

Band councils negotiating team introduces itself

By Donna Duric
Writer

Six Nations Band Council is seeking to educate the community on its consultation and accommodation process.

With six negotiated green energy projects underway and more projects in the works, band council's consultation and accommodation process (CAP) team held its first community meeting last week detailing how that process works.

"Tonight is not about consultation," said Amy Lickers, council's community planner, at the meeting last Thursday at the community hall. "Tonight is about letting people know about what it is we're doing, introducing the CAP team, trying to give people an idea of what consultation and accommodation is."

Lickers is a member of the CAP team, which consists of staff from band council's Lands and Resources and Economic Development departments.

"We all meet with proponents and we look at proj-

ects from many different views," said Lickers. "It has been determined that there is a legal duty to consult with First Nations communities when there's development going on in their traditional territories. What this means...is a community has the legal right to be involved in any discussion that happens regarding that development."

Other CAP team members include: Lonny Bomberry, director of Lands and Resources; Matt Jamieson, director of Economic Development; Phil Monture, council's land rights "consultant"; Karen Smith, land use officer; Joanne Thomas, consultation "point person"; and Paul General, manager of the Six Nations Eco-Centre. The CAP team has been involved in green energy projects.

Before projects get underway, the Ministry of Energy provides developers with lists of which First Nations to consult with on their projects, said Lickers. That list includes both the band council Confederacy Coun-

cil.

Band Council developed its land use accommodation and consultation policy in 2009. The agreements made so far will bring millions of dollars into the community for at least the next 20 years, with the Samsung Grand Renewable Energy Park near Jarvis bringing in about \$75 million alone.

"We want to make sure that any of these projects are being developed with the idea of perpetual care and maintenance," said Lickers, "to make sure we have long term solutions and not just one-off projects that...we don't have any say in how things are operating in the future." The consultation and accommodation policy is a 13-step process, explained Lickers.

Projects proponents give band council capacity funding to fund the CAP team activities.

So far, the team has gone through six community engagement processes. Only one project has been turned down during those



Band councils negotiation team held its first community information night last week explaining how it works. (Photo by Donna Duric)

community engagement processes, said Lickers. That was the proposed McKenzie Meadows housing development project directly across the street from the controversial former Douglas Creek Estates housing project in Caledonia.

She said, "We're trying to be proactive," before protests against development start.

The CAP team negotiates on projects both within the 900,000-acre Haldimand Tract and the larger 1701 Nanfan Treaty area, which covers a large portion of

Southern Ontario and the northern United States around the Great Lakes region.

The negotiated projects to date include: Samsung (a combination wind and solar farm), which is just about to enter construction; First Solar, which is now operational; Summerhaven wind farm (by NextEra); Brantgate Solar Farm (currently under construction); Port Ryerse wind farm (construction will begin in 2015); and Gunn's Hill wind farm, also to begin construction in 2015.

The CAP team says it has

pushed for the employment of Six Nations people during the construction of those projects, but there have been no guarantees. Elvera Garlow, director of Grand River Employment and Training, told the CAP team they need to start negotiating clauses in agreements ensuring the employment of Six Nations people.

The CAP team is in the midst of establishing the Grand River Community Trust to disperse the project revenues, and is assembling an interim board of directors for the Trust.