

MOHAWK COUNCIL OF AKWESASNE

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



Kentenha /October 10, 2017

Watkwanonhwera:ton/Greetings,

I hope everyone enjoyed the long Thanksgiving weekend; hopefully you were able to relax and spend time with your families. My weekend was nice and relaxing, aside from doing the usual fall yard work, in addition to outside preparation work for yes...winter!

The last few weeks have been very busy for many of us. Aside from hosting our monthly General Meeting on the last Saturday in September, the Mohawk Council of Akwesasne (MCA) also hosted three open houses. The open houses were held in conjunction with the regularly scheduled Ahwesashsne Mohawk Board of Education (AMBE) open houses. We thought it would be a good idea to host the MCA open houses (in the school gymnasiums) at the same time as the open houses are held for each school. This way, families coming out to meet their children's teachers would also have the opportunity to learn more about MCA programs, and community members coming out to learn more about the MCA programs would have the opportunity to visit our schools. The three open houses were a huge success; we thank all MCA employees for your great team work and the community of Akwesasne for making the event such an enjoyable one. I look forward to next year's open houses.

The last monthly General Meeting was held on Saturday, September 30, 2017 at the Akwesasne Homemakers. The morning agenda included a presentation by the Director of Tehotiiennawakon on the Akwesasne Tobacco Pilot Project; an update on the Akwesasne Election Law; an update on the Hydro One Equity Participation; an update on the Northern Border Summit; and a discussion on Cannabis Legislation. Our Council has recently formed a committee to examine and explore options for consideration around the impending legalization of cannabis for recreational purposes. We began that dialogue with the community at the General Meeting and we will continue to have more discussions with the community over the next several months. Please keep an eye out for these meeting dates and should you wish to learn more about this topic at any time, please feel free to reach out me or one of the District Chiefs.

Here is the link to the September 2017 MCA General Meeting: <https://youtu.be/oLN5H69V11A>. Please take a moment to listen in, stream it on the way to work, or download it to your phone.

In closing, I have attached my monthly activity report for your information, review, and update. I hope you take a moment to read the attached report, which provides a quick snapshot of my activities over the past month. If you have any questions regarding Council Meetings, please do not hesitate to direct those questions to me or one of the District Chiefs.

Sken:nen

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Abram Benedict".

Grand Chief Abram Benedict



Grand Chief Monthly Activity Report Seskeha/August 2017

AUGUST 1, 2017 CHIEFS OF ONTARIO POLITICAL CONFEDERACY

On the morning of August 1, 2017 the Chiefs of Ontario (COO) Political Confederacy (PC) met to prepare for an upcoming afternoon meeting with Ontario Premier Kathleen Wynne. The PC received a number of briefings from COO staff in preparation for the afternoon meeting; those briefings included: Drinking Water; Cap & Trade, Climate Change, and Resource Revenue Sharing. Members of the PC agreed that each portfolio holder would speak to their portfolio with Premier Wynne. The desired agenda items for the meeting with the Premier included: Wellness and Life Promotions; Ontario's Duty to Consult; Indian Welfare Agreement; Ontario's Action Plan for Reconciliation; Resource Revenue Sharing; Strategy for a Safer Ontario; Drinking Water; and Climate Change & Cap and Trade. The PC was also provided with an overview of work the Ontario Regional Chief has been doing around life promotions in collaboration with the Youth Council. COO Staff briefed the PC on a recent mini-cabinet shuffle which included the departure of Minister Glen Murray who will be replaced by Chris Ballard. Following the preparatory session, members of the PC travelled to Queens Park for the meeting with the Premier.

AUGUST 1, 2017 ONTARIO PREMIER AND THE CHIEFS OF ONTARIO POLITICAL CONFEDERACY

On the afternoon of August 1, 2017 members of the Political Confederacy met with Premier Kathleen Wynne and the Minister of Indigenous Relations and Reconciliation David Zimmer as part of the annual commitment to meet under the Political Accord. The meeting began with opening and welcoming remarks from the Premier of Ontario who commended the Chiefs of Ontario for the work they have

been doing in collaboration with the province. The Ontario Regional Chief outlined the work that he has been doing but also outlined the challenges the communities have been facing across the province.



