

Indigenous Commission, November 16, 2020

Arc Northland wants to work with the Indigenous Community to enhance and increase services for people with disabilities, and people over 65.

The Human Rights Commission wants to work with the African Heritage Commission and the Indigenous Commission on a racism statement for Duluth. A subcommittee will work on this.

The Commission was asked to support a partnership with Loaves and Fishes, Hildegaard House, Peace Church and CHUM on the homelessness in Duluth. A letter of support from the Commission will be drafted and voted on at the next meeting to request sites for the homeless: Sites to build yurts on; Dumpsters; Porta Potties; Accessible to bus lines. Councilor Renee VanNett brought forward the concern for 24-hour hygiene facilities for the homeless, which the City Council is working on.

An Indigenous Calendar is being developed with teaching tools regarding the history and meaning of being American Indian today.

Mayor Larson and City department heads will be invited to a Commission meeting to discuss the relationship and clarify the role of the Commission and the City and to promote the visibility of the Commission.

Skip Sandman has been named the Spiritual Advisor for Spirit Mountain. The Heritage Preservation Commission will work with the Commission on enhancing the relationship with Spirit Mountain and preserving the Indigenous heritage of this location. Much appreciation of this relationship was expressed by the Commission members.

Opioid/AIM/Sweat Lodge/Sobriety Feasts are not happening during the pandemic time.

Submitted by Liz Taylor

Indigenous Commission, October 16, 2020

The local Rights of Nature group asked the Commission to help craft language for a petition stating the rights of the St. Louis River Estuary Water Trail to be part of the Duluth City Charter and go on the ballot for the next election. A National Water Trail designation would allow surrounding communities to engage with both local citizens and visitors to learn about its past, present, and future, as well as plan and implement restoration efforts--with a sense of urgency--for Mother Earth.

In Duluth, there is concern that People of Color are not using social services. A survey of 120 people was done by LISC Duluth (Local Initiative Support Corporation) under the categories of: age, gender, ancestry, employment, use of current services, to come up with what resources are needed and what to do with the information. WEES (Wealth, Entrepreneurship and Economic Sustainability) is looking at the results to make certain they use a good process, that racism isn't embedded in the services to meet the needs, and how to move forward to bring the homeless to the job world. The survey also showed that people do not know of the services available. The hope is that employers get to hear the stories. Pam Kramer, representing LISC Duluth, will come back to the Commission with the next steps they plan to impose.

Andrew Slade, of the Environmental Center, informed the Commission that a Lloyd K. Johnson Foundation grant is available to fund a Minnesota Environmental Partnership for natural resources in tribal communities.

It was suggested an Indigenous Culture Calendar be developed, representing treaty signing dates, etc., to educate the public on the Indigenous history and culture in the Duluth area.

Indigenous People's Day was celebrated on October 12th with an emphasis on ways that needed change, with ancestors being honored.

Homeless camps at the Point of Rocks Campground have been ordered to evacuate. Concern was expressed as to the need for places to place these individuals. Attention to this will include a rally at City Hall.

Submitted by Liz Taylor

Indigenous Commission Meeting, August 17, 2020

City Councilors Eric Forsman and Janet Kennedy were present (Zoom) to tell of their support to honor Spirit Mountain as a Sacred place as the City goes forward with future plans. Babette Sandman noted it is a Sacred Fasting Area. It was requested that plans for any updates and changes to the area be brought to the Commission, so they have a say in the process.

Christina Woods of the Duluth Public Art Institute brought forward that two pieces of public art are being questioned as not true Indigenous art:

- The Leif Ericson statue.

- The Hiawatha and Minnehaha Tiffany Stainless Windows at the Depot.

The St. Louis County Historical Society will be asked to review the labelling of these art pieces and report back to the Commission.

The Indigenous People's Day will not be held this year due to the COVID-19 virus. A virtual day at Cedar Creek will be considered.

Mayor Larson will be invited to an upcoming Commission meeting to discuss the process for the Commission to have more opportunity to be visible when discussing the use of "Chief" for official City titles.

Before the next meeting, Chair Sandman will send the Commission a draft letter to the Duluth City Council in the support of the AIM Homeless Village in Duluth's West End.

