

Legislation Text

File #: 22-076, Version: 1

Human Rights Commission Meeting Date: February 10, 2022

To: Human Rights Commission

From: Claudia Garcia, Spanish Translator

Request of Beyond the Land Acknowledgement Statement Committee Seeking Partnership with Native Communities.

Action Requested:

Discussion and consideration of request of this committee. See background information and alternative action options below.

Summary Report:

Advisory Commissioner Valdecantos is a member of the “Beyond the Land Acknowledgement Committee,” hereafter referred to as “Committee,” a group of individuals and has drafted the attached letter (see more background in this memo). Valdecantos, on behalf of the Committee, is requesting the City to connect with the three Native communities closest to us, Mdewakanton Sioux community in Shakopee, Prairie Island Indian Community and Lower Sioux community government to government since many of the things they want to continue to do are waiting for the relationship to be established first.

This volunteer group has been working for a while to create a draft letter that they think is appropriate, respectful in order to create a strong relationship with the list of communities above. The Committee recognizes that the City Council should be the entity to determine formal connections with the tribal nations. Therefore, they are requesting the HRC consider a motion to support Council exploration of a more formal connection to advise on topics around Northfield’s native American history and current connections.

Valdecantos is unable to attend the HRC meeting in February. However, Dorothea Hrossowyc has agreed to attend to provide supplemental background information.

Additional Background on the Beyond the Land Acknowledgement Committee

Brief Description

The work of this group started as a subcommittee of the Human Rights Commission working on the development of a Land Acknowledgement, approved by the City of Northfield on November 17, 2020. The Committee is no longer a subcommittee by the Human Rights Commission. Rather, it is an informal group of volunteers who are meeting to advance the interests of advancing “beyond” the Land Acknowledgement Statement.

Land Acknowledgement Statement

We stand on the homelands of the Wahpekute and other Bands of the Dakota Nation. We honor with gratitude the people who have stewarded the land throughout the generations and their ongoing contributions to this

region. We acknowledge the ongoing injustices that we have committed against the Dakota Nation, and we wish to interrupt this legacy, beginning with acts of healing and honest storytelling about this place.

Beginning:

The group was formed after the visit from Bruce King, from St. Olaf, and Joe Hargis, from Carleton, interested in working with the city on creating a common Land Acknowledgement. The group grew and besides members of the HRD other community members also joined. The work crafting the Land Acknowledgement lasted over a year.

Goals:

The Land Acknowledgement was never an end but a beginning of a larger conversation and actions towards building connections to the Native American communities closest to Northfield, the Shakopee Mdewakanton Sioux Community, Prairie Island Indian Community and The Lower Sioux Community. To that end and before we get deeper into our list of proposed initiatives we want to connect with the communities closest to us and the best way to do this is by establishing a government-to-government relationship first. Carleton College has already done it with Prairie Island Indian Community and a delegation of the community visited Carleton during the Indigenous People's Day Celebration and a Carleton delegation was invited to tour the community shortly after.

Current Members

According to Valdecantos, the following are current members that have been shared to belong to the *Beyond the Land Acknowledgement Committee*:

Sue Garwood, Kristi Pursell, Dorothea Hrossowyc, Larry Fowler, Joan Hepburn, Clarita Kell, Beth Kallestad, Alyssa Melby-Herzog, Meredith McCoy, Jim Gehrke and more not specifically identified.

Grants and initiatives:

The Committee is now supported by Rice County Neighbors United/ Vecinxs Unidxs and a grant from the Union Pacific Community Ties Giving Local Grants. The work of the group is setting up talks about the Dakota history and Dakota people in our area, past and present, and different goals such as changing the name of the Sibley Park, creating beacons along the river to tell the story of the river and the people that have used it for generations, creating scholarships for Native American students and more.

The series of talks via zoom started last fall and continues in 2022.

We've had Dorothea Hrossowitz present on behalf of her adopted Dakota daughter, The Invisible Racism Towards Indigenous People by Graci Horne, Dakota and Wahpekute artist, educator and former Northfield High School student.

Ramona Kitto Stately, Dakota and Wahpekute artist and educator, came to town recently to give a talk about the Dakota community in the State of Minnesota, especially in the south of the state and in Scott County.

Soon we will have Franky Jackson come, via zoom as well, for another afternoon of learning about the Prairie Island Indian Community.

Spring 2022: As soon as the Shakopee Hočokata Ti reopens in the spring we will organize trips to visit the center.

Alternative Options:

- A. If supported by HRC, staff recommends a motion to request City Council consider seeking a

relationship with the Prairie Island Indian Community, the Shakopee Mdewakanton Sioux Community and the Lower Sioux Indian Community relating to providing perspectives related to Northfield's native American history and current connections.

- B. Seek further input or information related to the request before acting.
- C. Choose not to act on the request.

Financial Impacts:

NA

Tentative Timelines:

NA