

Council stalls on Elections Code schedule

by Paul Baswick

OHSWEKEN - Council has deferred voting on a proposed schedule which would allow for the ratification of the Six Nations Elections Code before the next general election, despite the "urgency" councillor David General said the situation demanded.

General, chair of the three-member Elections Code committee, presented the schedule at last night's council meeting outlining proposed key dates in the upcoming election and Elections Code revision processes.

The schedule, which General assured council is "very feasible, very practical," set a Sept. 22 date for the ratification of the Elections Code and a Nov. 17 general election date.

This is the schedule the council must follow, he stressed, in order for Band Council to meet its obligations under the current Grand River Custom Elections Code and the 1999 Supreme Court Corbiere Decision.

"We are at the point where we have to do something tonight," said General.

He said council was obligated under the current Elections Code to call an election within two years and eight months of signing their oath to the community. "This evening marks that point in the current council's mandate when they could call the next election."

The proposed schedule would have to be followed, he added, in order to accommodate enough time to ratify the Elections Code before the next election.

Some councillors, including Alton VanEvery, felt that voting on the schedule last night would be to act too hastily.

"I don't think we should hurry this," said VanEvery, who added the complications that arose from the speedy process that council followed when last revising the code.

"They hurried so much and because things weren't in order, people sued us and we lost."

He added he would rather not see revisions to the Elections Code before the next general election if changes were made too hurriedly.

General called the decision for council to defer the matter until Aug. 16 a "blatant disregard" of those who have worked to improve the Elections Code."