



## 23RD NAVAJO NATION COUNCIL OFFICE OF THE SPEAKER

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### **Council confirms two appointments to the Commission on Navajo Government Development**



**PHOTO: (left to right) JoAnn Dedman and Anslem Morgan were confirmed to the Commission on Navajo Government Development by the Navajo Nation Council during the 2017 Summer Council Session.**

**WINDOW ROCK** – During the 2017 Summer Council Session, the Council approved Legislation No. 0230-17 and Legislation No. 0237-17, confirming the appointments of JoAnn Dedman and Anslem Morgan to the Commission on Navajo Government Development.

Pursuant to Title II section 970 of the Navajo Nation Code, the commission was created by the Navajo Nation Council and given quasi-independent authority to accomplish the Council's project of instituting reforms necessary to ensure an accountable and responsible government.

Dedman will serve on the commission for four years as the Chinle Navajo Agency representative. She is currently the secretary/treasurer for the Nazlini Chapter and employed at the Nazlini Senior Center as the manager.

Morgan will serve a four-year term on the commission as the Eastern Navajo Agency representative. He is currently the president for Smith Lake Chapter and a retired Navajo Nation employee.

Council Delegate Kee Allen Begay, Jr. (Low Mountain, Many Farms, Nazlini, Tachee/Blue Gap, Tselani/Cottonwood), legislation sponsor of Dedman's appointment, stated that the individuals meet the qualifications to serve on the commission.

“Dedman has been nominated by the Chinle Agency Council to reappoint her to the commission. I believe she will continue to serve on the commission to express the Navajo peoples’ interests regarding our tribal government structure,” stated Delegate Begay.

Council Delegate Edmund Yazzie (Churchrock, Iyanbito, Mariano Lake, Pinedale, Smith Lake, Thoreau), legislation sponsor of Morgan’s appointment, stated that the Eastern Navajo Agency Council nominated Morgan.

During the discussion of the legislations, Council members raised numerous issues and concerns over the purpose and progress of the commission and the Office of Navajo Government Development.

Council Delegate Leonard Tsosie (Baca/Prewitt, Casamero Lake, Counselor, Littlewater, Ojo Encino, Pueblo Pintado, Torreon, Whitehorse Lake) said the commission and office is ineffective to address government reform.

“The office was created in 1989 with good intentions to address government reform, but the commission and office has fallen short. There are many chapter challenges and issues that need to be addressed and the commission or office has not come forward with any policy recommendations to solve the problems. Also, the commission refused to work on the chapter regionalization concept. That was their job and focus. I am disappointed in the commission,” stated Delegate Tsosie.

Council Delegate Jonathan Perry (Becenti, Crownpoint, Huerfano, Lake Valley, Nageezi, Nahodishgish, Tse’ii’ahi, Whiterock) requested a listing of the accomplishments and contributions of the commission in regards to addressing amendments within Title 26 of the Navajo Nation Code, which outlines the Local Governance Act.

“There is a lack of clarity in Title 26 and amendments are highly needed to address the misconceptions. There are too many grey areas in Title 26 and how has the commission addressed those areas? Are there any priorities that the commission or office has set to amend Title 26?” asked Delegate Perry.

According to Dedman, the commission has not taken action on policy recommendations or initiatives due to a shortage of membership, which has led to a lack of quorum. Dedman added that the commission should consist of 12 commissioners, but only have five commissioners confirmed. Seven commissioners are required to constitute a quorum.

Council Delegate Lee Jack, Sr. (Dilkon, Greasewood Springs, Indian Wells, Teesto, Whitecone) urged the new commissioners to begin a government reform initiative.

“The commission and office needs to address government reform. For example, the current Navajo three-branch government structure was suppose to be temporary and the commission is entitled to bring forth alternative forms of governments that we can adopt permanently. I have not seen one recommendation,” stated Delegate Jack.

After the discussion of both legislations, the Council approved Legislation No. 0230-17 with a 17-3 vote and Legislation No. 0237-17 with a 14-4 vote. The Council serves as the final authority for both bills.

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