

COMMUNITY DECISION-MAKING PROCESS
KAHNAWÀ:KE MEMBERSHIP LAW
3rd COMMUNITY CONSULTATION
Karonhianonha School Gym
28, Enniska/February 2013
6:00 – 8:30 PM

RECORD OF DISCUSSION

FACILITATORS:

Kahente Horn-Miller (Lead - CDMP)

Joe Delaronde (Group 1)

Kahente Horn-Miller (Group 2)

Kahienes Sky (Group 3)

RESOURCE PEOPLE:

Rose-Ann Morris (Lead – Resource Person)

Arlene Beauvais

Shari Lahache

Rhonda Kirby

RECORDERS:

Jennifer McComber (Main Screen)

Brandi Meloche (Group 1)

Sophia Dupont (Group 2)

Lulu Rice (Group 3)

6:00 P.M. **OPENING** – Kahsennenhawe Sky-Deer

6:05 P.M. **INTRODUCTION/MEETING GUIDELINES** – Joe Delaronde & Kahente Horn-Miller

6:10 P.M. **KAHNAWÀ:KE MEMBERSHIP LAW** – Rose-Ann Morris

6:15 P.M. **QUESTION: What needs to be amended in the Kahnawà:ke Membership Law?**

8:15 P.M. **NEXT STEPS** – Kahente Horn-Miller & Rose-Ann Morris

8:30 P.M. **CLOSING** – Kahsennenhawe Sky-Deer

QUESTION:

What needs to be amended in the Kahnawà:ke Membership Law?

GROUP 1

Facilitator: Joe Delaronde
Resource Person: Arlene Beauvais
Group Speaker: Vernon Goodleaf
Recorder: Brandi Meloche

Discussion:

1) Who can be a member? What is the criterion to become a member? 4 or more Kanien'kehá:ka great-grandparents (or, Iroquois or Indigenous great-grandparents)

- 4 great grandparents - needs better definition **Group 2: Agreed, must be defined and not include "acquired status".**
- 4 Great grandparents depends on context
- Council of Elders agreed to 3 great grandparents. After it was brought to the Lawyers, it was changed to 4 great grandparents. **Group 2: Not true**
- Definition is required for "What is a Kanien'kehá:ka grandparent"?
- 4 Great grandparents is "Blood Quantum" in disguise? **Group 2: Not true**
- One comment of not being ok with 4 Great grandparents.
- Create a working group to define definitions. **Group 2: Disagreed, don't think that a working group needs to be created because the definitions will be worked out during the drafting of the law.**

Automatic for a person born of 2 members or 1 member parent and other of Iroquois confederacy with verifiable proof **Group 2: Agreed**

- Should it read "Kanien'kehá:ka" or "Indigenous"? What if a person is Native but not part of the Six Nations? **Group 2: Agreed but "Indigenous" meaning Canada and continental U.S. only**
- If "Indigenous" is used it must be clarified - North America (U.S. & Canada) **Group 2: Agreed**

Is married to or living in a common-law relationship with a member

- No comments or concerns **Group 2: Remove "common-law"**

Maintains ties with community

- Be committed to the community.
- What if someone never lived here but they are now an elder and would like to be “accepted” by their community but they don’t want to move back here?

Honors customs and tradition, comply with codes, laws and regulations of Kahnawá:ke

- Make it an oath.

Requirement for a Clan or obtain a Clan

- There are many different processes for obtaining a Clan in the community. Which Longhouse is correct?
- Clans are important when it comes to titles.

Committed to learning Kanien’kèha

- Make it an oath.

Respects mother earth

- Suggestion → Remove “Respects Mother Earth”
- Suggestion → Make it an oath “Respects Mother Earth”
- Requirements are matters of opinion –It’s difficult.

Outcome:

Concerns were raised by Group 1 and presented to Group 2

- Definition is required for 4 Kanien’kehá:ka Great Grandparents
- Definition is required for citizenship
- Definition is required for Membership
- To establish a working group to work on definitions

QUESTION:

What needs to be amended in the Kahnawà:ke Membership Law?

