brunswick. Tom Gresham will present these two options to Dr. Garrison.

Tom Gresham informed the Council that the 26 boxes of human remains and burial objects in our care had been delivered to the Antonio J. Waring Laboratory at the University of West Georgia, which has inspected and repackaged them as needed. The costs to date are \$815.00, which covers labor at a modest (student) rate and materials. There may be additional costs later, which would be minimal. When Tom asked if we would like to invite Waring Laboratory curator Susan Fishman-Armstrong and/or Laboratory Director Thomas Foster to visit and report on our holdings, guest Dana Russell identified herself as the person who handles our material. She told us about the inspection and repackaging and offered to answer questions.

Nealie McCormick led a discussion on economic development initiatives to benefit Indians in Georgia. Ralph Crews reported that his tribe had begun making and selling jewelry and other items in a new structure on their tribal grounds. They are looking into grants to promote and expand this effort. Nealie reported that his tribe is working with others to build an airplane parts plant and that some citizens are already receiving job training in Norcross. JB Jones reported that his area of northeast Georgia, and Lumpkin County especially, has experienced several factory closings and major lay-offs.

There being no other business, the meeting was adjourned at 4:12 p.m.

Visitors: Frankie Mewborn, Pam Meditz, Judd Smith, Christine Neal, Ryan Kennedy, Jeb Jones, Melanie Jones, Vonnie McCormick, Frances Crews, Gisela Gresham, Dan and Dola Davis, Donna Ezzell, Dana Russell