

## Council on American Indian Concerns

Regular Monthly Meeting, March 11, 2009  
Conference Room B, Fernbank Museum, Atlanta

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

The meeting was called to order by Chairman Nealie McCormick at 1:43 pm. Ralph Crews led the opening prayer.

The January, 2009 meeting minutes, which had been emailed to members earlier, were approved with one correction.

The treasurer's report for expenses to date and a projection of expenses for the remainder of FY 2009 were presented by Ralph Crews (attached).

### *Ongoing Business*

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

Sarah Hill presented a one-page summary of the previous two months' emailed communications to the Council via its web site. These were generally routine and Sarah answered or referred them to others for a response. Sarah suggested that we reduce our paper use by emailing to Council members, in advance of each meeting, the monthly logs of phone calls and emails rather than providing copies at the meetings. The Council agreed. In addition, Pam Meditz will hereafter email the meeting agendas rather than providing individual copies at the meetings, and will also email the travel voucher forms. Tom Gresham will continue emailing the minutes of the previous meeting but copies will no longer be provided at the meetings.

Tom Gresham reported that in response to one emailed request regarding site protection, he spoke with a Mrs. Brown of the Albany area and answered many of her concerns. Since she is interested in site protection and is in the media business (radio), Tom sent her copies of the Council's site and burial protection DVD. The Council will hereafter send the DVD to citizens who contact the Council with site/burial protection concerns. Tom also asked Pam Meditz if the Council received a completed site/burial protection form from Patricia Davis, who had telephoned the Council in January with concerns about threats to a cemetery. Pam confirmed that she sent Ms. Davis the form, which has not been returned to the Council.

Marilyn McGaughey reviewed the current status of our rules and regulations, reporting that Diane DeShazo of the Attorney General's office submitted to the Council extensive and detailed

comments on the draft document, indicating her careful reading of it. Marilyn and Sarah Hill will make the suggested changes and produce a new draft. They will consult with Ms. DeShazo if they have any questions. Nealie asked for a copy of Ms. DeShazo's letter.

Tom Gresham reported that the Council has sent the three letters discussed at the January meeting, thanking the Archaeology Unit of HPD and the Wildlife Resources Division of DNR for their help with the burial salvage at Ossabaw Island and expressing best wishes to Christine Neal upon her retirement.

Tom Gresham stated that a report on the salvage and ground penetrating radar study at Ossabaw Island will be submitted to the Council, the Archaeology Unit of HPD and the Wildlife Resources Division of DNR within the week. A draft report circulated a month ago, has been revised, according to report author and lead archeologist Dan Elliott.

In news items related to Indians, Marilyn McGaughey mentioned an AJC article about the widespread use of corn and an article about new DNA studies that show migration paths to the New World between 15,000 and 17,000 years ago. Tom Gresham reported that the Cherokee Nation at Tahlequah, Oklahoma has commissioned a group of Georgia scholars, including Jace Weaver, Ervan Garrison and Brett Riggs (now in North Carolina), to construct a new replica Cherokee village as it might have existed around 1710 in the Southeast.

#### New Business

Frankie Mewborn discussed current funding challenges at the Department of Natural Resources and their effect on DNR's structure. In short, the Historic Sites Region that was created about a year ago has been disbanded; historic sites will now be administered as before, combined with parks in the four geographic regions of the state. Frankie is now the Parks and Historic Sites' Cultural Resources Manager and will remain at Panola Mountain, along with Judd Smith, Debbie Walsmith and curator Linda Bitley. Pam Meditz and Linda Moye have been transferred to other departments within the Parks and Historic Sites Division. However, Pam and Linda will be available to help with Council affairs to a limited extent. They will continue to field telephone calls and emails, and Pam will take care of the finances through the fiscal year. Frankie said that the DNR administration realized the value of having a Historic Sites Region, and that the changes he described were for economic reasons. Guest Ann Williams added that such cut-backs and realignments are common in state government today, noting that the Department of Human Resources will be cutting positions in FY 2010.

Tom Gresham introduced the president of the Society for Georgia Archaeology, Fernbank Museum archeologist Dennis Blanton, who informed the Council about the Spring meeting of SGA. It will be held at Wesleyan University in Macon on May 16 with the theme of "Mounds in our Midst". Papers about prehistoric mound sites throughout Georgia will be given on that Saturday and there will be a rare opportunity to visit the Lamar mound site near the Ocmulgee Mounds. We agreed that we will put a notice of this public meeting on our web site.

Tom Gresham reported that just an hour before departing for the Council meeting he received an email from UGA archeologist Ervan Garrison about the most recent burial eroding from the

Groves Creek site on Skidaway Island. Tom reviewed our minutes and notes on the issue, mainly from last August through October, and reported to the Council that we had developed and communicated a plan to Dr. Garrison. In essence we agreed that when he detects a new burial eroding from the creek bank he should notify local law enforcement (Chatham County police) as prescribed by law, but at the same time notify the medical examiner. Thus, the next critical step in the process, having the coroner/medical examiner determine whether it is a crime scene, can take place even if local law enforcement does nothing (as has been the case). Tom will relay this process to Dr. Garrison again, in writing.

In discussing means to save money, we agreed to look into parking in an adjoining deck for a flat daily rate (\$5 per use) rather than continuing the yearly contract to park in the present deck (\$14 per month). We will discuss this at the May meeting.

Nealie McCormick invited DNR law enforcement officer Dan Parrish to the podium to present a plaque to him from the Council thanking him for his many years of extraordinary service in the cause of archeological and burial site protection. Dan thanked the Council and said that although he no longer can focus on cultural resources crimes, he is still eager to help in any way he can. He said that the course he developed on cultural resources protection is still being taught to DNR personnel at the law enforcement training center in Forsyth. He said that if we learn of cultural resources crimes that need DNR attention, we should call him and he will see that a law enforcement officer will look into it.

Nealie then invited Tom Gresham to the podium to receive a plaque from the Council thanking him for many years of service to the Council. Tom was very grateful and mentioned that the Council is very much a team.

Marilyn McGaughey introduced Fernbank Museum archaeologist Dennis Blanton, our host for this meeting. Dennis welcomed and thanked the Council for its various efforts and especially for the financial contribution made to Fernbank last year. Dennis then invited the group to join him on a tour of the dugout canoe and a new exhibit on the pottery of St. Catherines Island.

There being no other business, the meeting was adjourned at 3:50 p.m.

Visitors: Frankie Mewborn, Pam Meditz, Ryan Kennedy, Vonnie McCormick, Frances Crews, Gisela Gresham, Ann Williams, Dan Parrish, Dennis Blanton.