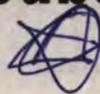


# Whitlow looks for feedback on proposed clinic



By Jayson Koblun

**OHSWEKEN** – Now that people know a pharmacy that may dispense methadone and suboxone could be established here, the community can get together and discuss different ways that it should be implemented.

And they are.

Community members met last Thursday to have some of their questions and concerns answered about the pharmacy Gail Whitlow and her business partner, Shaab Syed are hoping to run out of Ancestral Voices Healing Centre in Ohsweken; A traditional healing centre that Whitlow owns in the Ohsweken Village Plaza.

The two business partners held a community meeting at Elected Band Councils suggestion to open the floor to questions and comments from community members; they were joined on stage by Kathryn Macdonald and Charlene Ninham, a counsellor who will work with Whitlow and Syed.

Many people said that a methadone clinic has been needed on the reserve for a very long time and commend Whitlow for her desire to help, while others said that although they too see the need for a clinic, more information about the two drugs, their business plan, safety issues surrounding the location and more is needed.

The first time Whitlow presented her idea to Elected Band Council, it didn't seem like her efforts were well received. Councillor Hazel Johnson commented on why council may have reacted the way they did.

"Everything needs to be done with respect and communication and that involves everything from council to confederacy," said Johnson. "I think what happened to council was the shock of the sudden announcement that there was an opening that nobody was aware of. When you don't have open communication to understand what's going on, you start to ask questions."

Johnson is referring to

the private opening Whitlow and Syed held a few weeks ago. Whitlow said that the opening didn't mean they were already dispensing drugs, but that it was so she could prepare the space and purify it before they went further.

Johnson said that personally, she doesn't know much about methadone and feels that maybe others are in the same boat as she. As the issue is discussed further, she hopes that everyone will understand the amount of research involved in trying to make an informative, balanced decision.

"I wish we could help every person on the reserve with what they are dealing with," she said, also mentioning the steep learning curve involved with the issue at hand.

No decision was made at last night's meeting but Whitlow promised more gatherings like this will take place before the clinic can open and welcomes comments, questions and suggestions in the meantime.