



Office of the Grand Chief

Tsiothohrha / December 8, 2021

Wa'tkwanonhwera:ton / Greetings,

As we now shift quickly into the holiday season and New Year's, we take a moment to pause and reflect upon the last year and everything we have seen, ensured and been through. 2021 was a very different year, and on many accounts, difficult considering we are closing in on the two-year mark of the global pandemic. In March 2020, when we all hunkered down to keep safe and waited for the COVID-19 to pass, many (including myself) never thought it would be nineteen months and still on going. While the pandemic highlighted several gaps, risks, and weaknesses, it also has helped us in many ways. 2021 was difficult, but it also has taught us a lot. We have a renewed sense of family, friends, and loved ones. Not being able to interact physically, be in class, work in the office, or attend a social event or a party are many activities we had taken for granted. As we move into 2022, we must all continue to adapt how we keep ourselves safe as the pandemic continues. Science has shown that vaccinating against COVID-19 is the best way to keep yourself and our community safe. Unfortunately, reality has also shown that unvaccinated individuals are very likely to experience severe illness should they contract COVID-19. Currently, there is no immediate end in sight for the pandemic. I encourage everyone to get vaccinated, get the booster, and if you're unsure, reach out to one of our medical professionals here at the Mohawk Council of Akwesasne to discuss the vaccine and your health.

Last Thursday, our Council hosted our monthly General Meeting on the Zoom platform. Unfortunately, I was unable to attend and chair the monthly meeting. Chief Edward Roundpoint was gracious enough to agree to chair the meeting in my absence. I want to extend my appreciation to him for chairing, our Council for supporting him, and to you, our community, for helping him. Over the last several weeks, I have been part of a Chiefs of Ontario team working on the negotiated settlement of a Canadian Human Rights Tribunal case on discrimination against First Nation children in the child welfare system in Canada. As always, I have attached my monthly report that was distributed at last week's General Meeting. The entire recording of the General Meeting can be found at: <https://youtu.be/bvIw2dS-nhg>.

I would like to wish you and your family a happy holiday and a Happy New Year. Please be safe, and I look forward to updating you in 2022.

Sken:nen,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads 'Abram Benedict'.

Abram Benedict

Grand Chief



Grand Chief Monthly Activity Report

Kenténha / October 2021

OCTOBER 1, 15, 2021, BI-WEEKLY MEETING WITH SAINT REGIS MOHAWK TRIBE

Our Council has been meeting with the Saint Regis Mohawk Tribe (SRMT) on a bi-weekly basis as part of our ongoing commitment to combat the COVID-19 pandemic. The purpose of these meetings is to provide an opportunity for Council and our Emergency Operations Center to share information on our pandemic response with our counterparts from the SRMT. Topics for these weekly discussions include updates on current positive cases of COVID-19, upcoming state, provincial, and federal directives, updates from the monthly border calls, and other COVID-19 related discussions.

OCTOBER 4, 2021, COUNCIL MEETING UPDATE

- Representatives from a2z Consulting Services provided Council with an overview and proposal of the MCA 2021 – 2024 strategic plan for Council’s consideration.
- A briefing was provided on MCA job posting terminology whereby “permanent” has been removed and replaced with “indefinite hire”.

- Council was briefed on a concern with dead trees around Hydro Quebec power lines, MCA Quebec Liaison will follow up with hydro on mitigation options.
- A request was discussed on the need to identify an individual(s) to assist with tobacco burning and Ohenten Kariwatekewen Thanksgiving Address for MCA functions.
- Council agreed that the weekly Council Meeting will not take place next Monday due to the holiday.
- MCR's passed: Approval of contribution agreement with First Nations Confederacy of Cultural Education Centers to support environment program; Approval of contribution agreement with Ministry of Children and Youth for Healing and Wellness Strategy; Approval of funding from Enabling Accessibility Fund for improvements to CIA; Approval of Council 2021-2024 committee listings.

