

# Community votes "status quo": no alcohol regulation and no brewery

By TRT Staff

For those who could not make it to the Six Nations Community Hall on Saturday to witness or participate in the Alcohol Referendum - you may have missed an important bit of our history.

Of the approximately 18,000 Six Nations Band Members that are eligible to participate in the community engagement process just 557 ballots were cast - approximately 3.1%.

Of the votes that were cast; 116 were in favour of Six Nations Elected Council developing a community regulation - but one that would permit the sale, manufacture and distribution of alcohol in the community, 196 people also wanted SNEC to develop a community regulation - but one that would restrict the sale, manufacture and distribution of alcohol on Six Nations. Another 235 people voted that they wanted things to remain "status quo".

In the end, the "No" vote received the most votes - so status quo it is. But even still questions remain about the confusing ballot options and why

the pursuit of an SNEC Alcohol Regulation has been abandoned despite a total of 312 votes that were in favour of either a restrictive or permissive SNEC Alcohol Regulation.

When asked for clarification on whether or not the total 312 votes that did prefer an SNEC alcohol regulation was actually a majority or if the 235 votes that voted for the status quo was the majority, Economic Development officer Matt Jamieson said, "The majority of the votes determined the outcome was 'no regulation'. The objective was to determine community preference - if any additional research is needed this will be a matter for the Council to decide when the final report is accepted on February 2, 2015."

Those gathered to hear the results clapped and cheered that SNEC would not be moving forward with developing their own regulations regarding the sale, distribution and manufacture of alcohol on Six Nations territory. The results also indicated that the proposed brewery project would not be moving ahead.

During Saturday's vote, a small crowd of people gathered in the foyer of the Community Hall with signs and standing in opposition to the referendum.

Terrylynn Brant, one of the organizers of the opposition group said, "We are here to represent the 'silent majority that doesn't vote'. We are here expressing the fact that we do not want alcohol in our community." The group sat in the foyer of the Six Nations Community Hall discussing the wording on the referendum questions.

Other community members gathered at Saturday's Referendum but who wished to not be identified expressed concerns that the presence of protesters inside the foyer of the Community Hall was "voter intimidation" and was dissuading band members from participating.

Although there was a general feeling of relief after the results of the vote announced that the brewery project would not go ahead, some questioned the wisdom of initiating a referendum on alcohol to begin with.



A small group of Six Nations band members sat in the foyer of the Community Hall on Saturday as a physical expression of the voice of opposition to the proposed Six Nations Alcohol Regulation. (Left to right Leanna Bomberry, Terrylynn Brant, Myka Burning, Cathy Honyust, Meryk Burning). PHOTO BY PAULA HILL