Members of the PC outlined the ongoing challenges in each of the portfolios to the Premier; under the child welfare discussion, the Premier is very concerned over the recent amendments to the Ontario Child and Family Services Act (CFSA) and the consultation that took place. The Premier had thought that the province did extensive consultation with First Nations but it was explained to the Premier that although the province may have extensively consulted with First Nations, the First Nations consulted are feeling that what they had shared during the consultations wasn't actually incorporated into the legislation. This discussion led to the Consultation and Accommodation agenda item; the province explained the work they have been doing to develop an Ontario Consultation Policy, as well as a consultation office for Ontario. The PC pressed upon the Premier that the Consultation Policy must be reflective of how First Nations view consultation and not how the province views consultation.

As holder for the Environment file, I explained to the Premier the challenges due to the province moving very quickly on the Climate

Change Action Plan. I further explained that the Cap & Trade development was done without First Nations involvement and this causes concern amongst the PC. It was explained to the Premier that with the recent introduction of carbon tax, a number of communities in the north are being negatively affected by this because of the fact that many of their daily essentials have to be trucked or flown in to communities and the carbon tax has caused an increase in the transportation costs. It was further explained to the Premier that the carbon tax is also affecting the cost of propane and natural gas delivered on reserve. The Premier undertook to address this concern with the Minister of Finance.

AUGUST 2, 2017 CHIEFS OF ONTARIO WEALTH CREATION COMMITTEE

On August 2, 2017 the Chiefs Committee on Wealth Creation met with members of the Ontario First Nations Economic Developers Association to continue the planning for the upcoming First Nations Economic Advancement Conference being held on October 10-12, 2017 in Toronto. The committee reviewed the agenda and made recommendations for keynote speakers as well as individuals to be panelists. It was determined that workshops and panel discussions would take place intermittingly one after another, with breaks in between. Keynote speakers would provide commentary over lunch as well as during the gala on the Wednesday evening. Staff from the association provided an update on the sponsors and potential sponsors to support the upcoming event.

AUGUST 3, 2017 AKWESASNE ELECTION LAW COMMUNITY CONSULTATION

On the evening of August 3, 2017 I attended the Akwesasne Election Law consultation meeting at the Akwesasne Homemakers in Tsi Snaihne. Over the past year, the Akwesasne Election Law Working Task Group worked on the proposed amendments to the Akwesasne Election Law and on August 3 they presented those proposed amendments to the community. The Working Task Group explained the process they used to

determine those amendments. The community members present expressed their views to the working task group and the working task group explained that all the comments received will be considered and reported back to Council for consideration prior to the final vote by the community.

AUGUST 7, 2017 PEACE TREE MALL 25TH ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATION

On Saturday August 7, 2017 I participated in the 25th anniversary celebration of the Peace Tree Mall on Kawehno:ke. The Mohawk Council provided live entertainment with food and beverages for community as well as bounce houses for the children. A number of Peace Tree Mall businesses advertised specials to attract customers to their establishments. Niawenkowa to all those who helped celebrate the 25th anniversary as well the staff of Tehotiiennawakon for organizing the celebration.

AUGUST 8, 2017 COUNCIL MEETING

- Council set the agenda for the upcoming General Meeting of August 24, 2017 and also identified a Chairperson for the meeting, in the absence of the Grand Chief.
- Council agreed that more than one community member will be honoured in the Ionkwakwe:nion Book of Accomplishments at the General Meeting.
- MCRs passed: Approval of Bank of Montreal mortgage guarantee for community member; Approval of contribution agreement for Community Corrections Worker; Approval of Access to Territory for the purpose of business financing; Approval of transfer payment agreement with Ontario for the Akwesasne Tobacco Pilot Project.

AUGUST 8, 2017 CONFERENCE CALL WITH INAC

On August 8, 2017 I participated on a conference call with Curt Powell, Chantal Maru and Justine Mallou from Indigenous and Northern Affairs Canada (INAC). The three individuals from INAC are part of the Program

Evaluation Unit at INAC and were interested in interviewing me regarding our self-government negotiations and our community moving beyond the Indian Act. The INAC representatives asked what our community vision was for the self-government negotiations and how we believed it would benefit our community. I explained that the MCA already exercises jurisdiction outside of the Indian Act in many areas and the Mohawk Court is one example of that. I further explained to the representatives that our approach has always been that we meet the needs of the community and iron out the details with the federal government later on. The representatives further questioned our community's support for our negotiations and asked how we gauged that support. I explained that we have been involving our community since the inception of our negotiations and that community members are part of the advisory committee as well as our negotiations team. Overall the call went very well. I was able to explain to the representatives that because of our unique geographical location, being in two provinces, that we feel a final agreement with Canada would only assist in clarifying those jurisdictional challenges we face between Canada, Ontario, and Quebec.