OCTOBER 4, 2021, CALL WITH PUBLIC HEALTH AGENCY OF CANADA

On the afternoon of October 4, 2021, I hosted a call with representatives from the Public Health Agency of Canada (PHAC). The representatives had reached out to me to discuss COVID-19 rapid tests being made available to the Mohawk Council of Akwesasne. On the call of October 4, the PHAC representatives explained the several types of rapid tests available and explained how each one worked and what was required to perform the tests. I received all the information from the PHAC representatives and committed to following back up with them to determine which rapid test the MCA would need it.

OCTOBER 4, 2021, CALL WITH a2z STRATEGIC CONSULTING

On the afternoon of October 4, 2021, I hosted a call with representatives from a2z Strategic Consulting regarding assisting our Council with developing a strategic plan. On the call of October 4, 2021, I explained to the representative our objectives and desire to develop a strategic plan that encompassed our goals and desire for change. The representative committed to providing me with a proposal for strategic plan development.

OCTOBER 5, 2021, MCA INTERNAL HOMELESS COMMITTEE

On the morning of October 5, 2021, I met with our Internal Homelessness committee to share updates on the ongoing work. It was reported that there had been no new progress on the outstanding issues with the opening of the Cornwall Healing Center and that the City of Cornwall had not yet issued the permits to the Cornwall Care Center. It was agreed that a member of the committee would reach out to Unity Streets to offer additional assistance. The committee discussed the need to identify a permanent homeless coordinator for the MCA to ensure the various initiatives and projects continue to move forward. The committee was invited to attend an upcoming tour of properties owned by Transport Canada that could be considered for an alternate site for homelessness programming.

OCTOBER 5, 2021, DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION

On the afternoon of October 5, 2021, I hosted a call with the Justice Director to provide her with a briefing from my recent call with the Ontario Children's Lawyer and the Ontario Legal Aid Office. I explained to the director that the legal aid office and the Office of the Children's Lawyer were looking to partner with Akwesasne to

provide additional supports to one another. I explained that I would arrange to have connected the parties to begin the dialogue on collaboration.

OCTOBER 5, 2021, BORDER PARTNERS CALL

Every month MCA's Public Safety Portfolio Chiefs, representatives from the Saint Regis Mohawk Tribe and the Mohawk Nation Council of Chiefs, and I participated on the monthly call with the Port Directors for the Canada Border Services Agency (CBSA) and the United States Customs and Border Protection (USCBP). The calls now occur on the first Tuesday of the month on the Zoom platform. These calls are designed for Akwesasne to receive regular updates from the Port Directors on current traffic volumes, any issues with local travellers, and reports of any customs officers that may be in quarantine for any reason. These meetings also allow our local governments to provide relevant updates to the CBSA and USCBP representatives.

OCTOBER 5, 2021, KIDNEY SUPPORT CANADA

On the morning of October 5, 2021, members of our health portfolio and I met with representatives of Kidney Support Canada. The representatives had reached out to introduce themselves to Akwesasne and to share information on support services they provide. The representatives explained that they provide supports to individuals who are receiving kidney treatment and transplant patients. The representatives explained that they would like to work closely with the MCA and were interested in having a radio talk show in the new year to educate the community on their organization and

to create awareness. We committed to following up with Kidney Support Canada on scheduling follow-up meetings.

OCTOBER 7, 2021, SOUTHEASTERN ONTARIO ANGEL NETWORK

On the evening of October 7, 2021, I was invited to attend a Southeastern Ontario Angel Network (SOAN) investors meeting at the Cornwall Chamber of Commerce. For two hours four local businesses made 15-minute presentations on business investment opportunities and answered questions on their presentations.

OCTOBER 8, 2021, MEMBER OF PARLIAMENT

On the morning of October 8, 2021, I met with Member of Parliament Eric Duncan to discuss numerous local federal issues and discuss an introduction to our Council in the coming weeks.

