



OFFICE OF THE GRAND CHIEF

Ennisko:wa/March 4, 2020

Watkwanonhwera:ton/Greetings,

As we close off February, we look back and see that it was a very interesting month and, at times, a bit tense. During February, we saw China's 9th most populous city Wuhan become the center of the Corona Virus outbreak. As the virus continues to spread, there have been confirmed cases across the globe, including in Canada. The Public Health Agency of Canada has assessed the public health risk as being low and the Mohawk Council of Akwesasne continues to remind you to exercise every precaution to help minimize the spread of germs. Frequent hand washing is still the number one way to reduce the spread of infections. The Mohawk Council of Akwesasne will continue monitoring the progression of the virus spread and is prepared to implement our emergency plan should the need become necessary. Please continue to view and share our social media posts to receive current updates on the status of the flu virus.

On February 6, 2020, the RCMP executed an injunction against the Wet'suwet'en Hereditary Chiefs who are opposed to the construction of a gas pipeline in their traditional territory. Shortly after the injunction was executed, several acts of solidarity in support of the Wet'suwet'en occurred across the county, including one here in Akwesasne on February 7, 2020. The local show of support resulted in the Three Nations Bridge being closed for approximately two hours. We continue to see other communities take action to support the Wet'suwet'en Nation. Our Council continues to support the position of the Wet'suwet'en and calls upon all parties involved to find a peaceful solution that respects the rights of the Wet'suwet'en. Locally a unity march will be held on Wednesday, March 4, 2020 in Hogansburg.

Normally, I would have provided my report to the community at the General Meeting but last week due to the unfortunate inclement weather conditions we were experiencing, we cancelled the monthly General Meeting. To ensure you still receive timely updates, I am sharing my report with you now. The next General Meeting is scheduled for March 26, 2020. Please watch for updates.

For parents and players who are off to Mississauga for the Little NHL during March Break: Good Luck! Make us proud and have fun! For the rest of us, we impatiently await March 19, 2020 to welcome the first day of spring.

Enjoy the month ahead.

Sken:nen

Abram Benedict
Grand Chief



Grand Chief Monthly Activity Report Tsiothohrkó:wa/January 2020

JANUARY 6, 2020 COUNCIL MEETING

- Representatives from the Bank of Montreal introduced themselves to Council and discussed current services the bank has to offer. Council discussed on-going concerns and possible future financial discussions for consideration.
- Council was briefed on an application to the Mohawk Court regarding a housing issue.
- The Cannabis Committee Chiefs provided an overview and update on the application process and advised of the next steps for approvals.
- Council discussed a recent proposal to sell parcels of land to Council; further research will be done and reported back.
- A briefing was provided on the establishment of a medical review board for community support disability clients; administration will follow up.
- Council passed a motion recognizing the successful completion of the Executive Director's trial period.
- MCRs passed: Approval of contract award to International Water Supply Ltd. to replace Vertical Turbine Pump.

JANUARY 6, 2020 MCA/CBSA BORDER COLLABORATION INITIATIVE LEADERS CIRCLE PREP MEETING

As part of the ongoing Design Thinking Initiative (DTI) implementation work that our Council has been participating in, in collaboration with the Canada Border Service Agency (CBSA), I met with the Chiefs who were identified to assist me through their participation on various working committees, on January 6, 2020. This preparatory meeting was held prior to the MCA/CBSA Border

Collaboration Initiative Leaders Circle meeting scheduled to take place on January 8, 2020 in Ottawa with CBSA. At the prep meeting we received and further discussed the updates from each of the committees and reviewed the upcoming agenda items for the January 8th meeting.

JANUARY 7, 2020 CALL WITH TNG LEADERS

On the morning of January 7, 2020 I participated on a conference call with TNG Leaders regarding the ongoing governance review that TNG is conducting. The TNG representatives provided me with an overview of the preliminary results from their recent face to face interviews with Chiefs and Senior Administration for the MCA. It was explained that the next step of the review would be for Council and administration to select priority areas for action to be taken; this would be accomplished through an online survey of the information that was obtained throughout the interviews. Once the priorities are selected, TNG will make recommendations for improvements, based on governance best practices. A final report is to be provided to Council in March 2020.

JANUARY 7, 2020 UNITED STATES CUSTOMS AND BORDER PROTECTION

On the afternoon of January 7, 2020 Chief Darryl Lazore and I attended the United States Customs Border Protection station (USCBP) at Roosevelttown. Tribal Liaison Tracy Casey had requested the meeting to discuss concerns and upcoming changes. The USCBP representatives explained that according to United States law, individuals entering into the US must report to US customs. In Akwesasne, Indigenous people don't have to report to customs when coming from Kana:takon or Tsi Snaihne. It was reported that a few non-Indigenous individuals employed by the MCA were claiming that they didn't have to report and were producing letters to that effect. The USCBP clarified that non-Indigenous people employed by the MCA do still have an obligation to report. I advised the USCBP that we would inform our workforce of the obligation to report, but noted that compliance is an individual choice.

