

HDI lawyer removed from Six Nations

By Jim Windle

OHSWEKEN – A dramatic scene unfolded at the Grand River Employment and Training building Tuesday morning when members of the Men's Fire physically removed Haudenosaunee Development Institute lawyer Aaron Detlor from his office.

Detlor and the HDI have been under constant criticism in the past for its lack of transparency and what has been perceived as selling out Six Nations rights for money. For its part the HDI insists this is not true and that they have been open to the public.

The Men's Fire, an organization of Six Nations men say it's their responsibility through the Great Law to look after the people if they feel the government, be it elected or traditional, is not doing what is in the best interest of the community at large.

The men met Detlor in the second floor hall outside his office of the GREAT building and demanded he remove himself from the community. When Detlor refused, after several requests to leave, the men took it upon themselves to remove him physically.

Detlor was obviously surprised and tried to resist but was overwhelmed by about a dozen men intent on removing him any way necessary. He was frazzled but not visibly injured in the brief interaction.

The men accused Detlor of a number of questionable decisions made by the HDI that they believe reflects negatively on Six Nations rights and claims and say they have attempted to have their questions addressed several times but what they got was not to their satisfaction. Most



Members of the Six Nations Men's Fire surround HDI lawyer Aaron Detlor to force him off the Six Nations reserve for making deals with corporations and developers without the consultation or knowledge of the people of Six Nations.

recently, the HDI's stance on the McClung housing development in Caledonia and Empire Homes has been a bone of contention within the community.

Months ago, a lawyer's report on the work of Detlor for the people of the Whitefish Nation was circulated showing several questionable billing practices and a general dissatisfaction with his work by the sitting Chief who ordered an investigation of Detlor's billing during the time he worked for that Nation. This report has been an albatross around the neck of Detlor, which he can't seem to distance himself from.

In the hallway of GREAT, Detlor tried to explain his actions and that of the HDI, but the Men did not accept what he had to say, having heard it all before.

Lynda Powless, who works for the HDI as media

liaison while at the same time publishes the Turtle Island News, arrived at the scene accusing *Two Row Times* of orchestrating the event. It is an accusation TRT publisher Jonathan Garlow vehemently denies.

"We got a tip. That's all," says Garlow. "We were just covering it on behalf of the community who needs to know."

Once outside the GREAT building, Detlor was ordered into his car and to leave, only to return to clear out his office under supervision.

Detlor sat in his car for a time making frantic phone calls. When Six Nations Police arrived, they took Detlor into the building to question him further regarding the incident. Soon, HDI Director Hazel Hill arrived in defence of Detlor.

As news quickly spread throughout the community via Facebook and

emails, some came to the defence of Detlor while others felt it was about time something like this happened.

"I know there have been many women for many years (myself included) who tried to bring forward concerns about all of this only to be met with silencing. I appreciate that finally there was action to do this, I only hope that in the future women are listened to before it takes this long for anything to happen," posted Lindsay Ganohsahnwe Bomberry.

In May, Cayuga Wolf Chief Sam General caused a stir with calls for the dismantling of the HDI for not negotiating in good faith on behalf of the Confederacy, the immediate dismissal and removal of Detlor, Hill and Brian Doolittle for misrepresenting the Confederacy.

Months earlier, a del-

egation from the Oneida Nation, near London, attended a HDI public meeting and questioned Detlor why he was getting himself involved in that com-



Turtle Island News publisher, and HDI media liaison, Lynda Powless, accuses *Two Row Times* of orchestrating the ouster of HDI lawyer Aaron Detlor from the community by a traditional group known as the Men's Fire. Powless is employed by the HDI drafting press releases and controlling the image of HDI which some Six Nations people say is a conflict of interest. PHOTO BY JIM WINDLE

munity's affairs without the knowledge or consent of the people.

Nothing was done at that time.

This morning the Men's Fire took it upon themselves to remove Detlor themselves, saying he has been "misrepresenting the people of Six Nations."

Bill Monture, speaking for the Men's Fire explained the action as being made necessary after what he says has been several attempts to request information from the HDI regarding deals and agreements made by Detlor and the HDI on behalf of the people. In his own defence, Detlor maintains everything the HDI does has to be approved by the HCCC.

"We are ordering you out of the community," Monture told Detlor outside the GREAT building. "If you come back, we will be back again."

Detlor insists he is on reserve on the invitation of the Haudenosaunee Confederacy Chiefs Council.