AUGUST 9, 2017 CBSA ALTERNATIVE REPORTING

On the afternoon of August 9, 2017 I attended a meeting with the Canada Border Services Agency (CBSA) to review a proposed presentation for our Council. Over the past few months, CBSA has been working on a proposed alternative reporting framework for Council's consideration. The presentation outlined how alternative reporting will work, as well as what the proposed physical structure will look like. The presentation showed conceptually what two alternative reporting lanes would look like and what sort of two way technology would be used. The proposal includes a phased in approach for user groups, with the most frequent travelers being the first to test the pilot, followed by additional groups being added. Since our laminated status cards are not machine readable, the proposed solution is that an Akwesasne-specific registration system be created which would result in the production of

cards that are machine readable at a distance and only usable at the CBSA Cornwall Port for alternative reporting purposes. Individual users would be able to pre-register simply by providing the same information currently found on our status card. After attending this meeting, I am now fully aware of the content of the CBSA alternative reporting presentation and CBSA has been scheduled to provide their presentation to Council on September 11, 2017.

AUGUST 10, 2017 MEETING WITH CBSA REGIONAL DIRECTOR GENERAL

On the morning of August 10, 2017, I met with Canada Border Service Agency (CBSA) Regional Director General (RDG) for the Northern Ontario Region Shawn Hoag to discuss the ongoing relations between Akwesasne and the CBSA. Shawn was recently appointed the RDG for Northern Ontario but has been with CBSA for approximately 2½ years. I had met Shawn earlier in the summer but felt that it was important to have a follow up meeting with him to discuss Akwesasne priorities. One of the items we discussed was the ongoing development of alternative reporting for Akwesasne residents; I explained to Shawn that Akwesasne had been lobbying for this from CBSA for years and that we were pleased that CBSA is now more positively receptive to the idea. We also discussed the ongoing challenges faced by the community due to lengthy wait times; that many community members become frustrated with the wait times because of the impact these wait times have on the community's economy. Shawn explained that he felt that the cultural awareness training is one successful aspect of our relationship and that he is keen to bring other reconciliation measures to the CBSA on other levels. Over all the meeting was a good introduction and we committed to working toward meeting regularly over the course of the year.

AUGUST 10, 2017 EMPLOYMENT AND SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT CANADA

On the afternoon of August 10, 2017, I attended a presentation to staff of Employment and Social Development Canada (ESDC) with the Independent First Nations (IFN). The IFN communities had arranged to provide community overviews to several ESDC staff which included a

number of front line staff as well as a number of management personnel. The ESDC was interested in providing community exposure to the staff so that they would have a high-level understanding of some of the diverse challenges we face as a community. Since the eleven IFN communities are from across Ontario they were able to collectively provide a snap shot of the entire province.



Each IFN community provided a 30 to 40 minute presentation on their community and spoke about the broad community challenges but some also spoke about the access to services challenges for those northern communities. I provided the participants with an overview of the Mohawk Council of Akwesasne and spoke about the large organization in which we operate. I explained the creation of the Akwesasne Court Law and the many other community laws we have in Akwesasne, and explained how provincial regulations and laws impact our community at a

service delivery level. Many of the participants had never thought about how much two provinces can be so different until I explained the complexity in Akwesasne to them. I wrapped up the presentation with an overview of the international border challenges we face, from currency to access to services and described to them the many political hurdles we face being an international border community with Canada Border Services Agency and US Customs and Border Protection on the perimeters of our community.

AUGUST 13, 2017 CHIEFS OF ONTARIO POLITICAL CONFEDERACY MEETING WITH ONTARIO AND CANADA ON CHILD WELFARE

On the evening of August 13 2017 the Chiefs of Ontario (COO) Political Confederacy (PC) met to strategize for the next day's meeting with Minister of Indigenous and Northern Affairs Canada (INAC) Carolyn

Bennett and Ontario Minister of Indigenous Relations and Reconciliation (MIRR) David Zimmer and Ontario Minister of Children and Youth Services Michael Coteau. Minister Bennett invited the PC to the meeting to discuss child welfare. Earlier in the year INAC informed First Nation communities that they would be looking to get approval from the communities to begin the review of the 1965 Child Welfare Agreement through existing tri-lateral tables. The 1965 Child Welfare Agreement is an agreement that describes the fiscal responsibility of Canada for services Ontario provides to Indians. The staff for the Chiefs of Ontario provided the PC with overview of the current status of the 1965 agreement and outlined expectations for the upcoming meeting. The PC agreed that they would consent to the review but would require that a work plan be developed with appropriate timelines and that the leadership would request the Ministers and PC meet annually on Child Welfare. The PC also agreed that they would reiterate to Minister Bennett that it's imperative that Canada implement all the Canadian Human Rights Tribunal orders from the First Nations Child Caring Society case.

