

Council on American Indian Concerns

Regular Monthly Meeting, August 10, 2011
DNR Conference Room, Atlanta

Council members in attendance: Nealie McCormick, Marilyn McGaughey, Ralph Crews, Tom Gresham, and Bobby Tuggle

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

The May, 2011 meeting minutes, which had been emailed to members earlier, were approved as sent.

No treasurer's report was presented.

Communications to the Council - Nealie McCormick reported that he received no Council emails (via our Web site) since May.

Frankie Mewborn tallied seven telephone calls to the Council since May. He responded to two, providing web addresses or other information; he referred two to Nealie McCormick and two to Tom Gresham. Tom reported that the two calls he took were requests for copies of *Frontiers in the Soil*. Nealie said he would respond to his calls soon. Tom said he would respond to the seventh call, about services for Indians in the Atlanta area.

Ongoing Business:

Vacancy in the Council - Nealie McCormick reported that last week he followed up with the Governor's office about the appointment to fill the Council's "other scientist" position. Nealie had submitted a resume and other information for Dr. Jace Weaver in early June, and has heard nothing from the Governor's office. He resent the packet last week with a request for the Governor's office to act.

Rules and Regulations - Marilyn McGaughey reported that Linda Moye has made progress in getting our Rules and Regulations through proper channels, and then asked Linda to update the Council. Linda presented the one page of the R & R that contained the only changes (in red) that have been made since the last version was presented to the Council. These addressed concerns Tom Gresham had with Section 45-1-3.03. Tom Gresham made a motion, seconded by Marilyn McGaughey, to accept this latest draft of the Council's Rules and Regulations. The motion carried and thus the Rules and Regulations have been formally approved by the Council.

Linda will now proceed with the next steps in the process. Discussion ensued on the various next steps, and particularly on the two public meetings that will need to be convened. It

was agreed that one meeting would be held in our conference room in Atlanta, with Marilyn making arrangements, and the other in a facility on the Lower Muscogee Creek Tribal grounds in Whigham, with Nealie making the arrangements. Linda and Marilyn will coordinate the scheduling of these public meetings, the required public notice of the meetings in newspapers and other facets of the process. Linda said that the next step would be to submit the approved document to the Secretary of State's office in Macon and the scheduling of the public meetings will depend on the Secretary of State's office.

Floyd County Power Line – Tom Gresham reported that the Council received a response in mid-May from the Georgia Power Company expressing their view that they have done due diligence with the citizen's complaint that Indian graves may have been disturbed by their upgrading of the transmission line and that they do not intend to conduct further investigation. Tom said that while he felt that Georgia Power should have done more field work, he is convinced that no graves were disturbed by Georgia Power and that we should accept the results of their two studies. The Council agreed that Tom should write a letter to the landowner explaining the final outcome of the issue and a letter to Georgia Power accepting their conclusions, but advising that the Council is to be notified if Georgia Power proposes any further ground disturbing activity on the property. Tom will have Marilyn McGaughey review the letters.

Purchase and Distribution of *Frontiers in the Soil* - Tom Gresham reported that the 470 copies of *Frontiers in the Soil* that the Council purchased in May had been distributed to 24 Regional Educational Service Agencies and individual Atlanta area school systems for further distribution to all public middle schools. He said that about nine of these batches of books (from 4 to 26 books each) were hand delivered, and the rest were mailed by the U.S. Postal Service at media rate. Deliveries and mailings were made from May 9th through May 20th.

Discussion ensued on the possible purchase and distribution of more *Frontiers in the Soil*. Tom Gresham noted that two educators had called the Council requesting additional copies for their schools (a high school and a special school). He also noted that it may be advantageous to provide copies to private schools, if suitable schools could be identified. Bobby Tuggle stated that members of the Georgia Independent Schools Association would be sound, accredited schools. The Council agreed to postpone any decision on distributing *Frontiers* to other schools on a large scale, but did decide to purchase 30 more copies to distribute to those who request a copy. Tom raised the issue of how to decide who gets a copy, and Nealie asked Tom to make the decisions and bring any questions that might arise to the Council.

Reports of Planned Excavations – Tom Gresham reported that Deputy State Archaeologist Bryan Tucker relayed to the Council two notifications of intent to conduct archeological excavations over the summer. One submitted to the Council in June regarded shovel testing a colonial-era Native American site in Effingham County by the South Carolina Institute of Archaeology and Anthropology. The other was submitted in July and regarded shovel testing and metal detecting to locate Removal-era Fort Buffington in Cherokee County by the Georgia Chapter of the Trail of Tears Association. Tom reported that both institutions were well known and respected and

that neither project was likely to encounter burials, so he recommended that no action was needed.

Request for Funding - Nealie informed the Council that it had received a request from The Cherokee of Georgia Tribal Council in Saint George for financial aid of \$2,000.00 so that the tribe could purchase four computers to help with their educational/outreach program. Ralph Crews explained that their tribe has built a cultural center on their tribal grounds and they need computers so that visitors can access various language and culture software programs. Tom Gresham said that while it is important for the Council to make spending decisions before the very end of the fiscal year, he thought it was too early to make such decisions now, and recommended tabling the issue for now. It was agreed to table this matter.

Juvenile Courts and Native Americans - Nealie McCormick introduced two visitors who work with the juvenile justice system in Georgia and who have an interest in ensuring that Native American children are being served adequately. Lisa Larisey, a judicial liaison with the Georgia Department of Family and Children Services in Atlanta, spoke about their desire to meet all the needs of Native American children in foster care. She mentioned that Nealie and Vonnie McCormick spoke to a state gathering of juvenile judges and childrens' advocates earlier this year and the audience was very interested to learn about contemporary Native Americans in Georgia and about their special needs and issues. Lisa Mantz, Associate Judge of Juvenile Court in the Alcovy Judicial Circuit (Covington), said she has learned much about improving the protocol for referring children of Native American descent to foster care and protective custody. She and Lisa Larisey want to learn more about how to reach out to the state tribes. She also mentioned that she would like a copy of *Frontiers in the Soil*, and the Council agreed to send her a copy.

Visitor Ann Williams was asked to address the Council about recent developments with the State budget. She said that most departments (except Medicaid and K-12 education) had just been asked to trim another 2 % from their budgets, in anticipation of further cuts in federal financial support. She said Georgia gets 31 % of its funds from the U.S. government. Ann also spoke about programs by the Georgia Power Company that intend to help citizens reduce their power bills. These include understanding your power bill, recycling refrigerators, flat billing and senior citizens discounts. Nealie McCormick thanked Ann for her close monitoring of the Georgia legislature and issues in the public forum that affect citizens, and for keeping the Council informed of her observations.

Announcements, Other Business

Marilyn McGaughey told the Council about a recent article in *The Christian Index* about the United Methodist Church giving money for a Native American education center in Colorado as an act of restitution for the Sands Creek Massacre of Indians. She presented another article about an etching on a mammoth tusk found in Florida that may be the oldest art in North America.

Tom Gresham reported that the Council received a letter of receipt and an accession report from the Antonio J. Waring Laboratory of Archaeology at the University of West Georgia for the set

of human remains that had been turned over to the Council by the neighbor of an artifact collector in the Savannah area earlier this year. This material is being housed at West Georgia along with the other sets of human remains and burial objects that the Council is presently holding.

There being no other business, the meeting was adjourned at 3:25.

Visitors: Bryan Tucker, Debbie Walsmith, Linda Moye, Ann Williams, Lisa Larisey, Lisa Mantz, Tom Roberts, Vonnie McCormick, Frances Crews, Gisela Gresham, Dan and Dola Davis