

**MINUTES  
of the  
FIRST MEETING  
of the  
LAND GRANT COMMITTEE**

**June 17, 2019  
State Capitol, Room 322  
Santa Fe**

The first meeting of the Land Grant Committee for the 2019 interim was called to order by Representative Miguel P. Garcia, chair, on June 17, 2019 at 10:11 a.m. in Room 322 of the State Capitol.

**Present**

Rep. Miguel P. Garcia, Chair  
Sen. Elizabeth "Liz" Stefanics, Vice Chair  
Sen. Gregory A. Baca  
Rep. Rachel A. Black  
Rep. David M. Gallegos  
Rep. Susan K. Herrera  
Sen. Linda M. Lopez  
Sen. Richard C. Martinez  
Rep. Matthew McQueen  
Sen. Bill B. O'Neill  
Rep. Christine Trujillo

**Advisory Members**

Rep. Eliseo Lee Alcon  
Rep. Christine Chandler  
Sen. Carlos R. Cisneros  
Rep. Debra M. Sariñana

**Guest Legislators**

Rep. Tim D. Lewis  
Sen. Nancy Rodriguez

**Staff**

Mark Edwards, Bill Drafter, Legislative Council Service (LCS)  
Michelle Jaschke, Researcher, LCS  
Anthony Montoya, Staff Attorney, LCS

**Absent**

Sen. Cliff R. Pirtle  
Sen. Sander Rue  
Rep. Tomás E. Salazar

Rep. Harry Garcia  
Sen. Stuart Ingle  
Rep. D. Wonda Johnson  
Sen. Gay G. Kernan  
Rep. Patricia A. Lundstrom  
Sen. James P. White

## **Guests**

The guest list is in the meeting file.

## **Handouts**

Copies of all handouts are in the meeting file and are posted on the legislature's website.

## **Monday, June 17**

### **Introductions and Announcements**

Representative Miguel P. Garcia welcomed committee and audience members and asked members and guests to introduce themselves.

### **Guadalupe Hidalgo Treaty Division (GHTD) of the Office of the Attorney General (OAG): Program Overview**

Novela Salazar, legal assistant, OAG, provided an update on the status of the GHTD. Ms. Salazar noted that the GHTD has lacked funding for a full-time staff position for the past two years but is now continuing its education and outreach functions, as well as working on land issues at Cristobal de la Serna and current litigation related to the Tierra Amarilla Land Grant-Merced. Ms. Salazar said that she has been working with the members and staff of the Land Grant Council (Council) to determine what kinds of research and analysis the GHTD can provide in support of the Council's work. Ms. Salazar is also working with a number of different agencies that are looking into property title issues for the Cristobal de la Serna community. Senator Cisneros asked that Ms. Salazar keep the committee and the Legislative Finance Committee apprised of the GHTD's future funding needs.

### **Review of 2019 Committee-Endorsed Legislation**

Mr. Edwards provided an update on the status of committee-endorsed legislation. The following bills and resolutions were passed and signed into law in 2019:

- Senate Joint Resolution 2 approves transfer of the Laguna del Campo land tract from the Department of Game and Fish to the Tierra Amarilla Land Grant-Merced;
- Senate Bill (SB) 244 establishes a waiver of tuition for service program for legal services for land grants and acequias;
- SB 44 enables land grants-mercedes to qualify for Department of Transportation heavy equipment purchases under certain circumstances;
- SB 223 amends land grant election requirements and procedures;
- SB 17 provides comprehensive land use planning for land grants-mercedes; and
- SB 12 prescribes a standard procedure for providing notice of water applications and requires the state engineer to post notices online.

Committee members discussed the possibility of, during the next legislative session, reviving pocket-vetoed legislation to establish land grant partitions as autonomous land grants-mercedes and also reviving proposed legislation that did not pass that was intended to establish a

revenue stream for land grants-mercedes and to enhance the GHTD's authority to assist land grants. A member noted that mediation and planning services through the OAG may be the best approach to help the Cristobal de la Serna community resolve the tax and ownership issues related to old platting of area lands in lineas. It was also observed that La Merced del Manzano Land Grant-Merced was established as a political subdivision under Chapter 49, Article 1 NMSA 1978 during the 2019 legislative session and that a number of capital projects were also approved in 2019 benefiting land grants-mercedes, as follows:

- \$900,000 for the purchase of the Piedra Lumbre property near Abiquiu from the United States Forest Service for a consortium of land grants-mercedes;
- \$250,000 for the acquisition of abandoned real property within the former common land boundaries of the Town of Tome Land Grant-Merced;
- \$300,000 for a multipurpose community center for La Merced del Manzano Land Grant-Merced;
- \$50,000 for land acquisition for the Cristobal de la Serna community;
- \$150,000 to purchase and equip a dozer for the Chilili Land Grant-Merced; and
- \$170,000 to repair facilities for the Abiquiu Land Grant-Merced.

A member reported that La Puente Acequia Association has voiced some objections to the State Game Commission regarding the transfer of the Laguna del Campo property. At this time, the final documents to transfer the property are being modified to address the association's concerns.

### **2019 Interim Work Plan and Meeting Schedule Discussion**

Mr. Edwards presented the proposed work plan and meeting schedule, including detailed activities related to the following elements:

- strengthening governance capacity;
- land and water issues;
- economic development; and
- reports from individual land grants-mercedes and associated entities.

Members discussed a number of potential areas of focus for the work plan and ideas for future planning initiatives, including:

- the potential for including land grant studies as part of the New Mexico history curriculum in public schools and the possibility of establishing that course as a dual-credit program;
- receiving information on the various federal programs that land grants-mercedes are eligible to participate in under the 2018 federal Farm Bill;
- receiving a status report on the development of a land grant and acequia archive at the University of New Mexico-Taos; and

- the possibility of establishing a rural community infrastructure fund through the New Mexico Finance Authority to assist with infrastructure needs in rural areas that are not eligible for assistance through either the Colonias Infrastructure Project Fund or the Tribal Infrastructure Project Fund.

In response to questions, Arturo Archuleta, Council program manager, observed that the Council has an online listing of land grant-merced governing bodies and maintains a registry of land grants-mercedes but that maps for land grants-mercedes are not yet available online.

Mr. Edwards reviewed the proposed list of meeting sites. Some members requested that Tajique be placed on the list as an alternative meeting site for this year and that plans be made to visit the community in the future.

### **Motion**

Senator Martinez moved that the proposed work plan and meeting schedule be adopted. Representative Trujillo seconded the motion, which was approved without objection.

### **Adjournment**

There being no further business before the committee, the meeting adjourned at 12:03 p.m.