

LOCAL NEWS

Mohawk Council of Akwesasne General Meeting

The Kahwehnoke Community Center was the site for the April 29 Mohawk Council of Akwesasne's General meeting. The meeting started at 9:30 with Grand Chief Russell Roundpoint reviewing the agenda. The first item on the agenda was education and Chief Gary Cole, Kahwehnoke, gave a report on the additions to the Akwesasne Mohawk and Tsi Snaihne Schools. Chief Cole presented the following report to Council at their special meeting on Monday, April 24, and in the evening to the School Board. The priority of the School Board and the administration is to construct the additions to eliminate the portables. The Akwesasne Mohawk School will have a multi-purpose room and classrooms and the Tsi Snaihne School will have four new classrooms. The cost for the additions will be 2.3 million dollars. The School Board has 1.3 million dollars and the remaining amount of one million dollars will be borrowed by the MCA. The recommendation at the MCA's Special Meeting

is for a planned deficit for the two additions. The Council has not made a decision on this recommendation. Chief Cole wants the community to be informed about the additions to the two schools.

Chief Cole indicated there was a surplus from the SD&G school board, but the school Board cannot transfer from one line item to another. The people in attendance were concerned about the lack of classroom space should the children attending in New York State return to the Akwesasne School Board. Chief Cole stated that if the children returned there would not be enough classroom space. The Akwesasne Education Committee is presently meeting with Mohawk parents and students and the Salmon River Board of Education to resolve outstanding issues. If there is no resolution to the Akwesasne Education Committee's concerns then there may be students returning. The MCA Board of Education is on the capitol building fund for 1998. If this capitol building funds are allocated for 1998 then MCA would carry a deficit for the next three years with the understanding that the 1998 monies would repay the loan.

The next item on the agen-

da was a report by Mike Mitchell on the Traditional Medicine Workshop held April 9, 10, 11 and 12 at Anderson Lake, Manitoulin Island. Elders and Mohawk medicine people travelled to Anderson Lake and spent three days talking with Ojibwe, Crees and Iroquois from Six Nations. Gail McDonald attended the workshop to do a written report on the recommendations from the participants and on the three day workshops. The participants recommended further workshops either in Six Nations, Oshweken, or at Mohawk Valley. The elders recommended an Elders Advisory Council be organized to advise on traditional medicine and to advise on the health facility.

Mr. Mitchell continued with telling the people about the developing of a pilot project for the three communities, Wikwemikong, Six Nations, and Akwesasne, to come together to document and record the traditional medicines and how traditional medicine can be a part of the treatment plan for the patient.

Mr Mitchell went on to say that Toronto has a health center utilizing traditional medicine people such as Jan Longboat, Ron Wakegijig, from Wikwemikong, works side by side with the non-Indian medical doctors. Grand Chief Russell Roundpoint commended that the project was off to a good start and the pilot project will benefit the three communities. Chief Vincenette Cook of Tsi Snaihne, agreed that with three communities working together on this health project there is a better chance funding will be allocated. Mr. Mitchell concluded his report by stating that everyone who participated in the workshop will be brought together and the elders of Akwesasne will meet to organize the Elders Advisory Council.

The third item on the agenda was the arena. Mr. Mike Mitchell gave a summary of the current status of the arena. Mr. Mitchell has volunteered to sit on the Arena Committee to help with securing funds for additional items that are needed for the arena. The arena was not able to include all the items due to cutbacks. Such things as a Zamboni, parking lot pavement, more seats, a time clock and score board are

needed to provide the community with the best possible service. The Arena Committee has developed a fundraising plan and the various members will be approaching individuals and businesses for donations. A public relations report has been compiled and will be used when meeting with potential donors. Grand Chief Russell Roundpoint pointed out that this is a good approach to take and in a meeting with a Bank of Montreal representative, Grand Chief Roundpoint asked if the Bank would consider purchasing the time clock. The Bank of Montreal did not say no but will think seriously about the donation. The community can also participate in this fundraising campaign. The community can purchase seats. If a person wants to purchase a seat then a plaque will be placed on the seat with the donor's name. The cost of one seat will be \$200.00 and if this is too much then how about several people putting their money together. The arena is for the community and the

community can be apart of the arena by helping with the fundraising.

