

**COMMUNITY DECISION-MAKING PROCESS
KAHNAWÀ:KE ELECTION LAW
1ST HEARING**

Karonhianóhnhha School
26, Kentenhkó:wa/November 2013
6:00 – 8:30 PM

RECORD OF DISCUSSION

FACILITATORS:

Kahente Horn-Miller (Lead -CDMP)
Joe Delaronde
Patsy Bordeau

RESOURCE PEOPLE:

Trina C. Diabo (Lead – Resource Person)
Lori Jacobs
Angus Montour
Joann Patton

RECORDERS:

Leslie Skye (Lead/Logistics)
Brandi Meloche (Group 1)
Caroline McComber (Group 2)

6:00 P.M. **OPENING** – Patsy Bordeau

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

6:10 P.M. **REVIEW AMENDMENTS TO KAHNAWÀ:KE ELECTION LAW** –
Trina C. Diabo

8:15 P.M. **NEXT STEPS** – Kahente Horn-Miller

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

Question:
Do you agree to remove the reference to 50% blood quantum and replace with wording consistent with the Kahnawà:ke Membership Law throughout the entire document including to run for Grand Chief or Council Chief?

GROUP 1

Facilitator: Joe Delaronde
Resource Person: Lori Jacobs
Group Speaker: Dennis Diabo
Recorder: Brandi Meloche

DISCUSSION:

- Many community members have voiced their position which is not to remove the 50% in the election law. Some think it should be higher than 50% to run, you have to keep the blood line up.
- Against removing the 50% until this is worked on the 50% should stay.
- The “50%” comes from the Indian Act.
- I would go with 50% plus.
- There isn't a set definition of what this would be changing to. How can you say to change the 50% when you don't know what it would change to?
- **Suggestion** → Use a term other than 50%. Maybe use the term “half”.
- You have to stay at 50% and not use the 4 Great Grandparents. If you start changing the wording, what are you going to go to? You have to stay with 50+.
- Leave the 50% in on the condition that in a year or two it can be looked at again when the Membership Law is further defined.
- I can't accept less than 50% because of who we are.
- It's understandable to draw the line somewhere 50%, 75% or 25% but it all ends up being a smoke screen. It doesn't define the person's character. Why are they running? Who do they want to work for?
- The more you lower the 50% it becomes pretty difficult to defend that you are a Mohawk.
- We decide who is a Mohawk of Kahnawake, not INAC.
- We need to have someone there who can speak for us because they are one of us.
- I don't agree with leaving this as 50% and come back to it in two years. The longer we wait, the more we become less than 50%
- Who determines who is actually a Mohawk? We do, not the Membership Law.
- Don't lower it.

- Drawing a line, if you're here, you can run for office, if you're here, you can run for office.
- There were some who preferred to have 50%+, however, all agree to keep 50% in the election law as a requirement to run for office.

QUESTIONS:

- In the amendment being proposed in the draft, does this mean that you can be less than 50% and still run in the election?
Answer: Yes, as long as you are on the registry.

OUTCOME:

- All agreed to keep 50% in the election law as a requirement to run for office.
- **Suggestion**→ Conduct a survey through kiosks at the Kahnawà:ke Services Complex to present this question to community members.

PARKING LOT:

- There were no parking lot issues addressed.

Question:

Do you agree to remove the reference to 50% blood quantum and replace with wording consistent with the Kanien'kehá:ka Membership Law throughout the entire document including to run for Grand Chief or Council Chief?

GROUP 2

Facilitator: Patsy Bordeau
Resource Person: Angus Montour
Group Speaker: Kevin Fleischer & Timmy Norton
Recorder: Caroline McComber

DISCUSSION:

- The discussion opened with the comment that the current Law is inherently unfair to certain members as there are many who qualified for membership by way of other criteria met (KKR).
- The current KKR requires four out of eight great grandparents, however many on the KKR Registry may not meet the 50% blood quantum criterion for the amendment to the Election Law.
- The community voters should decide whether lineage is an absolute requirement and should be left to decide.
- All registered members regardless of the 50% blood quantum rule should have the opportunity to run for Chief and Council as a member. No further distinction between members should apply.
- More emphasis on skills and ability to read and write focusing more on education rather than the 50% requirement.
- Currently, there are 61% of members that of over 50% blood quantum. Where will the community be in the next 10 years if the threshold were to be lowered?
- Determine clearer definition of “great grandparents,” examining further the bloodlines of the great grandparent and whether or not they meet the 50% requirement.
- KKR registrants have rights and entitlements, therefore all members are equal regardless of blood quantum percentages.
- One participant placed a strong emphasis on their preference at maintaining distinction between membership status and blood quantum.
- Determine first, the type of individual needed and wanted to lead our community. Blood quantum should be a secondary consideration.
- There are many members currently registered (KKR) that have a solid knowledge of our culture and language but don't meet the 50% blood quantum currently required to run for office.

- There are members born in the community with perhaps 100% lineage however having not the basic knowledge or interest in language and culture. Is this what we want as leaders of our community?
- Perhaps other criteria should be explored to satisfy (i.e., clan, maintaining ties to community, community involvement etc...).
- Elected candidates perhaps taking a pledge and oath (language)? Whom and how would the pledge/oath be measured and enforced?
- All registered members should be placed on the ballot with community members to decide whether lineage would be a factor. This would let the people decide if they felt blood quantum was important enough for them to vote for a certain individual.
- Cautioning that the proposed amendment is discriminatory toward certain members of the community.
- Clan may become most significant in the future in relation to candidacy for office.
- We should be more “inclusive”
- Consider more stringent restrictions to the criterion such a residency requirements.
- Wrong to discriminate, members should be treated fairly as we are voting for a person not the number or percentage of blood. Members should not be ostracized due to bloodlines.

OUTCOME AFTER GROUP 1 PRESENTED TO GROUP 2:

GROUP I

- Consensus to keep the 50% minimum requirement
- Responsibility of the Mohawk too decide who are Mohawks

OUTCOME AFTER GROUP 2 PRESENTED TO GROUP 1:

GROUP 2

- Consensus not reached. Differing opinions on rights, responsibilities and obligations of members on the Mohawk Registry versus using a blood percentage for being elected to political office.
- Participants felt this question, because it is so tied to who we are, may need to be asked in another format or even the possibility of using a referendum.
- Proposed surveying the community by kiosks on this specific question.

QUESTIONS:

- Should there be two different criteria for the laws (Membership – Electoral)?
- Should that specific 50% blood quantum requirement criteria remain as is?
- What are the base requirements? (i.e. education)

OUTCOME:

- No consensus reached

FINAL OUTCOME:

- **Although NO CONSENSUS was reached between the two groups on the 50% blood quantum requirement for eligibility to run for office, both groups agreed that the Election Law Technician conduct a survey through kiosks at the Kahnawà:ke Services Complex to present this question to community members. This would enable the Election Law to move forward through the CDMP.**

PARKING LOT:

- There were no parking lot issues discussed.