

Local Council's match Save the Evidence donation

By Nahnda Garlow

BRANTFORD – The City of Brantford's Finance Committee voted in favour of meeting a call to match a \$220,000 donation by Six Nations Elected Council towards raising the \$1 million dollars needed to replace the roof of the historic building.

Both the donation from Brantford and SNEC will be contributed toward the Save the Evidence campaign, which is seeking to raise capital to restore one of Canada's first residential schools.

Brantford's Finance Committee voted 4-2 in favour of the resolution last Wednesday, proposed by Mayor Chris Friel. City councillors in support of the donation were John Utley, David Neumann, Richard Carpenter and Chris Friel. Those councillors in opposition were Rick Weaver and Dan McCreary.

Many citizens from the City of Brantford expressed via social media a desire to contribute toward the restoration project in some way as a gesture of compassion for what the First Nations, Metis and Inuit people in Canada suffered during the residential school era. This call was affirmed after the Truth and Reconciliation Commission released their report, finally articulating Canada's residential school policy as an act of cultural genocide against indigenous peoples.

Friel's resolution reads,

"...whereas the City of Brantford is supportive of the restoration and preservation of the Mohawk Institute Indian Residential School to honour the legacy of persons who attended the school and to ensure that this national historic site serves of a reminder to all."

The resolution further says that Brantford City Council, "...urge all citizens, organizations, institutions, corporations from private and public sector and surrounding municipalities to be a catalyst for change and donate to the 'Save the Evidence' Fundraising Campaign."

Chief Ava Hill said she was thrilled to hear the City of Brantford approved the matching donation towards restoration of the 'Mush Hole'.

Hill said, "Their decision to allocate funding to this project is a demonstration of the good things that can come out of partnerships and friendly relationships. I believe that it is also an indication that the recommendations made by the Truth and Reconciliation were heard by the Brantford City Council who voted to Save the Evidence."

Hill said the TRC report was able to reach Canadians with the facts and a summary of what happened in Canada's residential schools and that now is the "time for reconciliation."

"It is gratifying to know that the members of the Brantford City Council have

expressed their desire for reconciliation by agreeing to support the repair of the roof at the Mohawk Institute," said Hill. "I want to extend a special thank you to Mayor Chris Friel, who engineered the resolution that

was put forth, and to Councillors Richard Carpenter, Cheryl Antoski and Dave Neumann who were huge supporters of this proposal right from the beginning. On behalf of the Six Nations community, I want to thank

all of the members of City Council for supporting the decision."

Hill also said the SNEC and Brantford City Council can work together in unity to now pressure both federal and provincial govern-

ments to match the contributions the two councils have made. "If we can get them to do that, I am sure that we will reach our goal of securing all the funding that is needed to repair the roof."