

Townshend Historical Society

PO Box 202

Townshend, VT

05353

June 20, 2022

Catherine Deineo

Vermont State Librarian

60 Washington Street, Suite 2

Barre, VT 05641

Dear Library Board Members,

The Townshend Historical Society supports the proposed change of the name of Negro Brook to Huzzy Brook for Susannah and James Huzzy. The brook is located within the Townshend State Forest. We were glad to provide the petitioners with supportive, historical documentation verifying that Susannah and James Huzzy resided in the Townshend area in the late 18th and early 19th centuries. We look forward to seeing this petition move on to the next phase in the process.

Sincerely,

Charles E. Marchant, President

The Townshend Historical Society



The Windham County Branch of the NAACP

P.O. Box 6164 Brattleboro, Vermont

Email: info@windhamnaacp.org or president@windhamnaacp.org

Date: Aug, 23, 2022

To: The Townshend Historical Society

From: The Windham County Branch of the NAACP

Dear Townshend Historical Society,

We, the Windham County Branch of the NAACP, are writing to you today to directly ask that you rename “Negro Brook” as soon as possible. We understand that this brook might have been named long ago, and we also understand that its name might carry cultural significance to some. However, for those who are the American descendants of slaves (ADOS), and their white allies, the word ‘negro’ often harkens memories of oppression that we collectively fought hard to overcome. “If us Black folks wanted to be called negros, then that’s what we would call ourselves. We do not use that word.”

Though it may seem abrupt, the excess of recent events, such as the murders of Breonna Taylor, George Floyd, Ahamad Aubrey, and hundreds of trans Black women (to name only a few) have accelerated a much-needed cultural shift around the language and the symbols that we use to represent our marginalized populations. Structurally, we believe that this linguistic shift points us in the right direction as the words we use and the symbols we espouse creates and contextualizes the world in which we live. We paint the picture, so we are responsible for its outcome. “We believe it is time for that world to reflect the values of all citizens of this nation, especially the voices of those whose hands built it.”

Lastly, we want to note that we stand in solidarity with those who are already petitioning you to change this name to something more fitting for the times of fierce liberation in which we live. We would graciously accept the opportunity to discuss and even help members of the town and the historical society in the renaming process. We recommend changing the name to **Huzzy Brook**. We hope to hear from you soon.

Signed,

Branch President, Steffen Glenn Gillom

Branch Vice President, Nader Hashim

Branch Vice President, Wichie Artu



TOWN OF TOWNSHEND
Selectboard
PO Box 121 Townshend, Vermont 05353

June 17, 2022

Catherine Deineo
Vermont State Librarian
60 Washington Street, Suite 2
Barre, VT 05641

Dear Library Board Members;

The Townshend Selectboard supports the proposed name change of a brook within the Townshend State Forest from Negro Brook to Huzzy Brook. Many Townshend residents have signed a petition requesting the change and the Townshend Historical Society has voted to support the name change as well.

Given this support and the history we have learned about Susannah and James Huzzy, the Selectboard has voted unanimously to support the change as well.

Finally, we ask that the Townshend Selectboard be notified of the State Library hearing concerning this matter.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Sherwood Lake". The signature is written in a cursive style.

Sherwood Lake, Chair
Townshend Selectboard
PO Box 121
Townshend, VT 05353
Slakejr89@gmail.com

Vermont Board of Libraries
State of Vermont Department of Libraries
60 Washington Street
Barre, VT 05641

Attention: Tom Frank, Chair

Re VBL Hearing for Renaming of Negro Brook Petition

June 7, 2022

Dear Members of the Board,

I write to you again in my capacity as appointed spokesperson and Cultural Resource officer for the Elnu Abenaki Tribe, centered in southern Vermont and geographically the closest State-recognized Tribe to the subject feature in Townshend. Please enter this letter into the hearing record on this matter.

Elnu Abenaki would like to offer our support to the Petitioner's position in this shared effort to move toward respect, sensitivity, equity and inclusivity, with and for all community members. Whereas there may be ambiguity about the significance or intent in using a particular racialized term at its historical inception, we cannot ignore its associated potential for diminishing and harmful effects now and going forward. It is our responsibility as Indigenous People and as humans to foster balanced and affirming relationships with each other and with our Mother. The change from Negro Brook to Huzzy Brook is a positive and needful move toward balance.

The cultural biases that enable and empower disparate valuations and derivative treatment of other human beings spring from the same "othering" mindset of separability that spawns systemic settler colonialism. As we treat each other, so we treat the Land and – to be clear – All of Our Relations. When a toponym which, in the mouth and ears of its users, has strong potential to reinforce dysfunctional relationships is imposed upon this landscape, it is neither appropriate nor honoring. Further, as water is culturally considered the 'first medicine', the naming of this brook should engender healing and vital benefit.

Thank you for your consideration and we trust you will find a thoughtful resolution.

Rich Holschuh, on behalf of Elnu Abenaki Tribe

Tribal Headquarters
5243 VT Route 30
Jamaica, VT 05343

