



NORTH CAROLINA COMMISSION OF INDIAN AFFAIRS

SPECIAL MEETING MINUTES On CATAWBA NATION OF SOUTH CAROLINA'S PETITION FOR STATE RECOGNITION IN NORTH CAROLINA

April 14, 2026

VIRTUAL VIA MICROSOFT TEAMS

325 N. Salisbury St.
Raleigh, NC 27603

WELCOME: Mr. Gregory Bryant, Chair, called the meeting to order at 10:01 a.m. The Chair welcomed everyone and acknowledged guests, Commission Members, Tribal Leaders, Chiefs, State Officials, and staff.

INVOCATION: Commissioner Vee Oxendine presented the invocation.

ROLL CALL: Chairman Bryant requested that Ms. Daphne Pinto, staff member, conduct the roll call.

TRIBAL AND ASSOCIATION MEMBERS

Coharie	Ed Simermeyer	Absent
Coharie	Lenora Locklear	Present
Cumberland County Association for Indian People	Harrison Jones	Present
Cumberland County Association for Indian People	Tina Dicke	Present
Eastern Band of the Cherokee Nation	Michael Lambert	Present
Eastern Band of the Cherokee Nation	Jarrett Crowe	Absent
Guilford Native American Association	Perry L Hunt Jr.	Present
Guilford Native American Association	Amanda J Ballard	Present
Haliwa Saponi	Alfred Richardson	Present
Haliwa Saponi	P. Sunshine Richardson	Present (Via Phone)
Lumbee	Larece Hunt	Present
Lumbee	Ricky Burnett	Present
Lumbee	Vernanda Oxendine	Present
Meherrin	Edward Livingston	Present
Metrolina Native American Association	Walter D. Baucom	Present



ROLL CALL *(Continued)*

Metrolina Native American Association	Gregory Bryant	Present
Occaneechi Band of the Saponi Nation	Tony Hayes	Present
Sappony	Dorothy Yates	Present
Triangle Native American Society	Danny Bell	Present
Waccamaw Siouan	Vacant	Absent
Waccamaw Siouan	Nadine F. Patrick	Present

STATE OFFICIALS

President Pro Tem Appointee	Gerald Goolsby	Present
Speaker of the House Appointee	Craig D. McMillian	Present
Department of Administration (DOA), Gabriel J. Esparza, Secretary		
Designee: Noelle S. Talley, Deputy Secretary		Present
Department of Commerce/ ESC, Lee Lilley, Secretary		
Designee: Emily Roach, Director of Policy and Strategic Planning		Absent
Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ), D. Reid Wilson, Secretary		
Designee: John Nicholson, Chief Deputy Secretary		Present
Department of Health & Human Services, DevDutta Sangvai, Secretary		
Designee: Debra Farrington, Deputy Secretary Health Equity		Present
Designee: Portia Pope, Acting Director, NCDHHS Office of Minority Health		
Department of Labor, Luke Farley, Commissioner		
Designee: Chris Bullard		Present
Department of Cultural Resources, Chris Southerly, Advisor,		
Adhoc- Non-Voting Member		Absent
Designee: Rosie Blewitt, Assistant State Archaeologist and Site Registrar		

OTHER STATE OFFICIALS

Mark Teague, Attorney, NC Department of Justice	Absent
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YOUTH REPRESENTATIVE

NCNAYO Kenly McLaurin (Co-Chair) - Non-Voting Member	Absent
Vacant (Co-Chair) – Non-Voting Member	Absent
NC NACOHE Thorn Grove - Non-Voting Member	Present

The Chair declared that a quorum existed; therefore, the meeting could proceed according to the agenda.

STAFF PRESENT

Gregory Richardson, Executive Director
Daphne Pinto, Administrative Secretary to the Executive Director
Stephen (Steve) Maynor, Program Director, Section 8 Housing Program
Elkton (Elk) Richardson, Program Director, State Recognition Program
Pamela (Shena) Brewington, Program Director, Low Income Energy Assistance Program (LIEAP)
Laury Chavis, Program Director, Tobacco Survey Program
Ashley Patrick, Program Coordinator, Workforce Innovation Opportunity Act (WIOA) Program



Sonya Lang, Grants Administrator

OTHERS PRESENT: A total of 71 participants attended the Microsoft TEAMS meeting. A list of attendees is on file with the Commission.

ETHICS STATEMENT: Executive Director Richardson read the Ethics Statement on Behalf of Chairman Bryant and urged Commission Members to declare any conflicts of interest or the appearances of any conflicts of interest that may exist in relation to any matters before the Commission, as mandated by the State Ethics Act. No conflicts were noted.

ADOPTION OF THE MEETING AGENDA: The Chair requested a motion to adopt the agenda.

MOTION:

Commissioner Gerald Goolsby motioned to adopt the agenda as presented. Commissioner Alfred Richardson seconded. The agenda was approved with no objection from the membership, and the motion carried.

Chair Bryant welcomed Mr. John Nicholson, Chief Deputy Secretary, Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ), to the Commission. Mr. Nicholson replaces Mr. Jeff Hart, who previously served in this capacity.

PRESENTATION OF THE RECOGNITION COMMITTEE'S REPORT- CATAWBA NATION PETITION FOR STATE RECOGNITION:

Recognition Committee Chair Perry Hunt requested **Mr. Elkton Richardson, Tribal Recognition Program Director**, to present this item. Handouts were provided in the Board packet.