JANUARY 8, 2020 MCA/CBSA BORDER COLLABORATION INITIATIVE LEADERS CIRCLE MEETING



On January 8, 2020 members of the Mohawk Council of Akwesasne (MCA)/ Canada Border Services Agency (CBSA) Border Collaboration Initiative (BCI) Leaders Circle met in Ottawa. The Leadership Circle is the result of the Design Thinking Initiative (DTI) implementation that MCA and CBSA have been working on jointly. Over the past year and a half, CBSA and MCA formed a number of working circles (basically sub-committees) to work on various joint initiatives intended to improve the overall border experience for both parties. The meeting of January 8, 2020 was designed to review the joint work plan and to officially receive updates on the work being conducted by the sub-committees that had been formed. The Leadership Circle reviewed and agreed to a joint communications strategy for the work going forward. It was explained that the Domestic Lane Working Circle was working through the logistics on the implementation of a pilot domestic lane for the Cornwall Port of Entry. This working circle is also examining the line of questioning used by Border Services Officers (BSOs) when processing Cornwall Island traffic. The Leadership Circle then discussed the need to change of what was once called the Commercial Working Circle to a name that's more in line with the intent to remove or at least mitigate the economic barriers

that negatively affect Akwesasne and are specifically related to the border; it was agreed that the name would be changed to the Economic Development Working Circle. The final update was from the Signage Working Circle that is continuing to examine initiatives to support and improve the communications from and between each of the Working Circles; it was agreed by the Leadership Circle that this Working Circle's name would be changed to the Communications Working Circle. The Leadership Circle also agreed on a meeting schedule and a joint press release to inform the community of the ongoing collaborative work being done to find joint solutions to our unique border crossing issues.

JANUARY 10, 2020 PROPOSED NATURAL GAS EXPANSION PROJECT

On the afternoon of January 10, 2020 I met with representatives of Enbridge Gas to provide them with an update on the ongoing community engagement about the proposed expansion of natural gas onto Kawehno:ke. Over the past several months the MCA has held a number of information sessions on the proposed expansion and hosted an information session with Enbridge representatives present in October 2019. At the January 10, 2020 meeting we discussed the scheduling of the next community session with Enbridge representatives present to answer questions and further explain the project to the community; this will likely take place in March 2020.

JANUARY 13, 2020 COUNCIL MEETING UPDATE

- Council set the agenda for the upcoming General Meeting scheduled for Thursday, January 23 in Kana:takon.
- Legal counsel for the MCA briefed Council on upcoming proposed resolution and discussed next steps for the signing of the Tsikaristisere/Dundee Settlement Agreement.
- Council discussed letters received by BMO clients regarding Declaration for Tax Residence; further follow-up will be done with BMO.
- MCRs passed: Approval of amendment to Akwesasne Health Access Centre agreement; Approval of amendment to

Akwesasne/Canada agreement for tobacco awareness, prevention, reduction, and cessation activities report; Approval of allotment of land to community member (loan paid off); Approval of allotment of land to community member (loan paid off); Acknowledgment of the final referendum result for the Tsikaristisere/Dundee referendum as declared by the Chief Referendum Officer; Confirmation and approval of the Tsikaristisere/Dundee final settlement agreement and identification of representatives to sign the agreement.

JANUARY 15, 2020 AMBE LANGUAGE WEBSITE SITE LAUNCH



On the evening of January 15, 2020, I attended a Mohawk Language website lounge hosted by the Ahkwesahsne Mohawk Board of Education (AMBE) at the Kana:takon School. The Director of Education welcomed the community and explained that AMBE Skahwatsira program had been working with a consultant to develop the website and that the site was open to the community and would be used by AMBE students. A small demonstration was provided to the community followed by breakout sessions to further explain the various components of the site to the community and to receive feedback. The site address is imohawk.ambe.ca with a login password of skah123.

JANUARY 16, 2020 ONTARIO POWER GENERATION (OPG)

On the morning of January 16, 2020 representatives of the MCA and the Ontario Power Generation (OPG) attended a bi-annual meeting to receive updates on the progress being made on the implementation of the final settlement agreement. Representatives of the Partnership between OPG and MCA (POM) Team, who meet regularly throughout the year, provided updates of the joint activities the POM team members have worked on over the past two years. The POM team is

evolved from the former joint implementation team formed under the final settlement agreement. At the January 16, 2020 meeting, the POM team highlighted the financial contributions OPG has made toward our community, averaging approximately \$100,000 being provided annually to various Akwesasne organizations. An overview was provided on the employment initiatives OPG has undertaken to attract Akwesasne members to OPG, along with summer students. A complete progress report on all sections of the final settlement agreement was provided. Following the presentation, we were provided a tour of the refurbishment of one of the turbine generators.



