

NEVADA STATE BOARD ON GEOGRAPHIC NAMES

MINUTES

Wednesday, September 15, 2022

The meeting began at 9:31am, at the Richard H. Bryan Building, Tahoe Hearing Room. 2nd Floor 901 S. Stewart Street. Carson City, NV, and simultaneously streamed interactively on Lifesizecloud.com.

Board Members/Others Present at 901 S. Stewart St.:

Cynthia Laframboise, Chair, Nevada State Library, Archives, and Public Records
Christine Johnson, Executive Secretary (non-voting); University of Nevada Ren Dept of Geog. (Alternate)
Dominique Etchegoyhen, Nevada Dept. of Conservation & Natural Resources
Scott Carey, Nevada Dept. of Conservation & Natural Resources (voting alternate)
Craig Burkett, Sr. Deputy Attorney General, Nevada Attorney General's Office (non-voting)

Board Members/Others Present on Streaming Site:

Don Harper, Bureau of Land Management, Nevada
Dean Tonenna, Bureau of Land Management, Nevada (voting alternate)
Gabriel Judkins, University of Nevada Las Vegas, Department of Geosciences
Paul White, University of Nevada, Reno – Department of Geography
Jeff Welter, Nevada Department of Transportation
Sydney, Nevada Department of Transportation (voting alternate)
Catherine Magee, Nevada Historical Society
Shery Hayes-Zorn, Nevada Historical Society (voting alternate)
Thomas Powell – U.S. Forest Service
Robert Francis– U.S. Forest Service (voting alternate)
Stacey Montooth, Nevada Indian Commission
Clifford Banuelos, Inter-Tribal Commission of Nevada

Members of Public/Advisory Panel present in person or online:

Assemblyman Howard Watts
John Burgess, Nevada Department of Transportation (Advisory Panel)
Louis Forline, University of Nevada, Reno – Department of Anthropology (Advisory Panel)
Karl Yonkers, Nevada Department of Transportation (Advisory Panel)
Jennifer Runyon, USGS/U.S. Board on Geographic Names
Chrissy Klenke, UNR – Earthsciences and Maps Librarian (Advisory Panel)

Absent:

Lora Robb, Nevada Bureau of Mines & Geology
David Davis, Nevada Bureau of Mines & Geology (voting alternate)
Josh Owens, Nevada State Library, Archives, and Public Records (voting Alternate)
National Parks Service Representative

1. Call to Order and Approval of Agenda (for possible action)

Meeting called to order at 9:31am by Cynthia Laframboise. Introductions made of attending Board members and members of the public. Motion to approve agenda made by Dominique Etchegoyhen, seconded by Don Harper. Unanimous approval of the agenda. Motion approved.

2. Public Comment (action not taken)

Pursuant to N.R.S. 241, this time is devoted to comments by the public, if any, and discussion of those comments. Comment will not be restricted based on viewpoint. No action may be taken upon a matter raised under this item on the agenda until the matter itself has been specifically included on a successive agenda and identified as an item for possible action. All public comments may be limited to five (5) minutes for each person at the discretion of the Chair. No public comment made at this time.

3. Introduction of the Board, Guests (action not taken)

Board members and guests present in the meeting room were introduced, followed by board members, guests, and advisory panel members present on the streaming venue. No action was taken.

4. Approval of Minutes of the January 14, 2020 meeting (for possible action)

Motion to approve minutes of January 14, 2020 minutes as written made by Dominique Etchegoyhen, seconded by Paul White. One abstention, otherwise unanimous approval of minutes. Motion approved.

5. Announcements, Chair or Executive Secretary

From Executive Secretary: Official welcome of Assemblyman Howard Watts, and notation that the Nevada Indian Commission was added to the Nevada State Board on Geographic Names (NSBGN) this legislative session, and official welcome to the Nevada Indian Commission. Thanked Dept. of Lands and Conservation for hosting this meeting.

From Chair: Noted NSBGN have quite a few new representatives on the Nevada State Board on Geographic Names, thanked the new members for being present and that the NSBGN is embarking on a new era of activity and processes regarding names, and noted NSBGN will be working to create a checklist of research completed by all representing agencies that will be distributed to be included in each site's file, each agency will be required to submit the and will be part of the annual reporting package that the NSBGN will present to the State hereafter.

6. Announcements from Board Members

No announcements from Board Members were made.

