

## Sustainability Committee Minutes 5/31/22

Ben Scott Stephen John Donelle Heath Jeffery

In session 6:08

Land acknowledgement regarding history of boarding schools forced on native american children

Introductions for newer members

### **Communications**

John - suggested a tour of the utility's facilities inc. wastewater later this summer

Ben - city has ARPA funding and a bit more free rein on what we can spend it on. Suggestion that next meeting

Ben agrees to take notes for meetings

Donelle suggests higher meeting tempo to help get survey going

**Minutes:** passed 7-0

### **Mission statement:**

Discussion of how to address economic issues in mission statement.

Further refinement of language

### **6 focus areas:**

What do we want to define beforehand in shaping these areas?

Donelle suggests meeting in small groups before next meeting

Determining who's currently in what group

Item 8: Formed outline for discussion with council

Item 9:

Focus Area work and discussion

Work on presentation to city council

Work on timeline - Action Items

### **Land acknowledgment to include in notes**

I want to acknowledge the land we are on, the land we are making decisions about. That is the ancestral lands of the Ho-Chunk people, the people of the sacred voice.

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Some of you may know that earlier this month, just a couple days after our last meeting, the U.S. Department of the Interior released its initial findings of an investigation into the loss of human life and lasting consequences of the Federal Indian boarding school system.

I would like to share a little bit from that report.

The [report](#) details for the first time that the federal government operated or supported 408 boarding schools across 37 states, including Wisconsin, between 1819 and 1969. At these federal Indian boarding schools, Indigenous childrens' identities, languages, and beliefs were forcibly suppressed through "militarized and identity-alteration methodologies." Upon entry, children immediately had their hair cut, were reassigned English names, and "were punished for speaking their Native languages or engaging in cultural or religious practices."

"The intentional targeting and removal of American Indian, Alaska Native, and Native Hawaiian children to achieve the goal of forced assimilation of Indian people was both traumatic and violent. Based on initial research, the Department finds that hundreds of Indian children died throughout the Federal Indian boarding school system. The Department expects that continued investigation will reveal the approximate number of Indian children who died at Federal Indian boarding schools to be in the thousands or tens of thousands. Many of those children were buried in unmarked or poorly maintained burial sites far from their Indian Tribes, Alaska Native Villages, the Native Hawaiian Community, and families, often hundreds, or even thousands, of miles away. The Department's research revealed at least 53 different burial sites across the Federal Indian boarding school system and leads to an expectation that there are many more burial sites that will be identified with further research."

A quote from Secretary of the Interior Deb Haaland "The consequences of federal Indian boarding school policies—including the intergenerational trauma caused by the family separation and cultural eradication inflicted upon generations of children as young as 4 years old—are heartbreaking and undeniable."

In closing, I just wanted to share my gratitude that, despite the efforts of the US government to remove and replace the indigenous people of this land and to erase their culture, many Ho Chunk remain today and are able to share their knowledge, their language, and their wisdom of how to live in harmony with this place they call Deejop.