



Commonwealth of Massachusetts  
**EXECUTIVE OFFICE OF HOUSING &  
LIVABLE COMMUNITIES  
COMMISSION ON INDIAN AFFAIRS**

Maura T. Healey, Governor ♦ Kimberley Driscoll, Lieutenant Governor  
Edward M. Augustus, Jr., Secretary ♦ John Peters, Jr., Executive Director

**MINUTES OF THE VIRTUAL MEETING OF THE  
COMMISSION ON INDIAN AFFAIRS**

Meeting Date: Thursday, December 19, 2024

Scheduled Time: 2:00 - 4:00 pm

Place: via Zoom

Please Note: the meeting started with a delay due to technical difficulties.

**Opening Prayer:** by TaShanna Carter

**Role Call:** Troy Phillips (Chairman)

**Commissioners in attendance:** Troy Phillips, Gail Hill, Michael Wagner, Aaron Gonzales, Rhonda Anderson, and TaShanna Carter.

**Staff in attendance:** Jim Peters. (Burne Stanley-absent due to illness.)

Troy Phillips presided over the meeting.

1. Introduction of Leah Hopkins, DCR Indigenous Peoples Partnership Coordinator, her talking points:

- Her position to serve "First Peoples, First Stewards Partnership".
- To protect and promote the will of tribal peoples of the Commonwealth, their issues and concerns.
- DCR Core Principles
- Frameworks that exist that she wants to redefine.
- She has created shared goals and wants to redefine the long-term goals for a Co-Stewardship.
- "Two-Eyed Seeing Model" - long-term relationship-making with tribal citizens and communities.
- She will seek clarification as to: What is access and what is accountability.
- Many questions that she will address in her new position.

2. Melissa Ferretti, Chairwoman, Herring Pond Tribe, gave a presentation on Governor Healey's Executive Order #637:
  - Update on their process of receiving State Recognition by Executive Order.
  - Worked with various tribes that supported the Governor's Action. Jim Peters commented that Federal regulations call for State legislation of the Governor's action to become law.
3. Jim Peters offers Updates:
  - State Seal Commission was extended with a new deadline. The Exec. Director and a recommendation will be seated on the Special Commission.
  - Upcoming "250th Anniversary of America" will begin in 2025 and 2026. Many Massachusetts Natives participated in the Revolutionary War, and it is important that the Native story be told. He requested input from the Native community and others.
  - How do we help each other; we need to come together.
4. Troy Phillips spoke about looking for state funding for a "tribal gathering" of tribal citizens in the Commonwealth to bring us together.
5. Per Jim Peters, we are in the process of "finalization" of our listening sessions. A report will be presented during the Spring of 2025 and recommendations of next steps will be presented
6. Candia Flynn read a letter from the Nipmuc Nation Chairperson Tenah Richardson concerning the Nipmuc Tribal internal politics.
7. Darryl Waldron, Rhode Island Indian Council, spoke about the threat of State Recognition. He requested tribal people's support of the RIIC.
  - \*\*Posted in the chat to support and attend a breakfast contact: A Kemp @rhodeislandindiancouncil.org (401-781-1098 x302)
  - \*\*Breakfast: December 20, 2024 @ 9:00 am. Meeting.

### **Open Public Concerns:**

1. Love Richardson requested a response to the Nipmuc Nation's Chair's letter
2. Ellie Page, Pocasset Tribe, requests that Jim write a letter identifying and clarifying the status of the Pocasset Tribe.
3. Melissa Ferretti, spoke about concerns regarding NCAI and their attempt to disqualify State Tribes from NCAI membership. She offered an update regarding the "list-for-removal" that failed.

4. Love Richardson also requested that the Commission take action to intervene in Nipmuc tribal politics to resolve conflicts.

**Adjournment Time: 3:37 pm**

**Submitted by Commissioner Gail Hill**