Submitted by Liz Taylor

Duluth Indigenous Commission: January 27, 2020

Public Comment: Janet Kennedy, City Councilor, Pam Kramer, LISC Director, and Elena Foshay, City of Duluth Work Force presented information on a grant to focus on disparities. They are seeking two people who have experienced disparities to serve on a task force for 5 hours a week at a rate of \$50/hour. The task force will develop an action plan to reduce disparities. Commissioners were encouraged to refer applicants for these positions.

The Indigenous Commission's 2019 report to the City Council Committee of the Whole is being prepared. The 2020 work plan draft was approved.

The commissioners voted to continue Babette Sandman as chair and Carol DeVerney as vice chair.

Sobriety Feasts every second Wednesday of the month continue and are well attended.

Two applications to serve on the commission have been received. The applicants will be invited to the next meeting.

A draft copy of the by-laws was distributed for discussion at the next meeting.
Next meeting: Feb. 24, 2020

Submitted by Gail Schoenfelder

Indigenous Commission, November 18, 2019

The Indigenous Commission is working on adding members to the commission, including naming a representative from the Fond du Lac tribe, because of recent lack of quorum at meetings.

At the November meeting, Mary Villiard reported on the progress of the Chief Buffalo project, in the Gitchi-ode' Aking Park—with murals, storytelling, access to the history of in the downtown parks. Mary is working with other Indigenous artists to obtain funding to educate the community through murals, etc.

A grant proposal to have storytelling along the Western Waterfront Estuary is being considered.

Submitted by Liz Taylor

Indigenous Commission Meeting: September 16

At the Indigenous Commission meeting on September 16th, there was discussion on Indigenous Peoples' Day Planning—October 14th at noon in City Hall. This will include a walk to Gitchi-ode' Aking Park and a talk by one of Chief Buffalo's family members.

A Climate Mobilization Campaign Launch was held on September 24 at Gichi-ode' Akiing Park. The Climate Motivation Group brought forth a draft "Resolution Declaring a Climate Emergency in Duluth and Requesting the Duluth Energy Planning Commission to Develop a Community Plan for a Just Transition to a Clean Energy Economy" to be presented to the Duluth City Council.

Opioids/NAH/Sweat Lodge Sobriety Feast planning is going well, with children being brought in.

Community education and acknowledgement of the land history will be a future agenda item.

Submitted by Liz Taylor

Duluth Indigenous Commission, June 17; July 15; August 19, 2019

Commission members were happy with the celebration of the Gichi-Ode' Akiing Park naming ceremony in downtown Duluth. There were over 200 people in attendance. The name of the park means Grand Heart Place. A grant from the city of Duluth provides for events and Indigenous art in the park to honor Anishinaabe presence and Anishinaabe leader, Chief Buffalo. This is organized and directed by Zeitgeist. The first mural painting session in the park was on August 22-with a well-attended community presence.

Jim Ammel, UMD's Social Work Department, is doing a Generations Project: Exploring Indigenous Voices Using Photovoice. Thirty Indigenous community residents (10 youth, 10 adults, 10 elders) have been recruited to represent community Generations and to document community needs and strengths through photography. Project results will be related to the community and will reflect and celebrate indigenous voices and culture looking at multiple ways of interpreting through different generations, locations, etc. Dr. Ammel has met with the Commission several times to keep them updated on the project.

The Commission set a goal to have more of a voice/relationship with the Duluth City Council. On September 15, there will be a Vigil for the murdered indigenous women--Garfield Avenue and Superior. On September 28th there will be a March and rally to protest the Line 3 Project.

Submitted by Liz Taylor

Indigenous Commission, March 15, 2019

The Commission is finalizing plans for a May date to have a Naming Ceremony for the downtown park--Gitcie-ode' Aking.

Members noted there have been 60-65 individuals at the past months' Opioids/NAH/Sweat Lodge/Sobriety Feasts-held the second Wednesday of each month at 6:00 p.m. at One Roof. The success of these feasts has been overwhelming.

Submitted by Liz Taylor

Indigenous Commission, Update

A resolution introduced by the Indigenous Commission to change the name of Lake Place Park to Gitchi Ode' Akiing was unanimously passed by the City Council on December 10. The name Gitchi Ode' Akiing translates to "A Grand Heart Place." The resolution was sponsored by Councilors Gary Anderson and Joel Sipress.

A dedication is planned for Spring 2019.

Submitted by Gail Schoenfelder and Liz Taylor