GROUP 2

Facilitator: Kahente Horn-Miller
Resource Person: Shari Lahache
Group Speaker: Jeremiah Johnson
Recorder: Sophia Dupont

Discussion:

1) Who can be a member? What is the criterion to become a member? 4 or more Kanien'kehá:ka great-grandparents (or Iroquois or Indigenous great-grandparents)

- I don't believe that the criteria of having 4 Kanien'kehá:ka great-grandparents should change.
- I don't agree because of personal reasons having married a non-native so I don't agree because my children will not meet the 4 great-grandparent requirements.
- We have a lot of people that are full-blooded Indian from other reserves but their children are not put automatically on our membership list because of the requirement of "*Kanien'kehá:ka or Iroquois great-grandparent*" and they have to apply for membership when they're 18.
- Section 10.1 is for members on this reserve so automatic membership.
- If one parent is a Kahnawà:ke member and as long as the other parent that is from another reserve has verifiable proof, the children should have automatic membership.
- How do you track the lineage from other reserves? Shari answered that they have to answer and provide proof and show that they have lineage and it is not through "acquired rights".
- Are we speaking of children that are born here? Yes.
- For this specific example, I know someone who has four great-grandparents; can she qualify as a member just by her mother's side? Shari answered "No, she would have to apply for membership."

- How would the situation of having three (3) great-grandparents be addressed?
- There are other factors that should be considered: having a tie with community, have a clan, they have recognized children in the community, knowing the language, lived in Kahnawà:ke all their life
 - Great-grandparents
 - Deep ties with the community
 - Have a clan
 - Knowing the language
 - Living in Kahnawà:ke all their life
 - Recognized children on membership list
 - Spouse: the path they choose
- If the criteria were changed to 3 great-grandparents, it would mean so many more people could be considered members.

What is the definition of great-grandparent?

- Does it mean that the 4 great-grandparents must be 100% ?
- Realistically, you cannot ask for 100% full-blooded as you will not find many.
- It is not impossible to have 4 full-blooded great-grandparents.
- What if one of the great-grandparents gained acquired status at that time? The group said no.

Should membership be automatic for a person born of 1 member parent and other of Iroquois confederacy with verifiable proof?

- Shouldn't it be automatic if you're born of 2 member parents? Yes the group agreed.
- What about non-natives that are registered as members?
- A change that is needed: about automatic member, if women married out, they should not have to go in front of the Council of Elders to ask for "permission" because they have always been Onkwehonwe. We need to be inclusive.
- What if they are bringing home children, this has to be addressed. The welfare of the children of this marriage has to be looked at.
- The group said yes it should be automatic within the Iroquois Confederacy.

Should membership be automatic for a person born of 1 member parent and an Indigenous Nation with verifiable proof?

- Indigenous: The definition should be clarified "indigenous to Canada and the continental U.S."

Requirement for a Clan or obtain a Clan.

- Having a Kanien'kehá:ka clan, does a person who has been adopted have the same rights as a person born into the longhouse?
- What about people who go to Church?
- I think there is too much emphasis on having a clan.
- I think it is important to have a clan because we are Onkwehonwe people.
- But we are independent people and if someone is Catholic, we cannot force them to have a clan as it is an individual choice.
- I think it is very important for some people but not as important for others.
- I think it should be a personal choice and it should not be a requirement for membership.
- Should someone who has a clan carry more weight?
- I think having a clan is what we are as a Nation.
- The reason we had clans was so that we did not marry our brothers and sisters. There are many that still follow it today but it has lost the purpose it had a long time ago.

What are the criteria to become a member?

**4 or more Kanien'kehá:ka great-grandparents
Clan**

Committed to learning Kanien'kèha

Respects mother earth

Maintains ties with community

Honors customs and tradition, comply with codes, laws and regulations of Kahnawà:ke

Is married to or living in a common-law relationship with a member

Respects mother earth

- What does that mean?

Maintains ties with community

- If the person doesn't even know where Kahnawà:ke is and calls Membership because they want to live here and get stuff for free, they definitely do not have ties to the community.
- Must be expanded upon and must be kept as a criterion.