OCTOBER 8, 2021 KATENIES RESEARCH

On the afternoon of October 8, 2021, I met with Dr. Rose Alma McDonald from Katenies Research and Management Service to discuss a harvest project. Recently the MCA received a grant from the Quebec Government to develop a series of small videos on traditional hunting and harvesting. Katenies Research has been contracted to develop the video for the MCA. On the call of October 8, 2021, we discussed the project and the next steps to begin the film development.

OCTOBER 8, 2021, EMERGENCY COUNCIL MEETING UPDATE

- MCRs Passed: Approval of Tsiionkwanonhso:te 40-ton Condenser Replacement, Air Conditioner, Approval of AMBE Tuition Contribution Agreement, Approval of OVS Assignment of Lease-

Lot2G-9 Pillon Island, Approval of FIN Accept Audit of Consolidated Audit 2020-21, Approval of Executive Services Limit Hiring to Vaccinated Individuals, Approval of AMBE Allowing Executive Director to sign and accept Indigenous Institutes Mental Health Grant, Approval of Akwesasne Tsiionkwanonsohthe-Iakhihsohtha One Time Funding for Nursing Care ISC, Approval of Ministry of Health and Long Term Care Champlain Community Care Access Centre (CCAC) Amending Agreement 2021-2022.

OCTOBER 12, 2021, FINANCE COMMITTEE

On the morning of October 12, 2021, I met with the Chiefs on the finance committee. At the meeting of October 12, 2021, we reviewed the Akwesasne Financial Administration Law and the requirements of the finance committee. Following the review of the law, we reviewed the charter of the finance committee to better understand the requirements of each member. The committee identified Chief Julie Phillips-Jacobs as Vice-Chair and Chief Cindy Francis-Mitchell as Chair for the finance committee. The committee agree that a community posting would be done to fill the vacant community seats on the finance committee.

OCTOBER 12, 2021 ONTARIO POWER GENERATION RECONCILIATION ACTION PLAN

On the afternoon of October 12, 2021, I hosted a call with representatives of Ontario Power Generation (OPG) to receive a briefing on the OPG Reconciliation Action Plan. The representatives explained that the action plan was a road map of how OPG intends to partner with Indigenous communities, businesses, and organizations to advance reconciliation. It was explained that the road map was a

plan for OPG to learn and grow. I thanked the representatives for the brief overview and explanation of the Reconciliation Action Plan.

OCTOBER 13, 2021, MINISTER OF CROWN AND INDIGENOUS RELATIONS

On the evening of October 13, 2021, I met with Minister of Crown and Indigenous Relations Carolyn Bennett for dinner. I had reached out to the Minister's office to request a meeting with Minister Bennett. On the evening of October 13, 2021, I expressed my sincerest appreciation to the Minister for the support she has given to Akwesasne over the years. The Minister welcomed me to reach out anytime and expressed her support for Akwesasne regardless of if she continued as Minister of Crown and Indigenous Relations.

OCTOBER 14, 2021, TRANSPORT CANADA BUILDINGS

As part of our ongoing work to find a Cornwall location to develop a homeless center, members of our committee toured properties owned by Transport Canada within the City of Cornwall. On October 14, 2021, we met representatives from Transport Canada and the St. Lawrence Seaway Management Corporation at the buildings owned by the government located on Second Street Cornwall. We viewed two empty houses inside and out and looked at two others that were currently being rented out. The committee will discuss options at the next internal homelessness meeting.

OCTOBER 14, 2021, SUSAN AGLUKARK



On October 14, 2021, the Ahkwesahsne Mohawk School hosted Inuit singer-songwriter Susan Aglukark. It was a great pleasure to have Susan in Akwesasne again and to hear her story about her journey in music intertwined with her language and culture. Nia:wen'ko:wa Susan for stopping over in Akwesasne and sharing your wisdom and experience with our Akwesasne youth.

