

Six Nations voters say no to band alcohol regulations, brewery

By Donna Duric
Writer

In an overwhelming majority, the community has voted no to Six Nations Band Council's contentious plan to establish alcohol regulations on the territory. Over 550 people voted in a referendum Saturday asking the community if it wanted to see alcohol regulations established here.

The overwhelming majority - 235 people - said no to any attempt by the band to institute either permissive or restrictive alcohol regulations here.

When Six Nations Community Planner Amy Lickers announced the results of the vote just after 7 p.m. Saturday at the Community Hall, people cheered and expressed relief that there would be no band-led alcohol regulations on the territory.

"Our children thank you,"

said community member Fran Doxtator.

A 'yes' vote would have paved the way for a beer

the brewery idea is automatically off the table,

Lickers said.

The proposed brewery was



Brennan Green-Bird, Katie Rainey, Sawehate Bomberry and Tristan Green Bird held up a sign saying "My future does not include alcohol" for voters to read as they entered the community hall Saturday. (Photo by Jim C Powless)

brewery at the empty Oneida Business Park.

Saturday's results mean

met with hefty resistance during two months of community meetings held by



A group of traditionalist and even voters who didn't support the vote held a day long vigil at the referendum Saturday to have their voice heard. (Photo by Jim C Powless)



Once the results were read that killed the brewery and band regulations on alcohol, there was a momentary pause until planner Amy Lickers explained "the brewery is dead" to applause.

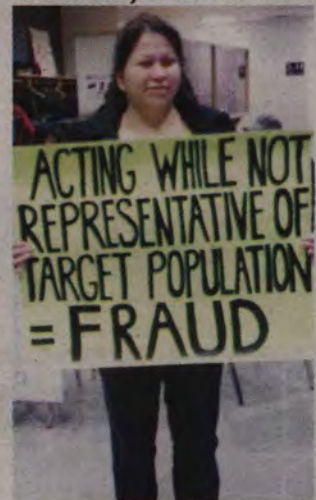
SNED from November through January.

After the results were tabulated by an independent election company, Lickers announced that 557 ballots were cast, with 116 people saying yes to permissive alcohol regulations; 196 voting for restrictive alcohol regulations; and 235 voting for no regulations whatsoever. Those numbers total 547, with 10 ballots spoiled or marked "blank", said Lickers.

She said those 10 ballots were spoiled or marked blank for various reasons: people checked off more than one choice; people didn't write anything on them; or, extra comments were written on them.

Six Nations Police Commis-

sioner Steve Williams said without regulations, the community will be rele-



Six Nations people showed up to voice their disagreement with the band led alcohol regulations that would have allowed a brewery at Six Nations.

gated to the "wild west." He said he wanted to see a brewery go up at the Oneida Business Park.

"I think the brewery would have been a good thing," said Williams also a local businessman and president of Grand River Enterprises. "The people are of the understanding that alcohol is bad. Well, we already have alcohol in our community. Making money off it isn't a bad thing. People have to start understanding the government is cutting back band council every year on funding. They gotta figure out a way to make money." Williams feels pessimistic about any business model ever taking shape at the empty OBP warehouse.

"It doesn't matter what we

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do; they (the community) don't want it," he said, citing an earlier plan to use the facility to recycle tires but the community objected.

He said he wasn't surprised by the referendum's results.

"It's exactly what I expected because the questions weren't very clear. The questions should have been 'yes' or 'no' if people want regulations. Then, six months later, bring up the brewery."

Elected Chief Ava Hill said she was neither for or against the regulations and said council will respect the results of the referendum.

When asked by reporters if she was disappointed with the results, Hill said, "No,

not at all. We wanted to give the people a chance to have their say; we wanted their opinions and we got it. The community has spoken."

Former elected Chief Bill Montour said he voted no to the alcohol referendum. "I don't know why this council would bring this back up again when we know how it tears the community apart. That's why in 1988 we said we would not bring it up again. This is crazy to put the community through this again."

Dozens of community members calling themselves "the silent majority" staged a day-long "sit-in" at the referendum, encouraging those coming through the doors of the community hall to vote

'no' to alcohol regulations. "I don't support alcohol in the community," said Terrylyn Brant, who didn't vote in the referendum. "It's caused too much damage."

The "silent majority" consisted mostly of traditional community members who don't vote in band elections or referendums.

They posted signs around the community hall denouncing alcohol and band council's methodology for the referendum.

"A 'no' vote still means yes," read one sign.

"Council supports drugs - alcohol is a drug," read another.

Another sign was held up above SNED Director Matt Jamieson, reading, "Free beer with every 'yes' vote - collect at band office."

Members of the Six Nations Men's Fire showed up to tell band council they were looking into charging council with breach of privacy after the band sent a mail-out to the membership marketing the brewery idea.

Men's Fire leader Bill Monture chided band council Senior Administrative Officer Dayle Bomberry over the alleged breach of privacy.

Band Council sent out packages to 15,000 names at a cost of over \$10,000, said Monture.

"That (money) could have fed families in our community," he said. "This privacy act was broken. Somebody broke that act," he told Bomberry.

"Where is my consent form that I signed for you to use

my name to send it out?" he asked Bomberry. "That's the question. I talked to the cops. I said we're going to be laying charges. It has to stop, what you guys are doing."

When Monture was finished speaking, Bomberry said, "Is that your message?" When Monture replied 'yes,' Bomberry said, "Okay, thank you," and walked away.

Two plainclothes Six Nations police officers were stationed at the community hall all day.

Numerous community members filed through the doors throughout the day and openly stated they were going to vote against band alcohol regulations.

Six Nations farmer Art Porter said he was opposed to the idea and, said he

was confused about the ballot questions. "It seems like regardless of what you vote, you're damned."

He voted 'no' to any alcohol regulations on the territory.

"They won't be building any breweries as long as I'm alive," he said.

When Lickers announced the results of the referendum, the audience paused for a moment until she announced the brewery and regulations were dead. The crowd erupted into cheers. Brant told the community: "The data (vote) proves our people don't want alcohol. Our community has said 'no.' Thank you very much."

Provincial alcohol regulations will continue to be enforced by Six Nations Police.