

MOHAWK COUNCIL OF AKWESASNE

Tetewaie:na - Honoring the past, facing today's challenges, building a strong future.



OFFICE OF THE GRAND CHIEF

Tsiothohrko:wa/January 30, 2017

Watkwanonhwera:ton/Greetings,

Happy Monday to all of you; the month of January has flown right by and, aside from a few days of undesirable weather, our weather for the most part, has been decent.

Now that the holiday season is over, Council has resumed our regularly scheduled monthly General Meetings. The January 2017 General Meeting was held last Thursday at the Kawehno:ke Recreation Centre. The agenda for the General Meeting included a presentation from the Mohawk Council of Akwesasne auditors Welch LLP who presented on the 2016-2017 financial statements for the MCA. The community learned about the current financial position of the MCA and the major areas of expense and revenue for the organization. The statements and other financial reports can be found at <http://www.akwesasne.ca/annualaudits>.

I'm excited to announce that for the first time ever, and as part of our efforts to reach our strategic goal of modernization, the Mohawk Council recorded the first General Meeting of 2017. Staff of MCA's Communication Unit worked very hard to prepare for this momentous event. Community members present at the General Meeting voiced no objection to the recording and despite the anxiety ever-present when initiating change, our first recorded General Meeting overall went very well! We decided to pilot this initiative in an effort to ensure that as many community members as possible are able to receive the information being provided, by as many means possible. Nia:wen to our Council for being committed to trying new things. Here is the link to listen in and watch the meeting: <https://youtu.be/ZWM5obiZJ9E>

I provided the community with a copy of my monthly report at the General Meeting and I must say that although it seemed that December was a slower month, when I began to work on my report, I suddenly realized that December was no exception, in that it was just as busy as usual. My report is attached for anyone who was unable to receive it at the General Meeting. As always, please note that my report doesn't always include an extensive list of all event /meeting attendees and serves to capture the essence of each event/ meeting in summary form.

I look forward to the month of February and eagerly anticipate putting the cold and snow behind us. Here's to brighter days ahead.

Sken:nen

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Abram Benedict', is written over a light blue circular stamp.

Grand Chief Abram Benedict



Grand Chief Monthly Activity Report Tsiothohrha/December 2016

DECEMBER 1, 2016 BREAKFAST CONFERENCE WITH PIERRE PETTIGREW

On the morning of December 2, 2016 I was invited to a breakfast reception in Ottawa hosted by Deloitte at the Chateau Laurier. This conference was facilitated by the Honourable Pierre S. Pettigrew who addressed complex matters related to the recent U.S. presidential election, the new Canada-European Union free trade agreement and Brexit. Mr. Pettigrew served in the liberal cabinet of Jean Chretien in various positions and the Government of Paul Martin as Canada's Minister of Foreign Affairs. Pierre spoke about how Donald Trump was elected against all odds and outlined that because of his lack of political experience and being a millionaire, Trump has no political alliances. Given Trump has no political alliance he doesn't have to tow a party line or worry about big business supporting him. Pierre's analysis was simply the same as many political analysis, that the political future of the United States of America is truly uncertain.

DECEMBER 1, 2016 COMMUNITY DINNER

Earlier in November our Council decided that instead of attempting to coordinate a Mohawk Council Christmas party we would sponsor three Christmas dinners for the entire community. On the evening of December 1, 2016 we hosted our Christmas dinner at the Kana:takon Recreation Centre and the traditional meal was served by members of our Council. Over the course of three hours we served well over 120 meals to the community; so many that we unfortunately had to turn some families away due to running out of food, but we encouraged them to please come out to the next dinner. The Mohawk Council offered a photographer to take family group photos and provided the families with same day copies of those family pictures. The turnout was a great success and gave us an indication that we needed to plan for a greater response at the dinners being held in Tsi Snaihne and Kawehno:ke later in the month.

DECEMBER 1, 2016 COMMUNITY TOUR with GOVERNMENT REPRESENTATIVES

On the afternoon of December 1, 2016 I provided a number of government representatives with a guided tour of our community. Following the Standing

Senate Committee presentation we did on the Jay Treaty and Border Crossing Issues in February, a report was issued to the Department of Indigenous and Northern Affairs Canada (INAC) calling on INAC to set up a multi-agency committee to examine the border issues Indigenous communities face and for the committee to report back to the Senate Standing Committee by December 2017.



The representatives for the community tour were from the INAC, Transport Canada, Public Safety, Canada Border Service Agency and the Department of Immigration, Refugees, and Citizenship. The tour provided the representatives with a glimpse into the reality we face in Akwesasne with the border and the multi jurisdictions we deal with daily.