7. Assemblyman Watts – Introduction of New Legislation (action not taken)

Assemblyman Watts introduced himself and presented an overview of legislation (AB88) passed during the 2021 legislative session including intent behind the bill. Specific information discussed pertaining to the Nevada State Board on Geographic Names included adding to the statutory duties of the board two elements: to change racially discriminatory language (names) on the landscape and the new requirement for the NSBGN to report annually to legislature on progress and actions of this board. Questions from the Board to Assemblyman Watts regarding looking at the history of the names in question from educational perspective. Assemblyman Watts mentioned the new annual report will be helpful in reporting to the legislation about exactly this – information and research on these names, in addition to the minutes of the NSBGN for public information record. Noted many names already existed on the land prior to the Western expansion. Documenting the history, the resulting debates, and the ultimate decisions made on the offensive names in question is essential and important and will be compiled and made accessible to the public for educational and informational purposes. Board member noted the NSBGN is not the naming authority (final decision) on names on the lands (this falls to the U.S. Board). The NSBGN is responsible to do the research, communicating with the Tribes and other local people regarding the names on the land, and reports to the U.S. Board, but new process on how to best do this is in question. Assemblyman Watts mentioned putting indigenous communities as the priority in any existing sites in question, with regard to investigating previously known/existing names for these sites, and respecting tribal sovereignty. ITCN member noted tribal consulting process, and noted need to listen to elected leadership in tribal communities. More discussion included noting the opportunity to bring in and restore indigenous names in an authentic and meaningful way by not rushing the process. Assemblyman Watts noted there is no timeline associated with the legislation – just the expectation that work is underway and progress is evident (information gathering, input

gathering). ITCN suggested NSBGN get on Nevada Indian Commission (NIC) and the Inter-Tribal Council of Nevada (ITCN) agendas to present current issues/information to reach as many people and Tribal authorities as possible during this process. Board member suggested educational information put forth on how to name/rename/restore names to the landscape to tribes would be good (cost?). Chair noted struggles with current website limitations, and past challenges in outreach. There is possibility of the Nevada State Library and Archives adopting the website (relocating it from UNR). Website can and should be better used for distribution of information, and Chair welcomes any and all suggestions on how to achieve some of these goals. Chrissy Klenke from UNR (earth sciences and map librarian from UNR) noted crowdsourcing is a potential use for NSBGN, might be a way to have the public better participate in this process. Question on what other names on the land might be offensive above and beyond the racially derogatory (and offensive) names (e.g. commemorative names of people or events). Discussion about opening the process for how places are named provides an opportunity not only to manage AB88, but to include more people in the general process, and have a better public presence. The public needs to understand how names on the land come about, and the process by which names are vetted and applied. Board member voiced concern for inundation of new names, and situation of prioritizing naming proposals. Time for processing each name is also a concern – typical naming in the past took between 6 and 12 months. Question on whether the NSBGN can impose a moratorium on a typical naming process in order to allow for prioritization of derogatory place names. U.S. Board on Geographic Names representative mentioned that transparency with the public is paramount. Noted if US Board (USBGN)s receives a name to rename a space in Nevada, they would look for immediate concerns, do the basic vetting on criteria for naming, and notify proponent that they will be interacting with the State Names Board, and the U.S. Board on Geographic Names (USBGN) is willing to wait as long as it takes for federal approval process in order to get process right, but proponents are often impatient and want the process to move quickly. USBGN has a Quarterly Review list that is published online, and also has a Tribal process that all 574 Federally recognized tribes and approximately 200 Tribal Historic Preservations Officers nationwide requesting comment or feedback. Only exception of bypassing states is when naming proposals bypass the entire system and go to Congress (tied to legislation). Names processed this way are entered into the Geographic Names Information System (GNIS) as being approved by the U.S., not the U.S. Board on Geographic Names. Exec. Secretary for NSBGN noted that the states do not name features or have the final authority, only the USBGN, and stated that there is a chance that a proponent could circumvent the state board and go to the USBGN, and appreciates the USBGN continuing to value the states' processes and input. USBGN states they will wait as long as they need to as long as they know that things are happening at the state level. Question on how to prioritize names, and what the timeline of this kind of effort will be. Current process is between 6 and 12 months for a single site. New legislation will necessitate much longer timing. Board member suggested NSBGN getting on Tribal meeting agendas as well as ITCN meeting agendas. USBGN must approve all names if they are to appear on US maps. State Deputy Atty General stated NSBGN is free to adopt any process as to how to go about internal processes. Assemblyman Watts noted appreciating NSBGN process, and noted reason he brought the legislation forward was to set a stance for the State as a whole, and the approach NSBGN will take toward names moving forward. Assembly Watts noted support of NSBGN in process evolution, noting current board limitations. Board member recognized and thanked Assemblyman Watts for the legislation, and time, thoughtfulness, and support of the NSBGN, and noted NSBGN will move forward the best we can to address all of the issues brought forward. Question on whether funding is available to help with these efforts, answer from Assemblyman Watts is no, but possible to bring forward for consideration for next legislative session.

