

VIRTUAL MEETING

Call to Order:

The meeting was called to order at 5:00 p.m. Present were Chair Karen Van Welden-Herman, members Tom Adams, Elaine Clements, Basenal Dessin, John Hess, Melissa Litton, and Town Manager Andrew Flanagan.

History of Regional Indigenous People: Ryan Wheeler, Director and Chair of Archeology, Peabody Institute of Archeology, Phillips Academy:

Ms. Van Welden-Herman introduced Ryan Wheeler, the Director and Chair of Archeology at the Phillips Academy Peabody Institute of Archeology. Mr. Wheeler spoke with the Committee about the history of the Indigenous People of the region based on his published article *Cutshamache and Cochichawick*.

Mr. Wheeler stated that from his research he discovered that over the years many liberties have been taken with elements of the story of the founding of the town of Andover. He stated that Cutshamache was a prominent tribal leader in the 1600s among that Massachuset who lived in what is today Dorchester. There are questions as to why a tribal leader from Dorchester would be involved in a land exchange in this area of Massachusetts, but this may be able to be explained through alliances and family connections. The English were looking to make these transactions with responsible people tied to geographic areas so that they could be sure that they were legally transferring land from Indigenous People into European hands. Indigenous People did not look at ownership in the same way as the English. Indigenous People felt that people could be responsible for and use land, but not own it with titles or other legal documents. The exchange with Cutshamache included an amount of money and a coat which is depicted in the seal. The sale also included a mini-treaty that Roger, a known Indigenous Person of the area, would continue to be allowed to plant on four acres and take alewives from the waters as long as no English enterprises were damaged. It is unknown where those four acres were located in Andover, North Andover or Lawrence. Since Cutshamache knew Roger, that is an indicator that Cutshamache did have a tie to the land.

Ms. Van Welden-Herman stated that she is interested in the reason why the Indigenous People would have sold the land. Mr. Wheeler stated that there could have been a number of reasons for the land to be sold. There was a fundamentally different understanding between the two groups in regards to land rights, responsibilities and ownership. The English wanted a legal transaction, but the idea that someone could own land was probably completely alien to the Indigenous People. It is challenging to even determine how much money was exchanged for the land for a number of reasons. People were also beginning to become dependent on European goods that cost money, such as ammunition and clothing. Ms. Van Welden-Herman asked if it was correct that there was a diminished number of Indigenous People living in the area during this period. Mr. Wheeler stated that there had been a tremendous loss of life, estimated at 70% to 80% due to epidemics. Ms. Van Welden-Herman asked where the Penacook are today. Mr. Wheeler stated that the Penacook and the Pawtucket people were closely allied with the Abenaki, Indigenous People of Vermont and New Hampshire. When there were strife or hostilities in the area, the Penacook would often go to New Hampshire. An Abenaki group in New Hampshire, the Cowasuck Band, have encompassed the Penacook people. He recommended that Ms. Van Welden-Herman reach out to that group as they have worked with local organizations on land acknowledgements and mascots.

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Mr. Hess asked if the Indigenous Person who appears in the Town's 350th mural in the Select Board room is Cutshamache whom Mr. Wheeler spoke of tonight, noting that he thought the spelling make have been different. Mr. Wheeler stated that it is the same person, and that there are many different spellings of the name, which makes it difficult to track him down in records.

Ms. Van Welden-Herman asked Mr. Wheeler if he has any suggestions on how the group could engage the public in understanding the historical background. Mr. Wheeler suggested that the group reach out to the Abenaki tribe to see if they would like to be involved. He noted that if there is a redesign, the group may want to work with an Indigenous artist. Mr. Hess added that Mr. Wheeler will be speaking about land acknowledgements at the AVIS Annual Meeting on April 12th.

Town Survey Discussion:

Mr. Flanagan stated that Ms. Clements had submitted comments on the survey that the Board reviewed at the last meeting and had also submitted an alternative survey for the Committee to review. Ms. Clements stated that she had reviewed the original draft survey with colleagues from the Center for History and Culture who then collaborated on the survey questions that she submitted. The Committee reviewed both the original draft survey that was put forward by Mr. Flanagan and the draft survey submitted by Ms. Clements and worked to blend the two surveys together. Mr. Flanagan stated that he would provide the Committee with the blended survey at the next meeting.

The Committee set the dates for their meetings to Thursday, January 27th at 5:00 p.m. and Thursday, February 17th at 5:00 p.m.

Approval of Meeting Minutes

On a motion by Mr. Hess seconded by Mr. Flanagan, the committee approved the meeting minutes of December 15, 2021. Roll call: J. Hess - Yes, A. Flanagan – Yes, B. Dessin – Yes, T. Adams – Yes, M. Litton – Yes, E. Clements – Yes, K. Van Welden-Herman - Yes. Motion passes 7-0.

Adjournment: On a motion by Mr. Hess seconded by Ms. Litton the meeting was adjourned at 5:52 p.m. Roll call: E. Clements – Yes, M. Litton – Yes, B. Dessin – Yes, A. Flanagan – Yes, J. Hess - Yes, K. Van Welden-Herman - Yes. Motion passes 7-0.

Documents

Draft Town Seal Survey

Draft Minutes of December 15, 2021