JANUARY 17, 2020 CALL WITH COUNCILOR AT PIKWAKANAGAN

On morning of January 17, 2020 I hosted a call with Councilor Steve Benoit from the Algonquins of Pikwakanagan First Nation. The call was arranged to discuss the Pikwakanagan's cannabis industry and to better understand if the community had a regulatory system in

place. Steve explained the community's current position and stated that they are working toward implementing a law to regulate the industry. We discussed current businesses in Pikwakanagan and the overall cooperation level for the development and implementation of a cannabis regulatory system. I provided Steve with an overview of Akwesasne's progress and shared our current challenges.

JANUARY 17, 2020 CALL WITH CATHOLIC DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD OF EASTERN ONTARIO SPIRIT OF WATER EVENT

Late in 2019 I received a letter from the Catholic District School Board of Eastern Ontario requesting permission to host a healing walk. On January 17, 2020 I hosted a call with a representative of the school board to learn more about the proposed event. Marian Lawson MacDonald the Indigenous Education Lead explained to me that an Anishinaabe healer would like to conduct a water healing ceremony on the St Lawrence River. Marian requested permission to conduct the ceremony and requested the MCA's participation in the event. I explained to Marian that we had no objection to the event and that I would put her in contact with our Director of Education to have a conversation about our potential participation.

JANUARY 20, 2020 COUNCIL MEETING UPDATE

- A representative from the Community Support Program (CSP) provided Council with an update on next steps, related to a homelessness case. Further updates will be provided.
- A briefing was provided from a recent meeting with Transport Canada and the Canada Lands Company (CLC). Council agreed that further conversations will continue with Transport Canada and CLC regarding partnership opportunities.
- Council discussed the current self-government negotiations, including the use of the Mohawk language in the draft agreement. There was also a discussion on the impacts of certain provisions of the draft agreement. Council will further discuss at a later date.

- A briefing was provided on the preliminary findings of the Governance Review and the next steps were outlined for Council's information.
- Council agreed that a sign for the Anowarako:wa Arena, including the arena logo, will be placed on International Road.
- A concern was discussed regarding the current emergency management protocols to be used during an emergency.
- Council discussed the possibility of forming a Language Act working group. Research will be done on existing work on the MCA Mohawk Language Strategy.
- MCRs passed: Approval of amendment to Akwesasne/Canada funding agreement; Appointment of an Enforcement Officer for Akwesasne Interim Cannabis Regulations; Approval of Issuance of Cannabis Cultivation license.

JANUARY 21, 2020 CANNABIS HOST COMMUNITIES NETWORK

Earlier in December I was invited by the Mayor of Smith Falls and the Mayor of Clarington to attend a Cannabis Host Community Network Meeting on January 21, 2020 in Toronto. The two mayors had invited elected leaders from across Ontario that had licensed Cannabis growers in their communities. The meeting began with roundtable introductions of each of the representatives, followed by an overview of the intent of the meeting by the hosts. The participants shared insight into their experience with licensed cannabis facilities and explained the benefits and downsides to having the facility in their community. Many of the participants experienced a challenge with the smell of cannabis coming from grow facilities but it was explained that this was coming from many of the outdoor grow facilities. The communities have seen job creation with the facilities being opened and this has resulted in overall community growth. Overall, this meeting highlighted areas that Akwesasne needs to be considerate of as we continue to develop our own cannabis regulatory system.

JANUARY 22-23, 2020 ACE MEETING

On January 22 & 23, 2020 I travelled to Wakefield, Quebec to attend the Assembly of First Nations (AFN) Advisory Committee on Climate Action and the Environment (ACE) two-day retreat. The retreat had been scheduled to prepare for the upcoming AFN National Climate Gathering scheduled for March 3-4, 2020 in Whitehorse, Yukon. On the first day, the committee reviewed the Ministers mandate letters and the Speech from the Throne and discussed how these related to the environment and the upcoming gathering. The committee spent a considerable amount of the day discussing a National Climate Strategy that could be used as a discussion paper for the upcoming gathering. The committee was briefed on the upcoming Convention on Biological Diversity in October 2020 and the United Nations Climate meeting. Wrapping up the first day, the committee also discussed how to align itself with the Minister of Environment, based on his new mandate letter. On the second day, the committee continued the discussion on the development of a national strategy and broke into sessions to discuss possible key pillars for the strategy based on political possibilities and also on realistic grass root approaches for communities to embrace. The draft strategy will be brought forward to the national gathering in March. The committee was updated by the AFN staff on: Caribou, Chronic Wasting Disease, Impact Assessment Act, Species at Risk, and the Joint Committee on Climate Action. The committee agreed to meet on the Sunday preceding the National Climate Gathering in Whitehorse.