At this point in the meeting, a Mohawk man asked for time to explain a problem with his house. He has been having problems since 1990 and would like to clear this matter. The MCA Council suggested a date next week for a meeting with the Housing Committee and the Mohawk man. He agreed and a date and time was set.

The meeting continued with the Mohawk Roundtable update by Mike Mitchell. Mr. Mitchell told the people and the Council that he had just returned from a meeting in Toronto where the participants where First Nations people involved with the self-government process. The representatives were from organizations and First Nation governments from across Canada. The Yukon representative mentioned their land claims and how self-government has been integrated into the land claim negotiation. Manitoba is dismantling the Department of Indian Affairs and has jurisdiction over Education. Ontario is no different with different efforts by Nations, Tribes and groups on jurisdiction. The Mohawk Roundtable will be concentrating on two areas: health

and justice. The Mohawk Roundtable will be negotiating with the respective Ministries. Myrtle Bush and Gail McDonald have been brought on board to assist with specific research and writing. The Chiefs of Ontario have designated Richard Powless as their representative to Roundtable meetings on taxes for cigarettes.

The Mohawk Roundtable will work with the other issues later as direction is given by the leadership for the three Mohawk communities. Grand Chief Russell Roundpoint talked about Akwesasne jurisdiction and not Canada or the United States. He went on to say, "we have the ability here to enforce our jurisdiction. We need to meet with the Mohawk Nation Council of Chiefs and the Grand Council. We can control our own destiny."

Mr. Mitchell was thanked for his reports and then business from the floor was opened. A family from Pilon Island made a request to Council about the purchasing of a new barge. The present barge is in need of repairs and has been used for ten years. The barge is used for the transporting of cattle, furniture and people. The family would like a new barge if possible and if not then repairs made to the existing barge. The families on Pilon Island are still farming and transportation is needed. The Council agreed to have Joe Francis evaluate the existing barge and to obtain information on the cost for a new barge. The family then mentioned that the landing dock on the Cornwall side has never been completed. Chief Lynn Roundpoint remembered that this was to have been looked after about two years ago. Chief Sharrow and Chief Delormier will follow up on this issue.

The next issue from the floor was the request by a member of the traditional healing committee for assistance with securing funds. Chief Vincenette Cook said she would check with Francis Jock and Jeff Whalen and would have a response by Wednesday of next week. Another request related to the same committee was the need for a room for their next healing session. Council agreed that a room would be made available in Kohnonkwatseriio. This was agreeable to the individual.

The next question from the floor was an update on the McComber Road intersection. Grand Chief Russell Roundpoint has met with the family about the entrance to McComber Road. Negotiations are continuing with the family and a temporary solution has been worked out with Nancy Chaussi. The entrance will be widened using Chaussi's property. The work will begin shortly. Also to be added will be hedging to stop some of the dust. It was stated that this is a temporary measure only.

A question was asked about Mohawk immersion in the Daycare systems. Chief Cook responded by saying that the Director Lois Terrance, was looking into this. Chief Cook, Ms. Terrance and staff understand that the parents want immersion Mohawk in the daycare. The Council recognizes your concern and will, indeed, give your concern to Ms. Terrance.

A Cornwall Island resident commended Council for their letter to the community. It's good to see Council stand up for the community programs. Grand Chief Roundpoint said that the Council and Police Commission compiled the letter and issued the letter to the respective newspapers.

The final question/remarks from the floor was a request from the Tsi Snaihne Homemakers need Council to do a report on the repairs to the Homemakers building. The roof is finished and the siding is nearly done. A final report is needed to the funding agency and as Council helped to defray some of the costs, the Homemakers need a report. Council said a report would be prepared for the Homemakers.

The Council General meeting adjourned at 11:45 with the announcement that Council was pleased to see so many people at a general meeting. The general meetings were averaging 2 to 3 people and today there were well over twenty five people in attendance. The Council will put the minutes in the newspaper and will see about delay broadcasting of the general meetings. The community needs to know what's happening and the media can get the word to the people.

The next general meeting is May 27th, 9:30 a.m. at Kanatakon Recreation Center.