Key Highlights:

- The Commission received the Recognition Committee's report and recommendation regarding the petition submitted by the Catawba Nation for state recognition.
- The review process was followed in accordance with 1 NCAC 15. Section 0200 – Procedures for Legal Recognition of American Indian Groups.
- The Recognition Committee determined that the Catawba Nation met all eight (8) required criteria for state recognition.
- No deficiencies were identified during the review process.
- Mr. Elk Richardson noted that a public hearing was held on March 18, 2026.
- The Recognition Committee formally recommended that the Catawba Nation be recognized as a state-recognized American Indian Tribe by the State of North Carolina.
- **It was noted that the Commission is required to take final action at the next Commission meeting scheduled for June 5, 2026, in accordance with administrative procedures.**
- The current action is to accept the Committee's report, not to finalize recognition.

Supporting Documentation

Handouts of the Recognition Committee Meeting Minutes and Hearing on Petition submitted by the Catawba Nation Office of Tribal Government, dated March 18, 2026, and the NCAC 15.



Section .0100 – General Provisions, presented during the meeting, is maintained on file with the Commission.

ACTION:

The Recognition Committee recommended that the Commission accept the Committee’s report regarding the petition submitted by the Catawba Nation for state recognition.

MOTION – VOICE VOTE:

- Commissioner Gerald Goolsby made a motion to accept the Recognition Committee’s report regarding the Catawba Nation petition.
- The motion was seconded by Commissioner Edward Livingston (*Commissioner Alfred Richardson also voiced a second*).
- Mr. Greg Bryant, Chair, asked members to say “Aye” if they were in favor of the motion. With the Ayes being the majority. The motion was carried.

DISCUSSION:

- Discussion occurred regarding the possibility of holding a special called meeting before June 5, 2026, to expedite final vote ahead of the short legislative session.
- Executive Director Richardson advised adhering strictly to the established procedures to avoid legal concerns or the appearance of impropriety.
- Chair Bryant stated he would consult legal counsel to confirm notice requirements and permissible timings for action. If guidelines allow an earlier meeting (e.g., due to the required notice period), the Chair will notify members; otherwise, the matter will proceed at the June 5, 2026, meeting.

JUNE 5, 2026 – VENUE PLANNING: This item is not listed on the agenda.

- The Commission discussed meeting in the Charlotte area on June 5, 2026. Holding a meeting at the Catawba Nation (South Carolina) was not recommended at this stage to avoid any potential conflicts of interest issues until the NC Commission of Indian Affairs has completed the recognition process. Staff will work in consultation with the Chairman to identify and confirm a suitable venue for the June 5th meeting in the Charlotte area.

OTHER BUSINESS:

- **In Memoriam / Recognition:** Commissioner Larece Hunt requested that the Commission honor the late Mr. Elton Ray Jacobs for his dedicated service on the Commission, including his long-standing leadership as Vice Chair of the Recognition Committee. A moment of silence was observed in his memory. Chair Bryant expressed appreciation to Commissioner Hunt for thoughtfully acknowledging and commemorating the late Mr. Elton Ray Jacob’s service and legacy.
- **Community Event Reminder:** After adjournment, Executive Director Richardson relayed a reminder from Commissioner Al Richardson regarding the Haliwa-Saponi PowWow (April 17-19, 2026).

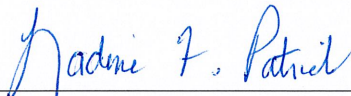
CLOSING PRAYER: Chairman Bryant requested that Commissioner Alfred Richardson lead the membership in a closing prayer.



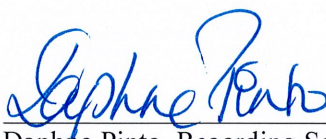
ADJOURNMENT:

Chairman Bryant requested a motion to adjourn.

- Commissioner Gerald Goolsby made a motion to adjourn. Commissioner Chris Bullard seconded the motion. Motion carried unanimously.
- The meeting adjourned at 10:44 am.
- Note: Near the end of the meeting, the Chair experienced brief connectivity issues; votes were confirmed via phone audio and recorded accordingly.
- The next Commission meeting is scheduled for June 5, 2026. Location TBD.

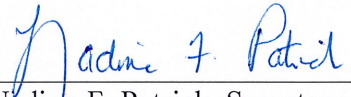


Nadine F. Patrick, Secretary-Treasurer
NC Commission of Indian Affairs
(Sign & Date)

 6-5-26

Daphne Pinto, Recording Secretary
(Sign & Date)

These minutes were approved by the North Carolina Commission of Indian Affairs on June 5, 2026.



Nadine F. Patrick, Secretary-Treasurer
NC Commission of Indian Affairs
(Sign & Date)



**N.C. COMMISSION OF INDIAN AFFAIRS
SPECIAL MEETING
VIRTUAL VIA MICROSOFT TEAMS**

325 N. Salisbury St. Raleigh, NC 27603

April 14, 2026

10:00 am – 10:30 am

DRAFT AGENDA

Opening Session	10:00 am
Welcome and Call to Order	Greg Bryant, Chairman
Invocation	Vee Oxendine, Commission Member
Roll Call and Adoption of the Agenda (Present and Agree)	Daphne Pinto, Administrative Assistant
Reading of Ethics Statement	Gregory Richardson, Executive Director
Presentation of the Recognition Committee's Report and Recommendation Regarding a Petition for State recognition, Submitted by Catawba Nation Office of Tribal Government, in accordance with 1 NCAC 15. 0200 – LEGAL RECOGNITION OF AMERICAN INDIAN GROUPS	Perry Hunt, Recognition Committee Chair, and Elkton Richardson, Tribal Recognition Program Director
Closing Prayer	Al Richardson, Commission Member
ADJOURNMENT	10:30 am