OCTOBER 15, 2021, CALL WITH CANADA'S CHIEF FEDERAL NEGOTIATOR

On the afternoon of October 15, 2021, I hosted a call with Canada's Chief Federal negotiator Alfred Caron to discuss setting up the next Akwesasne Canada negotiations. Alfred explained to me that Canada would like to set up the main negotiations table in the coming week before Christmas. I committed to having a main table in the coming week.

OCTOBER 15, 2021, BROCKVILLE BRAVES

On the morning of October 15, 2021, I hosted a call with Dustin Traylen the owner and General Manager of the Brockville Braves Hockey Club. Dustin Traylen requested a call with me to discuss the team's name and logo. Dustin explained to me that the City of Brockville arbitrarily removed the Brockville Braves logo off of the arena floor and covered it up in other locations within the area.

Dustin explained to me that a group within the city has been pressuring the city council to have the name and logo changed. I explained to Dustin that I supported the team committing to changing the name and logo after consultation with the community of Brockville. I further explained that Akwesasne hasn't traditionally weighed into disputes like this, but we weren't also supportive of the use of western representation of First Nations. Dustin explained he would continue to work through the dispute and thanked me for my insight.

OCTOBER 18, 2021, COUNCIL MEETING UPDATE

- Representatives from Lopii Production provided Council with an overview of their French children's TV show and requested permission to film in Akwesasne. Council determined due to the limited ability to timely plan and have COVID plans approved the request will be declined.
- Council agreed that they will support the district holiday fundraisers and support a tree/wreath etc.
- A briefing was provided on the ongoing effects to open the Akwesasne Healing Center and the challenges being faced with permit issues for the facility.
- Council agreed that an MCR will be forthcoming on the need to be double vaccinated to attend any MCA in-person group meetings and/or participate in functions at any MCA facility.
- An update was provided on the preparation for a shoreside clean-up in Kana:takon.

- Council discussed a recent request for Council to consider changing “Thanksgiving” to Indigenous Peoples Day”. After much deliberation Council decided to leave it status quo for the time being.
- A briefing was provided on the plan to have a Council session following the strategic planning session to review and strategize on plan political goals.
- Council discussed the possible impact of economic recovery payments to community support clients and determined that impact payments will not affect the clients.
- A concern with a vacant lot in Kana:takon was discussed. The community member was informed of the research conducted to validate the claim.
- Council set the General Meeting agenda for October 28, 2021.
- A briefing was provided on the upcoming ground-breaking ceremony with Habitat for Humanity.
- Council discussed and determined that in place of Holiday Dinners, the community will be provided with Christmas gift cards.
- MCR’s passed: Approval of Community Strategy for Cairn Island; Approval of initiation of amendments to the Akwesasne Election Law; Approval of MOU with AMBE and St. Lawrence College; Approval of MOU with AMBE and Algonquin College; Acceptance of funding agreement with ISC for Jordan’s Principle; Approval of agreement with LMS system for Iohahi:io; Approval of the issuance of Cannabis Retail license; Approval of establishment and allocation of Akwesasne Community Healing Fund; Approval of Finance

Committee Chair and Vice-Chair, Approval of amendments (s) to Akwesasne / Canada funding agreement;

OCTOBER 19, 2021, CORNWALL AKWESASNE HARBOUR OWNERS MEETING

On the afternoon of October 19, 2021, I participated in a Cornwall Akwesasne Harbour co-owners meeting. The project manager from ACC Futures provided an overview of the community engagement survey results and explained that over the next few months we would examine the results to assist with the development. Representatives from WSP Engineering provided the owners with an overview of the phase one environmental report. The owners received an update on the current leases, the demolition, ongoing maintenance, and issues with security and safety on the property.