JANUARY 23, 2020 GENERAL MEETING

On the evening of January 23, 2020 we hosted our monthly General Meeting in the District of Kana:takon at the Recreation Centre. We began the meeting with introductions and a brief presentation from the Ahkwesahsne Mohawk Board of Education (AMBE) elected trustees. The Trustees spoke about the mandate of the board and invited community members to attend their regular monthly meetings that have a portion open to the public. Following the AMBE presentation, the Director of Health along with the Akwesasne Non-Insured Health Benefits Program Manager provided the community

with an overview of the program, the benefits available to members and how the process for appeal works. An update on the research on Special Needs that Council members have undertaken was provided, including next steps, and this was followed by an update on the Dundee Tsikaristisere claim. The meeting ended with an update from Council on border initiatives and business from the floor. If you want to view the entire recording of the General Meeting, it can be found at: <https://youtu.be/b7mfVkgpvHk>.

JANUARY 24, 2020 DUNDEE TSIKARISTISERE CLAIM

On the morning of January 24, 2020 I travelled to Toronto to meet with our lawyer and financial advisor. As part of the execution of the Dundee Tsikaristisere final settlement agreement, the Mohawk Council of Akwesasne is required to have a signed certificate of independent legal and independent financial advice. On January 24 I had the original copies of the independent certificates signed by our lawyer and financial advisor as required under the final settlement agreement.

JANUARY 24, 2020 CALL WITH INDIGENOUS SERVICES CANADA

On the morning of January 24, 2020 I received a follow up call from Indigenous Services Canada (ISC) Ontario Regional Director Anne Scotton regarding our submission to ISC for funding to remove the former MCA Administration Building # 2 in Kana:takon. Anne informed me that Akwesasne was likely going to receive official notification that our funding submission was going to be approved to demolish the building. The Admin 2 Building was vacated 5 years ago due to asbestos concerns. Given the age of the building and the excess cost to mitigate the asbestos, the building was abandoned. Once the funding is official, the MCA will work with ISC over the next few months to have the building demolished so that plans can be made to build a new facility.

JANUARY 27, 2020 COUNCIL MEETING

- Council discussed an upcoming meeting with the Mohawk Nation Council of Chiefs and reflected on the last meeting jointly attended by the two councils.
- A briefing was provided on the use of Mohawk language in the draft Akwesasne/Canada self-government agreement. Council determined that Mohawk Language will not be used in the agreement, to avoid even further interpretation disputes in the finalization of the draft agreement. Council also agreed that Section 17 of the Indian Act will not be in the draft agreement.
- Council debriefed on the recent General Meeting and discussed the necessary follow up. Everyone was reminded that the next General Meeting will include one agenda item: the MCA budget presentation.
- A briefing was provided on an upcoming meeting with SIBC in relation to the traffic light on International Road.
- A motion was passed authorizing administration to proceed with remodeling the MCA Administration 1 Boardroom.
- MCRs passed: Approval of Appointment of Youth to the Akwesasne Youth Council; Approval to Rescind and Replace a MCR for Housing Loan to Community Member; Approval of Housing Loan to Community Member; Approval of Application to Indigenous Language and Cultural Program for Thompson Island; Approval of Transfer Payment Agreement with Ministry of College & Universities; Approval of Revisions to AMBE Organizational Chart; Approval for Grand Chief to be Named as the Plaintiff for Dundee Litigation Discontinuance; Approval of Construction Contract with Capital Controls for SCADA Replacement; Approval of 8 Council Meeting Minutes; Approval of 3 Emergency Council Meeting Minutes.

JANUARY 28 & 29, 2020 PACIFIC BUSINESS & LAW INSTITUTE



On January 28 & 29, 2020 Chief Edward Roundpoint and I attended the Pacific Business & Law Institute (PBLI) First Nation Taxation conference in Vancouver BC. PBLI invited Chief Roundpoint and I to present at the conference on Ontario's Proposed Tobacco Pilot Project with Akwesasne. Our presentation was on the lessons learned from our experience with the proposed tobacco pilot project and revenue sharing agreement with Ontario. We explained our community's position of not being supportive of tax collection within our community.

To view the entire presentation:

<https://drive.google.com/open?id=1D0bcxDmQ5ISUqIQcM1L6HdyCDkM5ONE>.

Other presentations at the conference included First Nation Tax Immunity, First Nation Taxation, First Nation Corporation Tax, and First Nation Trust Taxation. Additional information can be found at: <https://www.pbli.com/>