8. Protocol and streamlining of NSBGN procedures update (for possible action)

Discussion between NSBGN board members ensued, with Chair noting we can adopt internal processes to make sure NSBGN can accommodate new requirements. Executive Secretary reiterated current standard process of a naming application (first hearing, second hearing, and either send to Washington DC at that time with State opinion, or possibly another hearing. Some applications have gone as long as two years at the State level). Further comment from Executive Secretary mentioned potential to have more meetings per year and/or possible subcommittees. Question posed on whether

to go about managing offensive names list one by one, or all together. Executive Secretary noted that NSBGN forms should be updated to include a box for “restoration” – not just ‘change’ or ‘new name.’

Executive Secretary explained current outreach process, including county commissions and tribal communications. Stated that counties should be more involved in the process, and perhaps NSBGN should present at county commissions to explain the process in order to elicit more participation. Board member mentioned that we need to form a process in order to not overlook current applications, and need to apply time to research the offensive names. Extensive discussion on various possibilities and questions on how to develop process and perform outreach. Board member suggested subcommittee can assist in implementation on AB88 (including location of sites, what agencies are attached, and move forward on suggestions for processes), 2) subcommittee on improvements on website and public outreach – one improvement could be website notification that proposals could take several years), and 3) need of a motion in recognition of AB88, implementing a multi-year prioritization of outreach to Nevada’s Tribal communities – over the course of as many as five years, and during this time, nominations for new names would be accepted, but not classified as a priority to process. Board Member asked what information should NSBGN expect to have next time we meet, in order to implement some of the proposed processes. What information does NSBGN need? Extensive discussion on what names are in the purview of the NSBGN, and how to develop process on performing outreach and who will work on the development of the outreach process, and another group should be working on the locations of the sites in question. Once offensive names are fully identified (where, specifics of feature, what county), suggestion that ITCN and NIC should be given the information in order to make aware where the specific site is in order to obtain input as to which Tribes are interested in the consultation process with NSBGN, in order that NSBGN is not identifying the Tribes, but perhaps given the information, the Tribes identify themselves as interested parties. ITCN supports going before ITCN but not as part of the normal process, states that all Tribes need to be contacted individually. ITCN does like the idea of identifying Tribes of interest, but going before ITCN is not a substitution of consulting with Tribes directly. ITCN will work to figure out ways to best engage Tribes by consulting with Tribal Historic Preservation Officers (THPO), and others. An option is to be a standing agenda item on ITCN meetings. Clarification that NSBGN does not want to use NIC and ITCN in lieu of direct Tribal Contact. USBGN representative is also questioning who developed the list of offensive names, and noted there are no duplicate names on the list, but several features might be able to be bundled based on commonalities of the feature (East Fork of the XXX river, West Fork of the (same) river). Reminded that there is no single ‘offensive names’ list, but perhaps many. NSBGN board member noted it is important to remember the social complexities of this process. Each site needs to be considered on a case by case basis. The current list provided to NSBGN does not list the location of the sites, and a lot of work needs to be done to identify the actual physical locations and we need more information that will need to be collected. ITCN stated ‘Squaw’ name on any feature needs to be removed. Chrissy Klenke offered to make interactive (ESRI) map to be able to locate the sites in question. USBGN representative noted that more ethnic groups (not just Tribes) need to be consulted based on the offensive names on the list (Asian-American, African-American groups).

Further discussion ensued, resulting in designation of tasks to particular individuals to complete prior to next meeting. Board member suggested outreach committee. Deputy Attorney General noted that creation of subcommittees is not part of current agenda, and subcommittee is subject to open meeting law requirements. It is therefore easier and in line with organization of this Board to assign tasks to individuals and report back to whole Board at next meeting, as has been the process (each agency is meant to research each site and report back at the following meeting having used all their own available resources).

Motion made by Paul White to work with Christine Johnson, Robert Francis, and Scott Carey to evaluate current process and organize and prioritize actions of the board in order to implement AB88. Cliff Banuelos offered support. Seconded by Dominique Etchegoyhen. No additional discussion, no objections and no abstentions. Motion passed.

Motion made by Gabriel Judkins, who - with the help of Christine Johnson, Chrissy Klenke, Cynthia Laframboise, and Thomas Powell will research the list of offensive names provided in this agenda, identify geographic location and gather additional information that will assist in identifying interested parties. Seconded by Dominique Etchegoyhen. No additional discussion, no objections and no abstentions. Motion passed.

9. Election of Vice-Chair (for possible action)

Current Vice-Chair (representing NDOT) had to step down from position, and current NDOT voting member will not be taking on this role. Executive Secretary explained role of Vice-Chair, current Vice-Chair (Karl Yonkers) further explained the role is to support the Chair and tasks as assigned. Executive Secretary thanked Karl Yonkers for having filled that position for two years. Dominique Etchegoyhen volunteered (self-nominated). Motion to elect Mr. Etchegoyhen as Vice-Chair made by Cynthia Laframboise, seconded by Gabriel Judkins. No additional discussion, no objections, and no abstentions. Motion passed.