OCTOBER 19, 2021, HABITAT FOR HUMANITY GROUNDBREAKING



Earlier this year, the Mohawk Council of Akwesasne was approached by the Cornwall Habitat for Humanity and a member of Akwesasne requesting we partner to assist in helping an Akwesasne member and his family. The Saucier-Leaf family was a successful recipient of a Habitat home through the Cornwall Habitat for Humanity. The Mohawk Council of Akwesasne advanced this opportunity and initiative to benefit a family and decided to become a partner by donating some off-reserve land to the project. On Tuesday, October 19, 2021, we were honoured to participate in the ground-breaking ceremony to begin the construction. We know this partnership is minimal, but it is a small step to ensuring all our members are included in our partnerships within the City of Cornwall.

OCTOBER 20, 21, 2021 CAPITALIZE FOR KIDS

On the afternoon of October 20 and the entire day of October 21, 2021, I participated in the Capitalize for Kids Conference in Toronto. Over a day and a half, several presentations were provided by businesses looking for investors, they explained their investment strategy and answered questions about their proposals. Also, many presentations were provided by successful investment portfolio managers who shared insight into their success and strategy tips. The day and a half event is a fundraiser for Capitalize for Kids a non-profit organization that supports services to children across the GTA.

OCTOBER 20, 2021, SERVICE CANADA

As part of our regular contacts with Service Canada, we hosted a meeting with Service Canada on October 20, 2021, to receive an update on the ongoing Akwesasne Old Age Security Files. At the meeting of October 20, the Service Canada representatives provided

the MCA with an update on the 2021 overpayment recoveries. The Service Canada representatives explained the recovery process and explained what happens when the recovery goes into an estate. We also discussed the ongoing impacts the overpayment recovery has had on our community elders and discussed how many new files could occur in the future. We will continue to meet with Service Canada regularly to ensure we share communications.

OCTOBER 20, 2021, CORNWALL COMMUNITY HOSPITAL MEDICAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE

On the evening of October 20, 2021, I participated in the Cornwall Community Hospital (CCH) Medical Advisory Committee. The committee received reports from the various department officials and reviewed two policies and agreed to make recommendations to the full board for approval. The committee went into an in-camera session to conduct an in-camera session.

OCTOBER 21, 2021, STRATEGIC PLAN STEERING COMMITTEE

On the morning of October 21, 2021, I attended the first Strategic Plan Steering committee meeting. Our consultants from a2z Strategic Consulting welcomed the participants to the meeting, they provided an overview of a2z the company and outlined their approach for the strategic plan development. A2z reviewed the committee's terms of reference with the committee and welcomed feedback. The committee reviewed the project overview and work plan and provided input into the plan. A2z outlined the communications plan and explained its importance and the importance of the steering committee being involved in all steps of the plan's development.

OCTOBER 21, 2021, ONTARIO EAST MUNICIPAL CONFERENCE

On the morning of October 21, 2021, I participate in a panel with the Ontario East Municipal Conference (OEMC) along with the ACC Futures to present on the Cornwall Akwesasne Harbor project. The conference was held on the Zoom platform. We begin with background on the history of the land, the transfer of the land to the owners and the engagement with the communities on the project development. We explained that the owners were committed to developing the property for the benefit of the community. Following our formal presentation, we answered questions from the audience.

OCTOBER 25, 2021, COUNCIL MEETING UPDATE

- Eric Duncan, Member of Parliament for Stormont-Dundas and South Glengarry introduced himself to Council and provided an overview of his priorities for the region and explained how he would like to assist Akwesasne with our community priorities.
- The Program Manager for the family wellness program provided Council and with an update and overview of the Akwesasne Healing Centre.
- An update and overview were provided from a recent meeting between the Chiefs of Ontario and the Government of Ontario regarding the dispute between the Optometrist of Ontario and Ontario. The Chiefs of Ontario will continue to advocate for a resolution to the dispute.
- Council discussed a request to expand the eligibility boundaries for the Akwesasne Heating Assistance Program. After much debate,

Council determined that the boundaries would remain status quo for the 21/22 heating season.

