Speaker Morgan meets with members of the Council of Governance-Certified Chapters regarding issues related to post-certified governance chapters

WINDOW ROCK, Ariz. -- Navajo Nation Speaker Lawrence T. Morgan met with members of the Council of Governance-Certified Chapters (CGCC) on July 1 to discuss how issues related to post-certified governance chapters could be effectively addressed.

The members of the CGCC group consist of elected local leadership from the 10 governance certified chapters, who have implemented the Five Management System (FMS) in accordance with Title 26 of the Navajo Nation Code, the Navajo Nation Local Governance Act. Although each chapter has met the requirements necessary to obtain governmental authority with respect to local matters, there is still no streamline process within the government offices to execute plans related to local planning.

“We need to work on issues like zoning, but we are limited,” said Gloria Skeet de Cruz, CGCC member and Baahaalii Chapter Manager. While governance certified chapters are entitled authority to enact and enforce zoning and implement a community approved land use plan, there are no processes or procedures in place which allows them to do this.

“The local governance certified (LGA) chapters have worked hard to become organized and implement the FMS system so they may exercise their authority to carry out local planning,” said Speaker Morgan. “The act has supported their efforts to get this far, but now we need to create a process that is less cumbersome for governance certified chapters to move forward.”

Most recently, the CGCC conducted a two-day work session on June 22-23 with the Transportation and Community Development Committee to discuss how the group could effectively address issues related to post-certification.

After analyzing the current structure and meeting with government officials over the years, the CGCC has concluded a sub-office within the Office of Navajo Government Development to specifically address post-certification issues is the best solution. Currently, the LGA certified chapters are still pooled with uncertified chapters, and CGCC members fear their concerns will not be addressed when the new structure is implemented.

“With the restructuring of the government, we need to find a special place for the LGA certified chapters,” said Speaker Morgan.

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Stanley Yazzie, deputy director of Community Development, was in attendance at the meeting and expressed his support for the office to be created within the Office of Navajo Government Development.

“Issues will continue if we do not identify a place for them (to be directed),” said Yazzie. “The government development office is the best place to create this office. By the name itself, it is appropriate.”

Yazzie also added there are 59 chapters who are on the track to becoming governance certified under the Five Management System. Once certified, these chapters would also benefit from the creation of the sub-office.

“I’m impressed with the local leadership of the governance certified chapters who have come together from all areas of the Nation to address these concerns and take action on behalf of their constituents,” said Speaker Morgan. “They have a vision for their community, and see the value of local empowerment.”

Speaker Morgan, the CGCC, Yazzie, and Paulson Chaco, executive director of the Office of Navajo Government Development, discussed logistics surrounding the plan to create the office, and created a working group to move forward. CGCC members are already anticipating the plans to create a sub-office.

“We’ve gone through so many loopholes and brick walls, but we are moving forward,” said Flora Nez, CGCC Vice-President and Steamboat Chapter Manager.

Other CGCC members include elected chapter leaders, including Lorenzo Isaac Jr., CGCC President and Shonto Chapter President; Anita Hayes, Tse Da Kaah Chapter; George Jim, Littlewater Chapter President; Carol Bitsi, Sheepsprings Chapter Manager and Rick Nez, San Juan Chapter President.

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