10. Election of Executive Secretary (for possible action)

Chair noted Christine Johnson's service to this position and longtime support of Chair position. Christine Johnson offered to continue service in this position but offered it to all other board members, pledging support of whomever would be replacing her. Motion to elect Christine Johnson made by Dominique Etchegoyhen, seconded by Paul White. No additional discussion, no objections, and no abstentions. Motion passed.

11. Deacon Peak (for possible action)

Due to COVID impacts and NSBGN not meeting since January, 2020, the NSBGN is re-hearing this application beginning with a 'first hearing.'

This is first hearing for this site in Nye County. This is the highest point in the small range of hills directly north of Devil's Hole, where the native Pupfish live (affiliated with the proposal from September 2019 for Pupfish Peak). The site would be named for James Deacon, now deceased but distinguished Professor Emeritus of Biology at the University of Nevada, Las Vegas' Department of Biological Sciences. His leadership led to the protection of critical water resources in the Ash Meadows National Wildlife Refuge, and Dr. Deacon was instrumental in gaining recognition for other unique desert fish species in Nevada. This site is in Nye County in the Ash Meadows national Wildlife Refuge, just east of Death Valley. Board member mentioned having met with project leader who oversees this refuge, and that they are in full support of honoree (Mr. Deacon), who is held in high regard for the work and research he did on pupfish. Conversation on this site ensued, noting a letter of support for naming this site received by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife. Motion to defer this item until the next meeting, in order that the NSBGN can apply developing process (including outreach to Tribes), and what priorities are for managing names made by Paul White, seconded by Cynthia Laframboise. No additional discussion, no objections, and no abstentions. Motion passed.

12. Gridley Peak (for possible action)

Due to COVID impacts and NSBGN not meeting since January, 2020, the NSBGN is re-hearing this application beginning with a 'first hearing.'

This is the first hearing for proposed naming of Gridley Peak in Lander County. NSBGN is in possession of a letter of opposition to naming this site from the Yomba Shoshone Tribe. Executive Secretary noted Nevada Historical society possesses an important artifact that pertains to Mr. Gridley's impact and importance in Nevada's history. Motion to defer discussion on Gridley Peak until the next meeting, in order that the NSBGN can apply developing process and in light of the objection made by the Yomba Shoshone Tribe - made by Paul White, seconded by Clifford Banuelos. In further discussion, ITCN noted impact of COVID on the Yomba Shoshone Tribe has made communications difficult, and Thomas Powell stated this site is on USFS land, and would like more time to research.

USFS staff will follow what Tribal input dictates. No additional discussion, no objections, and no abstentions. Motion passed. USBGN representative asked Federal representatives on NSBGN to keep their USBGN member in the discussion and get their input on this item prior to any State vote (BGN member is who USBGN defers to).

13. Select Tentative Meeting Place for January 2022 Meeting (for possible action)

Tentative meeting place selected for next meeting at the Richard H. Bryan Building at 901 S. Stewart Street in Carson City, NV. Meeting will be (and needs to be) simultaneously streamed. Executive Secretary noted that the NSBGN traditionally meets on the second Tuesday of the months of January, May and September. January 11th of 2022 would be the second Tuesday for next meeting. Department of Lands and Conservation was thanked for hosting current meeting, discussion on potential meeting spots ensued; UNR was considered but parking is difficult and less of an issue in Carson City. Department of Lands and Conservation offered to host in the same building for the next meeting, and will look for a streaming-capable room. Exact room and streaming site to be determined prior to next meeting. Meeting tentatively set for Tuesday, January 11, 2022 at 9:30am. Motion for the meeting to occur on this date and time made by Cynthia Laframboise, seconded by Dominique Etchegoyhen. No additional discussion, no objections, and no abstentions. Motion passed.

14. Public Comments (action will not be taken)

Pursuant to N.R.S. 241, this time is devoted to comments by the public, if any, and discussion of those comments. Comment will not be restricted based on viewpoint. No action may be taken upon a matter raised under this item on the agenda until the matter itself has been specifically included on a successive agenda and identified as an item for possible action. All public comments may be limited to five (5) minutes for each person at the discretion of the Chair. ITCN noted apology for lack of Native American representation on NSBGN in the past, and intends to make NSBGN a priority moving forward. Chair thanked ITCN and NIC for future partnerships, and everyone attending for participation. Chair noted January meeting will be needing to elect a new Chair. Dominique Etchegoyhen noted AB88 specific verbiage of bill focuses on racially discriminatory language which will narrow focus of NSBGN, and priority is the racially discriminatory names. Exec Secretary thanked board for participating and other members for joining this deep, meaningful, and educational conversation that resulted from this meeting, and official welcome again to new members and long-time members and advisory members supporting board.

15. Adjournment

Meeting adjourned by Cynthia Laframboise. Meeting adjourned at 12:05pm.