Honours customs and tradition, complies with codes, laws and regulations of Kahnawà:ke

- What does this mean?
- It was put in for the traditional aspect.
- What does "customs and traditions" mean? Cornbread and steak on Sunday?
- If you don't want to go to the longhouse you don't have to, it is a personal choice.
- Former COE member commented that the Council of Elders was putting an amendment in for this section, to change the word to "respect".

- Make it 2 sentences: Respects customs and traditions. Complies with codes, laws and regulations. Or “Honours the customs and traditions of Kahnawà:ke”.

Married to or living common-law:

- Shari explained that this pertains to someone who has little or no Mohawk lineage but is married to or living common law with a Kahnawà:ke member.
- “Common-law” should not be considered as meeting the criteria because the couple is just “shacking up”.
- Remove “common-law” as when someone is married they value the commitment more.
- “Common-law” is widely accepted.
- The government does not recognize the spouse if they are not legally married.
- We must remember that this is our law and we don’t have to go along with outside governments’ definitions.

Outcome:

Discussions will continue at the next meeting on March 21, 2013 .

QUESTION:

What needs to be amended in the Kahnawà:ke Membership Law?

GROUP 3

Facilitator: Kahienes Sky
Resource Person: Rhonda Kirby
Group Speaker: Pauline Lahache
Recorder: Lulu Rice

Discussion:

What needs to be amended?

1) Who can be a member? What are the criteria to become a member? 4 or more Kanien'kehá:ka great-grandparents (or, Iroquois or Indigenous great-grandparents)

- Some Indigenous blood but not 4GG
- Concerns about having children with Indigenous people outside
- We are becoming exclusionary
- Some people here have no blood ties but many who do have it are excluded
- Birth clan = automatic enrollment
- Forget the Indian Act
- We are matrilineal
- Go back to old values
- How do people get clans?

Need definition of great-grandparent

- We don't have a choice in our lineage
- Disagree with 4GG law; we have to be inclusionary.
- Why do we deny some and not others?
- Bill C31 forces us to down grade lineage; got to be a stop somewhere. Blood quantum.
- Major impact, where does the cut off come?

Automatic for a person born of 2 members or 1 member parent and other of Iroquois confederacy with verifiable proof

- 2003 changed from 50% to 4GG-

Prior to change did Indigenous from outside nations count toward 50% blood quantum?
Age 18 you were to choose membership.

Replace Iroquois Confederacy with Indigenous to be inclusive.

Is married to or living in a common-law relationship with a member

- (Rose-Ann explains sections in Law)
- Common law - How do we define lineage in same sex relationship?
- Adoption-native at birth
- Maintains ties with community
- Honors customs and tradition, comply with codes, laws and regulations

Regulations of Kahnawà:ke

- No comments

Requirement for a Clan or obtain a Clan

- How do people get clans?
- If you are not born with a clan
- You can't be giving the clan; they would not have full rights.
- Adoption
- So what if the mother is not native?
- People who have clans can come back in but we aren't taking away membership from existing members.
- Clans hanging around their neck are allowed to be under the clan but don't have a voice.
- Different ideas of a clan - clear definition of a clan.
- What are the responsibilities of a clan?
- Do you have any leadership within the longhouse?
- Consult the longhouse people about their clans.
- We do not have to consult the longhouse because this doesn't amend existing clan decisions.

Outcome:

Group 3 was able to present its position to Groups 1 & 2, however no overall consensus was reached.

Final Outcome of all 3 Groups:

No Consensus reached as all three (3) groups were only able to answer the first question in the KML Review. Group 1 & 2 started deliberations with Group 1 presenting their position to Group 2. Before Group 2 could respond, Group 3 was permitted to present their position since they weren't given a chance at the previous meeting. Due to time constraints, the meeting adjourned at 8:30 p.m.

NEXT MEETING:

4th Membership Community Consultation

Thursday, March 21, 2013 – 6:00 p.m. to 8:30 p.m. – Karonhianonha School