AUGUST 14, 2017 CANADA ONTARIO FIRST NATIONS CHILD WELFARE LEADERSHIP MEETING

On the morning of August 14, 2017 the members of the Chiefs of Ontario (COO) Political Confederacy (PC) met with the Minister of Indigenous and Northern Affairs Canada (INAC) Carolyn Bennett and Ontario Minister of Indigenous Relations and Reconciliation (MIRR) David Zimmer and Ontario Minister of Children and Youth Services Michael Coteau. The purpose of the meeting was for the federal government to receive endorsement from the PC to proceed with a review of the 1965 Child Welfare Agreement. The meeting began with an introduction and overview by the meeting facilitator who outlined the purpose of the meeting and then turned to Minister Bennett who outlined the government's commitment to overhaul the child welfare system in Canada and review the child welfare agreement. The Minister

acknowledged that it will take time to review the agreement but committed to having First Nation involvement throughout the review.



Minister Zimmer and Minister Coteau, on behalf of Ontario, committed to working with the Federal Government and First Nations to review the agreement and involve the First Nations. The Ontario Regional Chief (ORC) explained to the Minister that Ontario would like the support of the government to commission an Ontario specific study to examine the uniqueness of Ontario as it relates to child welfare. The ORC further reiterated that between COO and INAC they needed to come to an agreement on a release of immediate relief funding that had already been committed by the Federal Government but the Ontario region wouldn't endorse a funding distribution formula. The First Nation leadership agreed that a technical committee would come to a resolution regarding the formula distribution that would trigger the immediate release of funds. Ontario and Canada responded positively to an Ontario specific study, and the First Nation leadership agreed that a review of the 1965 Welfare Agreement would proceed. Prior to the conclusion of the meeting, the First Nation leadership provided a roundtable of priorities including the immediate implementation of all the Canadian Human Rights Tribunal orders. I reiterated to the Minister

that in Akwesasne we need to have Quebec at the table to address the jurisdictional realities in Akwesasne in the Child welfare sector. The meeting concluded with a commitment to continue the work on the review of the 1965 agreement.

AUGUST 15, 2017 COUNCIL MEETING

- Council honored Alanna Pyke for her accomplishment and had her sign lonkwakwenion the Book of Honoring
- A community member presented a renewable energy project proposal to Council and explained the potential benefits; the community member will keep Council informed as the project progresses.
- Council discussed the possible expansion of the Akwesasne Heating Assistance Program to off-reserve members; policy research will be conducted and brought back for a decision.
- The action items were reviewed for the upcoming General Meeting scheduled for August 24 in Kana:takon.
- Council agreed to move the September 4th meeting to September 5th.
- MCRs passed: Approval of loan renewal with Canada Mortgage Housing Corporation (CMHC); Approval of (4) Council Meeting Minutes(s).

AUGUST 18, 2017 STUDENT BURSARIES PRESENTATION

Over the past several years the Mohawk Council of Akwesasne has hosted annual Student Bursary Awards presentations in partnership with the Bank of Montreal and Enbridge Gas. On August 18, 2017, we hosted this year's annual student bursary award presentation. The sponsors of the awards each provide ten graduating high school students with a \$500 bursary to recognize them for their hard work in high school but also to assist them with expenses related to heading off to college or university. Representatives from Enbridge Gas and the Bank of Montreal were invited to the bursary presentation so that they could personally meet the ten bursary recipients that each company sponsored. This year

the Mohawk Council of Akwesasne also invited recipients of the Wade Lafrance Memorial Award to the celebration to receive their \$500 bursary from the Mohawk Council.



The event began with a meal attended by the students and their parents followed by welcoming words from me and the representatives of the Bank of Montreal and Enbridge. Following the welcoming words, the sponsors each called the individual recipients to the podium to present them with their bursary cheque and to personally congratulate them. On behalf of the Mohawk Council, I presented the three recipients of the Wade Lafrance Memorial award with their bursaries. The event was a great success and we wish all graduates the best for the school year ahead.