DECEMBER 2, 2016 TRANSPORT CANADA & INAC MEETING RE: SEAWAY CASE

As part of our ongoing efforts to resolve the Seaway litigation against Canada outside of the court process, the Akwesasne team met with representatives of Indigenous and Northern Affairs Canada (INAC) and Transport Canada on the morning of December 2, 2016 here in Akwesasne. The representatives from Canada provided us with updates on: (1) the return of Block 1 Lands and (2) the recent meeting with Federal Bridge Corporation on bridge corridor challenges and bridge tolling. We will continue to meet with Canada to address our challenges with the international corridor and the exportation concerns we have.

DECEMBER 2, 2016 CONFERENCE CALL REGARDING CHILD TAX CREDIT

Recently the Mohawk Council has received an increased number of calls from community members who are being audited by Revenue Canada or Revenue Quebec. The audits have been focusing on those who are receiving child tax credits in an attempt to verify that they are eligible to receive those credits based on residency. The community members coming forward are being asked to provide additional information and documentation within a specified period of time, but then they are being asked to provide even more information, and in some cases their benefits have been suspended until the audit is complete which in many cases, results in a hardship being experienced by the family. The Mohawk Council arranged a call with Indigenous Affairs, Canada Revenue Agency, Quebec Revenue,

and Ontario Revenue to discuss each agency's protocol on audits and reviews for Child Tax credits. The challenge has been that based on Akwesasne's unique geographical location, the supporting documentation being supplied for the audits are not what agencies would normally see. We will continue to work with the revenue agencies to mitigate the impacts on Akwesasne community members. Future calls and an in-person meeting are being scheduled.

DECEMBER 5, 2016 MOHAWK COUNCIL OPEN HOUSE

On the evening of December 5, 2016 the Mohawk Council of Akwesasne hosted its first open house at Kanonhkwat'sheri:io. The Mohawk Council had been planning the open houses for several months to provide the opportunity for all MCA departments to showcase what MCA has to offer, in terms of services to our community. Over 100 community members attended the first open house to come out to learn more about the MCA.

DECEMBER 6-8, 2016 ASSEMBLY OF FIRST NATIONS SPECIAL CHIEFS ASSEMBLY

Over the course of December 6-8, 2016 I attended the Assembly of First Nations Special Chiefs Assembly in Gatineau, Quebec. The Assembly began with an opening address from National Chief Perry Belgard on a reflection of the past year and what the AFN has accomplished throughout the year. The National Chief also outlined his vision for 2017, including engagement with the Federal Government as well as top priorities including environment, education, and fiscal relations with the Government.



The Prime Minister of Canada addressed the Chiefs on the afternoon of December 6 and updated the Chiefs on the priorities of the government and outlined the work the government is doing around Indigenous issues. The Prime Minister reiterated his commitment to the Truth & Reconciliation Commission (TRC) recommendations as well as the Missing and Murdered

Indigenous Women Inquiry. Just prior to the Prime Minister addressing the Chiefs, the National Chief honoured Gord Downie for his commitment to raise awareness of Indigenous issues. The Prime Minister also participated in the honouring ceremony.

Over the course of the three days a number of updates were provided to Chiefs from the Regional Chiefs on their respective portfolio, which included education, environment, women's file, social, and other AFN portfolio areas. A presentation was done on what some communities are doing around the pipeline, which resulted in a lengthy discussion on how First Nations are involved and the environmental concerns. A number of Chiefs called on the AFN to have a Chiefs assembly on pipelines. The AFN was criticized for not allowing adequate debates on issues due to the agenda being packed with presentations. Further to the three day assembly, I participated in an Ontario Regional Chiefs Caucus meeting to prepare for the following AFN assembly.

DECEMBER 7, 2016 MEETING WITH SIBC BOARD OF DIRECTORS

On December 7, 2016 I met with the Board of Directors for the Seaway International Bridge Corporation (SIBC). Several weeks earlier I requested a meeting with the board to officially introduce myself, provide them with an overview of the community, and highlight challenges that the toll booth location and toll collections have on our community. The board of directors is comprised of four representatives from the Federal Bridge Corporation Ltd. (FBCL) and four representatives from the St. Lawrence Seaway Development Corporation (SLSDC); these are the two bodies that make up the SIBC. All board members were present with the exception of one member who participated by phone, and one board seat is presently vacant as well. The General Manager for the SIBC was also in attendance.

I started off with an overview of the community and provided the demographics of Akwesasne as well as what services the MCA delivers to our community. I highlighted the jurisdictional challenges we face daily on delivering services to our community, from ambulance to doctors to nurses. I also outlined the challenges we face in accessing home delivery service and large appliance repair in Snye and Kana:takon because of the border, which is further complicated because Canadian service providers are forced to pay the \$7 toll if they choose to provide their services to Akwesasne residents living in the Canadian portion of Akwesasne; for those that do, this cost is usually passed along to the customer, our community members.

