

COMMUNITY DECISION-MAKING PROCESS
KAHNAWÀ:KE MEMBERSHIP LAW
7th COMMUNITY CONSULTATION
MCK LARGE CONFERENCE ROOM
1, Onerahtohkó:wa/May 2013
6:00 – 8:30 PM

RECORD OF DISCUSSION

FACILITATORS:

Kahente Horn-Miller (Lead - CDMP)

Ron Skye (Facilitator)

RESOURCE PEOPLE:

Rose-Ann Morris (Lead – Resource Person)

RECORDERS:

Tracey Goodleaf (Recorder)

6:00 P.M. **WELCOMING** – Elizabeth Curotte

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

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

6:15 P.M. **QUESTION:**

1) What needs to be amended in the Kahnawà:ke Membership Law? Continued. See consensus from Group 1 and 2 and summary points from April 24, 2013.

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

8:30 P.M. **CLOSING** – Elizabeth Curotte

QUESTION:

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

GROUP 3

Facilitator: Ron Skye
Resource Person: Rose-Ann Morris
Group Speaker:
Recorder: Tracey Goodleaf

CDMP Consensus from Group 1 and 2 from March 21, 2012

Question: 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?

- Group 1 & 2 agreed to 4 Indigenous great-grandparents.

From April 24, 2013 Group 3 points raised:

- Importance of clans
- Return to traditional government
- See wampum's set out lineage descent and adoption on individuals and families
- Establish working group to develop plan to return to clan system
- Child with a clan should be automatic member
- Child with 4 great-grandparents should be automatic member
- Consideration for 3 great-grandparents but must have ties to community (must have grown up here)
- One Mohawk parent should be the requirement
- Spouses can't acquire rights/benefits
- Proof that person applying for membership has a clan?

May 1st Group 3 discussions began:

- What do you think a possible consensus would be?
Last meeting was focused on using traditional ways and incorporating them so that there is importance placed on clan and adoption.

- Is it a value or a process? It's a value that we were talking about. It's a value. Not a process. Dept. of Indian Affairs has been taken to court from a lot of women who had been cut off from membership. Here in Kahnawake we are making our own membership law. We are trying to make it clan, etc. but we are influenced by Indian Act. Up to Mclvor and further.
- Indian Act got made and we like to use our cards. We are trying to become more Kanien'kehá:ka and yet we're still arguing about things that are in the Indian Act.
- It's the Indian Act problem. They were forced to do things. We're still in the old way of thinking via Indian Act.
- All issues can be resolved the old way. ie: adoption, clans, etc.
- There's something to be learned from the Indians of India. They are Indians because they're born to an Indian Family. Here we fight amongst ourselves. Our culture, our land, etc. is at stake. Traditional ways can answer all of these questions.
- Today we can't talk about the clan system. It'll take years and a long time to do it this way. We have to carry the great grandparents that's already in place, whether it be 3 or 4 great grandparents. The return to Traditional government will put the rest in place.

Facilitator asked if observers can speak to clarify their comments through other participants.

- Some people speak through other people because they're not on the registry.
- We shouldn't do this because the other 2 groups didn't have the opportunity.
- Concerned with other groups observers participating from April 24th.
- The process itself is for members on the Registry.
- All groups agreed that non-members would be spoken for by members.
- Do we maintain the original decision; the status quo? Or do we allow for the individuals to speak on their own behalf?
- In 21 years at public band meetings, (observer) nonmembers were not allowed to speak unless they were invited speakers.
- If you don't allow the non-members to speak you are following the Indian Act.
- Suggested to maintain the status quo.
- If the presenter of the idea doesn't state the idea correctly, then can the individual add more clarification?
- We have to stop dehumanizing the people that cannot speak on their own behalf.
- It's only for clarification.
- We should stay at what was in place in the beginning. We need to be on the same page as group 1 and 2.
- Okay status quo.

Discussion continued by Group 3:

- Still go on minimum 4 great-grandparents. Don't dilute the society. Exactly what the Government wants is to get rid of us.
- This is about being Mohawk, not about who you marry. You're Mohawk one day and not the next.
- Yes, you're still Mohawk, but the future generations will not be.
- Participant gives an example when she was growing up, 13 women of her friends were not told about the ramifications of marrying "out".
- It's the way you live, not about the blood quantum. It's about the culture, the language, and the correct attitude. Cultural participation is a necessity.
- 2 persons agree with the 4 great-grandparents.
- One person said she found out that in 1945 the Longhouse began in Kahnawake. Traditional life. In 1948, the town crier issued clans. They gave out clans to people standing outside the church. Because we were raised Catholic, only learned the Traditional ways later on in life. Clan comes from your mother. It's your lineage. Through your lineage, you pass to your children. You have to understand what goes with the Clan. You have to learn about it. 22 clans in Kahnawake at one time.
- We need to learn about the clan system. The clan system implies a community tie. We have to get educated. A plan needs to be developed to return to clan system and responsibilities that goes with clans and the whole system. Not ready to implement full clan system now.
- Another person noted the 1922 big longhouse convention in Kahnawake. Then the 1889 Indian Act. We were 7 Indian Nations of Canada...The clans Chiefs used their clan symbols, their drawings when they signed. We were traditional up to the 1840s. We were the Iroquois of the Sault who became known as the Mohawks because the Mohawk language became dominant.
- Still want to consider 3 great-grandparents. The way people talk now it seems that the clan system is not relevant now but, it is in the Membership Law; it's an important part of the criteria.
- The reason why the elders wanted it was to be considered for the future, It wasn't defined clearly.
- Paradox - 4 great grandparents and then one marries out, but you are still Mohawk, so one Mohawk parent should be enough to be a member.
- Saying exactly the same thing.
- Diagram on flip chart: 4 great-grandparents and One Mohawk parent. (see attached diagram)
- One parent per generation is more inclusive. (Male or Female).
- This goes against the clan system.

- We can look back at this later, the clan system.
- There is no scale of dilution. Are we deciding criteria for birth? Yes
- How much can you obtain as being at 50% in education, health care, etc. When they reach the age of maturity, they decide to stay or leave.
- Clarification on what's in law now. Under section 10, automatic membership for offspring of 2 members, then application for membership based on having 4 great-grandparents, plus other criteria.
- If you have 4 great-grandparents, then automatic registration at birth.
- We're trying to maintain our lineage; that is the goal. The one-parent rule is not agreeable. Especially when it (marriage out) becomes repetitious, then it needs to be questioned. Double mother clause. If the younger generations choose to marry out, that should be stated and they will be informed of this.
- Are we only speaking of blood quantum or also practicing your culture? If we're more inclusive, we will be attracting more people to practice our culture, learn the language, etc. We can't just rely on government subsidies.
- We want to strengthen our Community, build the bloodline and thicken the blood. Only way to do it is to explain to your children.
- In 1981 law, you married out, you were out? Is this what we're trying to change?
- Membership Law is problematic. Excludes certain people. Law is not enforced. 1984 blood quantum law. Council of Elders was suspended. Consensus was reached.
- We've already watered ourselves down.
- CDMP rules. The process has been already approved. This is to make the necessary amendments. Not to discuss the process. Process was developed by the Community. Law is not to be sent to Ottawa either.

RECAP: 4 great-grandparents automatic
The one parent rule to be discussed.

- Church made Longhouse go underground. 1920s there was a condoled chief. In order to be inclusive, then you have to have at least one parent being Mohawk.
- Govt. is obligated to pay per capita.
- Not the issue.
- You are also teaching your children to be racist.
- One Mohawk parent per generation with links? Something to look at?
- 2 first nations.

- From an anthropologist viewpoint; intergenerational inbreeding weakens the genes. Causes higher rates of autism, scleroderma, cancer and more impacts from the environment too. It's not going to get any better. We have to look at this. Are we weakening the gene pool by these laws? Health issues. Concern: Not a lot of population to choose from.
- Statistics on registration requested:
- We have now about 300 Bill C-3 on Indian Affairs band list, of those, 16 reside on reserve. Total registered by Indian Affairs is just over 10,000.
- Those members on Kahnawà:ke Kanien'kéha Registry who meet the Membership Law is just over 6,300, so there is a difference of about 3,900 individuals registered but not accepted as members. Of the 3,900 there are about 1,400 with 4 great-grandparents, plus another 400 who have 3 great-grandparents.
- Facilitator noted there are mandatory reviews after 5 years of the making of the Law.
- Out marriages can be repaired in one generation of marrying in and marrying out. Things are fixed in one generation.
- 4 great-grandparents can be on one side, or on both sides? Yes.
- What are we trying to protect? Some want to reserve the blood. Some want to up the population and keep them coming back to the Community.
- 3 great-grandparents and a clan should be strong consideration.
- If you have a clan, then automatic registration. This was proposed April 16th, but not agreed to by the group.
- Research with Longhouse, you lose your clan when you marry out.
- All of the Longhouses follow same basic rules. Do not bring false information to the table; you do not lose your clan when you marry out.

RECAP:

- 4 great-grandparents at birth is automatic.
- 3 great-grandparents with a clan could be considered..
- An individual with a clan, born with a matrilineal lineage. (Not from adoption. Iroquois is through the women, while Abenaki from the father.) Individual with hereditary clan. Not settled yet.
- Agree to bring the ONE parent rule back to the table? No consensus.
- Bring it to the May 9th participants for them to consider.

Parking Lot: Border crossing and Green Card

May 1, 2013 Final Minutes

Approved by:

Rose-Ann Morris, Membership Registrar

Date