AUGUST 21, 2017 NORTHERN TRIBAL BORDER SUMMIT

On August 21, 2017 I attended the Northern Tribal Border Summit in Shakopee Minnesota hosted by the Saint Regis Mohawk Tribe and the Kootenai Tribe of Idaho. Here is an excerpt from the joint press release statement issued by the summit hosts:

The Kootenai Tribe of Idaho and the Saint Regis Mohawk Tribe announce the successful completion of the Northern Tribal Border Summit held on August 21, 2017 at the Mystic Lake Casino & Hotel in Shakopee, Minnesota and the formation of a new intertribal advocacy alliance –the Northern Tribal Border Alliance (“Alliance”)–to coordinate efforts of tribal governments and First Nation’s communities when addressing shared concerns at the United States-Canada border.

Approximately 70 participants attended the day-long Summit, with representation from 19 tribal leaders from both the United States and Canada. The Summit opened with attendees sharing the difficulties they face when crossing the border while touching on a number of contributing factors, such as the unwillingness of border agents to accept tribal government-issued identification documents, excessive interrogation and harassment, denial of entry for minor offenses, and the improper handling of sacred or cultural items. An additional challenge expressed was the assumption of American border security responsibilities by tribal law enforcement personnel without receiving adequate financial support. All in attendance expressed a willingness to continue working cooperatively with American and Canadian border officials as partners in border security in a way that treats them as equal, yet sovereign governmental partners.

Rep. Kevin Cramer (R-ND), co-chair of the U.S. House of Representatives Northern Border Caucus, served as keynote speaker. Also in attendance were representatives from the U.S. Department of Homeland Security, including John Barsa, Acting Assistant Secretary in the Office of Partnership and Engagement; Timothy Quinn, Executive Director of the Office of Customs and Border Protection Intergovernmental Public Liaison; David Munro, Director of Tribal Affairs; and Laura Francois-Eugene, Enhanced Tribal Card and Enhanced Driver’s License Program Manager.

The newly-formed Alliance agreed that immediate and ongoing engagement with both the United States and Canadian governments was necessary. The participants identified four primary action areas:

- 1. Improvement of both United States and Canadian border crossing policies and practices for tribal citizens;*
- 2. Improvement of both United States and Canadian border security training and recognition of tribal identification credentials;*
- 3. Implementation of the Jay Treaty provisions in Canada governing border crossing for all tribal members and First Nations communities and removal of the 50 percent blood quantum requirement in the United States; and*
- 4. Improvement in education and cultural sensitivity by border agents.*

AUGUST 23-28, 2017 ANNUAL VACATION

From August 23 to August 28 I was away from the community on vacation to spend time with my family.

AUGUST 30, 2017 CORNWALL AND THE COUNTIES COMMUNITY FUTURE DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION ROUNDTABLE MEETING

On August 30, 2017, I was invited by the Cornwall and the Counties Community Future Development Corporation (CFDC) to participate in a roundtable discussion with other community leaders representing Cornwall, the United Counties of SDG and Akwesasne.



The CFDC is managing a two year project called the Cross-Border Partnership Program with a vision of “Stronger Together”. The morning was dedicated to hearing updates on the program and to dialogue with other community representatives on special projects, joint ventures, challenges, struggles, big ideas, and how we can best work together to strengthen our community ties. As the morning progressed, the common theme was the challenges that Akwesasne, Cornwall, and other communities in the area face with respect to the location of the Seaway International Bridge Toll. Through the information sharing amongst the participants, it was determined that a joint political lobby strategy would be developed to approach the Federal Government on the impacts of the toll location and the hindrance it causes to all our communities and our economies. A small working group will continue to develop the strategy for a future meeting with the larger group. Akwesasne provided insight into the daily challenges we face with the toll and Canada Border Services Agency location.

AUGUST 30, 2017 CORNWALL CHILDREN'S TREATMENT CENTRE FUNDRAISER

On the evening of August 30, 2017, I was invited by the Cornwall Children’s Treatment Centre to an annual evening dinner and fundraiser at the Best Western Parkway. This fundraiser dinner and roast was in honour of NHL hockey assistant coach Marc Crawford being roasted by Ottawa Senators head coach Guy Boucher and the Calgary Flames President of Hockey Operations Brian Burke.