Recently we were notified by OVS that the SIBC is reviewing the number of bridge passes issued to the MCA, which is resulting in OVS having to respond and provide

additional information for each pass. This is being done because the SIBC is looking for ways to generate additional revenue. I let the board know that recent actions on bridge pass reviews and other policy reviews is causing additional administrative pressure on the MCA and on our community in general, and that these actions only amount to unnecessary frustration. I told the board that I'm not convinced that the little changes and numerous reviews being conducted in an effort to collect more tolls is resulting in the thousands of dollars they claim to need in order to break even. The point I stressed is that these actions only serve to cause more frustration for the community and for local businesses, which in turn results in more people using their status card instead of using or obtaining a bridge pass at all. I further reiterated that it is the board's duty as a subsidiary of the Crown to promote reconciliation with our community.

Overall the meeting went well. I will ask my office to follow up with a request to the board to identify a joint committee to review the toll policy, to collaborate on work in the corridor, and to strategize ways for how we can simply work together.

DECEMBER 8, 2016 COMMUNITY DINNER

On the evening of December 8, 2016 we hosted our 2nd Christmas dinner at the Tsi Snaihne Recreation Centre; we served over 250 traditional meals that night to many appreciative members of our community.

DECEMBER 9, 2016 NATIONAL INDIGENOUS LEADERSHIP MEETING WITH MINISTERS



On Friday December 9, 2016 I was invited by the Ontario Regional Chief to observe the first Ministers on Climate Change meeting with the Prime Minister of Canada and the National Indigenous Leadership, which was held in Ottawa. The meeting started with a visit by Vice President Joe Biden who spoke to the Premiers about the importance of Canada and United States relations and that things shouldn't change much between the two

countries when the new Trump Administration takes office in January 2017. After the Vice President departed, the meeting continued with each National Indigenous representative, namely the Metis, First Nations, and Inuit providing an overview of their perspective on Climate Change. Following the presentations by the

Indigenous leadership, the Premiers were able to speak about the partnerships they are working toward in each province.

DECEMBER 12, 2016 COUNCIL MEETING

- The Akwesasne Election Law Workgroup provided a report to Council on the recent election law survey results and discussed next steps; Council will further discuss workgroup composition at an upcoming meeting.
- Council agreed that a report will be published on the cooperative land use agreement signed by MCA in 2009 for the use of Akwesasne land.
- Council was briefed on recent support requests and agreed that we will not support legal fees.
- An update was provided on a recent letter received regarding the MCA Admin 2 building.
- Council discussed the recent change to the General Meeting format where Chiefs provide roundtable updates and agreed that this format will continue for future General Meetings.
- It was agreed that an overview and update will be provided to Council on the Nutfield Track claim.
- Council discussed the possibility of forming a Recreation Portfolio; further research will be done.
- A brief was provided on Section 107 (Indian Act) marriages; further research will be done and reported back to Council.
- MCRs passed: Approval of assignment of lease for Thompson Island; Approval of formation of a Governance Committee; Approval of application to AEDF Community Infrastructure Fund; Approval of (6) Council Meeting minutes.

DECEMBER 12, 2016 MOHAWK COUNCIL OPEN HOUSE

On the evening of December 12, 2016 the Mohawk Council of Akwesasne hosted its second open house at the Tsi Snaihne Recreation Centre.

DECEMBER 14, 2016 MOHAWK COUNCIL OPEN HOUSE

On the evening of December 14, 2016 the Mohawk Council of Akwesasne hosted its third and final open house at the Kawehno:ke Recreation Centre.

DECEMBER 15, 2016 CONFERENCE CALL WITH CHIEFS OF ONTARIO POLITICAL CONFEDERACY

On December 15, 2016 I joined the Political Confederacy (PC) by phone to prepare for an upcoming meeting with the Premier of Ontario. The PC of the Chiefs of Ontario (COO) is scheduled to meet with the Premier bi-annually as part of the signed statement between Ontario and First Nations. The PC reviewed the various areas that are current regional Ontario challenges for communities and assigned the order of presentations for the upcoming meeting with Premier Wynne. The PC discussed reflections from a recent retreat and how the regional priorities aligned with PC retreat priorities. The Chiefs also discussed how the PC structure supports the priorities and portfolio systems.