- A concern was raised regarding burned-out street lights in Kana:takon; administration will follow up on repairs.
- Council discussed the need to have more interaction and the possibility of meeting in person on a rotating basis. Logistics and location will be researched and followed upon.
- MCR's passed: Approval of agreement with ACCESS for wage subsidiary; Council directs that all individuals attending public events in an MCA facility must be fully vaccinated; Approval of community members to sit on the Oversight Committee on Legislative Development; Approval of contact with ACCESS for a welding program at Iohahi:io; Approval to place freeze on Cannabis Retail License Intakes effective December for 180 days, at which time it will be reviewed; Approval to retain a lawyer for the Akwesasne Representative and Advocacy Program.

OCTOBER 25, 2021, MEETING WITH SOUTH GLENGARRY

On the afternoon of October 25, 2021, I met with representatives of the South Glengarry Council and CAO to discuss commonalities between Akwesasne and South Glengarry. This was an initial exploratory meeting between our two communities to discuss some possible next steps to explore.

OCTOBER 25, 2021, INTERVIEW FOR ADVOCATE MAGAZINE

On the afternoon of October 25, 2021, I was interviewed by Jennifer Pereira on behalf of the Chiefs of Ontario the Advocate magazine. We discussed my time on Council, my role at the Chiefs of Ontario

Leadership Council and current community projects including the Fiber to the Home project. We also discussed our current council and the planning for our next three years. The Advocate magazine is a bi-annual magazine printed by the Chiefs of Ontario and distributed to all First Nations in Ontario.

OCTOBER 13, 27, 2021 WEEKLY COVID CALL

On a bi-weekly basis throughout October Council met with MCA's Administration to specifically discuss and receive updates on our response to COVID-19. These meetings provide an opportunity for Council to thoroughly discuss our current precautions and travel restrictions. While discussions may occur at length during these weekly Wednesday meetings, decision-making is reserved for the regular Council Meetings.

OCTOBER 28, 2021, MEMBER OF PARLIAMENT ERIC DUNCAN

On the morning of October 28, 2021, I met with Member of Parliament (MP) Eric Duncan and the ACC Futures project manager Simon McLinden to discuss the impacts the Seaway International Bridge toll has on our communities, Akwesasne and Cornwall. We discussed the possibility of meeting with representatives in Washington to educate them on the impacts of the toll and the community. Since 66% of the American bridge is owned by the American Government, we felt it was important that the American Owner was aware of the impacts the toll has on Akwesasne and Cornwall. We agreed that we would work to secure meetings with the House of Representatives for New York and New York Senator to discuss the bridge.

OCTOBER 28, 2021, PAROLE BOARD OF CANADA CHAIRPERSON INDIGENOUS CIRCLE

On the morning of October 28, 2021, I participated in a call with the Parole Board of Canada (PBC) Chairperson's Indigenous Circle meeting. The PBC Chairperson Jennifer Oades welcomed the circle members and reviewed the minutes of the last meeting. A representative of the PBC provided the circle members with an update on the status of elder assisted hearings using Zoom and teleconference. It was explained that many of the hearings were happening on Zoom and very little was happening in person. A presentation was provided to the circle draft elders / cultural advisor manual that has been developed to assist new elders and cultural advisors become orientated with their role. The circle provided input in the draft. A final report and presentation were provided to the circle on the PBC efforts to outreach out to Indigenous Communities to educate them on the services provided by the PBC to indigenous inmates.

OCTOBER 28, 2021, STRATEGIC PLAN STEERING COMMITTEE

As part of the Council's initiative to develop a new strategic plan for the MCA, the Strategic Plan Steering Committee met on October 28, 2021. An overview was provided of the upcoming kickoff event scheduled to take place the following week. A2z provided a review of the agenda for the two-day event and asked for validation of the proposed communications tool going to be used for the plan development. Each member of the steering committee provided reflections on the methodology being used in the plan development.