

DATE: May 13, 2022

TO: Niskithe Prayer Camp Leaders  
Kevin Abourezk  
Renee Sans Souci  
Erin Poor

FROM: Mayor Leirion Gaylor Baird

RE: City Commitments

I see you. I respect you. I acknowledge your existence.

I offer the following commitments in response to your Asks of me as the Mayor of the City of Lincoln posted on May 2, 2022. These commitments are within my ability to make as Mayor right now using existing city structures, committees, and policies. The commitments do not address your Asks directed to the City Council, the Catholic Diocese, or Manzitto Construction since they are not under the purview of my administration.

I did not veto the City Council's decision related to the Wilderness Crossing development on lands in proximity to the sweat lodges known as the Fish Farm and Oyate Lodge. That decision can't be revisited. However, there are things we can do to address the structural changes you requested.

Our common goal is that the concerns of Native community are heard, valued, and influence city policies. You made some specific asks of me and my administration. I am offering my responses to move us towards our common goal and to resolve this situation.

***Your Ask: The creation of a Native Advisory Committee for the City of Lincoln, chosen by the Lincoln Native American Community to include Elders, youth, and adults, which would be required by municipal code to be engaged with for any issues that impact the Native Community.***

**My Response:** I am going to work with the Mayor's Multicultural Advisory Committee (MAC) to create a sub-committee charged with convening Native leaders to advise the Mayor's Office on issues that impact the Native Community. I will work with the MAC Chair, Dr. Colette Yellow Robe, to help establish the sub-committee. I will work with you to help determine committee membership, and the specific charge and scope of their work.

**Your Ask:** *The appointment of members of the Native Advisory Committee to specific departments, such as the Planning Commission, and involved in such efforts as comprehensive planning for the city.*

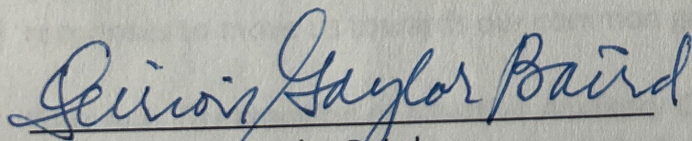
**My Response:** I will work with the Niskithe Prayer Camp and other Native leaders to identify and cultivate individuals who can be considered for appointment to openings on City Boards and Commissions including the Planning Commission. This aligns with our already existing goal to diversify City Boards and Commissions. We will make an intentional effort to add members of the Native community who have skills, experience, and expertise relevant to City Boards and Commissions so their voice and perspective can be included in decision-making. I can make this commitment now without going through the process of by-law changes that would take several months and require approval from other governance bodies.

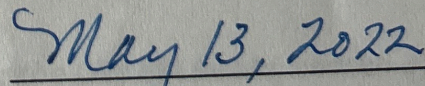
**Your Ask:** *For changes to the City of Lincoln governing documents that mandate special religious protections for Indigenous ceremonial sites.*

**My Response:** I am working with the Parks and Recreation Department and Solidago Conservancy to establish a Conservation Easement on the Danker property commonly referred to as The Fish Farm. This would offer protection for the Sweat Lodge located on that land. I am working to ensure that this process is not financially burdensome to Kathleen Danker as the property owner. We have several options for establishing the Conservation Easement, including Solidago Conservancy purchasing part of the Danker property for the Easement. My administration is already working on this commitment.

One of the specific charges to the Native sub-committee could be to help identify other Indigenous ceremonial sites in Lincoln and policies to protect them.

I commit to these action steps in response to the Niskithe Prayer Camp Asks.

  
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Mayor Leirion Gaylor Baird

  
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Date