DECEMBER 16, 2016 MEETING BETWEEN CHIEFS OF ONTARIO POLITICAL CONFEDERACY AND THE PREMIER OF ONTARIO

Following the preparation meeting on December 15, 2016 the Political Confederacy (PC) met with Ontario Premier Kathleen Wynne on December 16, 2016 at Queens Park in Toronto. The meeting began with the Premier reporting on various areas that the province has been working on with Indigenous people and also outlined her expectations for that day's meeting. The Ontario Regional Chief provided opening words and outlined regional work that has been going on in the province with First Nation. The Regional Chief also outlined the areas of challenge and explained that further presentations would be done throughout the meeting by members of the PC. The youth representative presented to the Premier on youth priorities and spoke about the areas where the province is supporting the youth but stressed the need for greater resources to prevent youth suicide. The Chiefs then presented on community wellness, including the Local Health Integration Network's Patients First Action Plan for Health Care and the lack of consultation on the policy development. A lengthy discussion occurred on the life promotions program and how this is impacting the communities, or rather the lack of impact this program is having in communities. A number of chiefs spoke regarding wealth creation which includes outcomes from the recent Ontario First Nations Economic Forum, the Casino Rama reserve dispute, resource revenue sharing, and taxation on tobacco and gasoline. These files all impact the conditions of communities and their economies. Briefs were provided to the minister on environment and infrastructure challenges were outlined. The Premier committed to follow up on a number of commitments to the Chiefs.



DECEMBER 15, 2016 COMMUNITY DINNER

On the evening of December 15, 2016 we hosted our 3rd and final Christmas dinner at the Kawehno:ke Recreation Centre. We served over 250 meals. Overall, the three Christmas dinners were a huge success and every single person who walked through the door was very appreciative and raved about the food.

DECEMBER 19, 2016 COUNCIL MEETING

- The Director of Justice and the Justice Coordinator provided Council with an overview and next steps after acceptance in principal of the Akwesasne Driver's Law as part of the law enactment procedure.
- Aboriginal Right and Research Manager gave an update on the status of the Nutfield Tract Claim and the Cairn Island Claim.
- Council was briefed on the increase in the number of Quebec Child Tax credit audits happening to community members.
- Council agreed that the 2016/17 MCA heating assistance deadline would be extended for another 7 days.
- MCRs passed: Approval of funding proposal for Restorative Justice Grant; Approval of signing authority for new Executive Director and Acting Health Director for MCA BMO Accounts; Approval of authority for Program Manager of IATC to issue occupancy license; Approval of authority for Program Manager of IFWP to issue occupancy license; Approval of lease Hamilton Island; Approval of Thompson Island Youth Camp Canada 150 contribution agreement; Approval of addendum to Parks Canada Deer Heard Reduction Program Agreement; Approval of (3) Council Meeting minutes
- MCRs denied: Acceptance of Akwesasne Driver's Law in Principal.

DECEMBER 20, 2016 MEETING WITH MONTREAL MAYORS OFFICE

On December 20, 2016 I attended a meeting with Montreal Mayor Denis Coderre's office to discuss Montreal's proposal submission to Canada asking that Mount Royal be recommended to the United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) as a World Heritage Site. The Mayor of Montreal recognizes that First Nations have an interest in Mount Royal and would like Kahnawake, Kanesatake and Akwesasne's involvement in the proposal. On December 20, the Mayor's office outlined the process to apply to become a UNESCO site and what the potential was for the community to be given the designation. Montreal wants to provide Mount Royal with a Mohawk name. The three Mohawk communities will discuss this with their respective Councils to determine whether or not we will collaboratively support the project and if so, to come up with a Mohawk name that fits. Akwesasne will be following up on these requests from the City of Montreal.

DECEMBER 20, 2016 MEETING WITH LEGAL COUNCIL

On December 20, 2016 I traveled to Montreal to meet with Mohawk Council's legal counsel regarding the Seaway proceedings. The purpose of the meeting was to provide legal counsel with an update on the ongoing dialogue that is taking place between Akwesasne, Transport Canada, and Indigenous and Northern Affairs Canada. Since the dialogue has been taking place, the official lawsuit against Canada has been placed in abeyance to allow the necessary time for the dialogue to resolve the outstanding issues.

DECEMBER 20, 2016 CALL WITH ONTARIO MINISTRY OF CHILDREN AND YOUTH SERVICES

On the morning of December 20, 2016 I participated on a conference call with Ontario Ministry of Children and Youth Services (MCYS) to discuss the implementation of the Child Protection Information Network (CPIN). CPIN is an Ontario wide information system that the province of Ontario is implementing for Children's Aid Societies to track child welfare cases on Ontario. The purpose of the call was for Akwesasne to discuss with MCYS how they can adapt the system to meet Akwesasne's needs because our child protection agency operates in two provinces. We posed a number of questions to the Ministry for follow up. All children's aid agencies in Ontario are going to be required to use CPIN, but in Akwesasne we need the system to be adapted to Akwesasne's dual designation in Ontario and Quebec.