



GEORGIA COUNCIL ON AMERICAN INDIAN CONCERNS MEETING MINUTES

Date: July 28, 2025

Time: 11:30am

Meeting called to order by: Nealie McCormick

INVOCATION

Led by Vonnie McCormick

Council Members Present

Nealie McCormick, Chairman
Paul Brannen
Rhonda Bennett
Maureen Meyers
Royce McCrary
Heidi Altman
Terry Raber
Frank Williams
Christian Dane – Program Manager (non-member)
Donald Kirkland – Senior Advisor (non-member)

Guests Present

Chief Vonnie McCormick, Lower Muskogee Creek Tribe
Amanda Murphy, Policy & Regulation Unit, DFCS
Sierra Shumake, Partnership for Innovation
Eliana Velasquez, Partnership for Innovation

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

The meeting minutes for the meeting on May 17, 2025, and the meeting on June 6, 2025, were distributed for review. Terry Raber moved to accept minutes; Rhonda Bennett seconded. Motion carried unanimously.

TRIBE REPORTS

Lower Muskogee Creek Tribe: Provided by Chief Vonnie McCormick.

Health and Community Concerns:

- Experiencing high rates of terminal cancer, potentially due to environmental factors in farming communities

Youth and Cultural Activities:

- Held youth camp from June 9-13 for ages 11-16
- Activities included learning Muskogee language, pottery, finger weaving, bead work, archery, stomp dancing, stick ball, and making a dugout canoe.



Community Services:

- Offering free eye exams for people 55 and older
- Hosting a gospel sing on October 17th
- Holding a powwow on October 18-19 with head dancers Kim Wildcat and Big Jim Richenbaugh

Ongoing Projects:

- Working with Children's Museum in Atlanta for Native American Heritage Month
- We are working on the historical part of our records for Roy James at Secure Records Solutions.
- Collaborating with USDA and NRCS on an elder's board
- Continuing efforts on federal recognition
- Working with a tribe in Alabama to teach Muscogee language
- Managing greenhouses with an intern who implemented monitoring technologies

Georgia Tribe of Eastern Cherokee: Provided by Rhonda Bennett.

Federal Recognition and Political Support:

- Worked with Julian Fraser from Congressman David Scott's office on their press release regarding the Congressman's letter to the BIA on behalf of the Georgia Tribe of Eastern Cherokee and Lower Muskogee Creek Tribe
- Discussed support from David Petite, Marjorie Taylor Greene, and Fawn Sharp for reopening federal recognition consideration

Heritage Center and Museum:

- Receiving interest and donations for historical museum
- Met with Lumpkin County Historical Society, who support the project
- Local elected officials are supportive
- Working with Allison Galloup from University of North Georgia on documentation

Community Partnerships:

- Collaborated with Boy Scouts to use authentic costumes and ceremonial customs
- AJ Calera helping with GoFundMe page and grant applications
- Exploring contact with Doug Collins about Native American veterans' recognition

Upcoming Events:

- Exploring property acquisition for potential live exhibits
- Received donation of two sets of shackles from Trail of Tears era
- Meeting with Breedlove Construction for blueprints

Youth Engagement:

- Started discussions about forming a youth council with 7 young members (ages 18-20)

Cherokee of Georgia Tribal Council: Provided by Paul Brannen.

Preparing for Powwow taking place in early September.



PRESENTATIONS

A presentation on the Georgia Native Sites Project was delivered by Eliana Velasquez and Sierra Shumake, interns from the Partnership for Innovation.

PROJECT REPORTS

Discussion was had on current projects below.

- A) Jekyll Island Foundation' Horton House Native American Project
- B) Tribal Institutional Review Board
- C) Georgia Tribe of Eastern Cherokee Records Digitization
- D) Rock Eagle Signage

BUSINESS

- A) Heidi Altman moves to approve the letter outlining its position on the state flower and to send it to Representative Deborah Silcox. Motion seconded by Maureen Meyers. Motion carried.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

- A) Next meeting scheduled for September 11-13, including planning session.
- B) Georgia Tribe Night on August 9.
- C) Missing Persons Day on May 16, 2026.

ADJOURNMENT

Royce McCrary moved to adjourn meeting. Motion seconded by Terry Raber. Motion carried unanimously. Meeting adjourned at 12:48pm.