

Code reform a 'council initiative': Staats

SN Chief says proposed amendments to Elections Code must be reviewed by band council

By Paul Baswick

SIX NATIONS — Proposed changes to the Six Nations Elections Code won't get off the ground without first being presented to band council, says Six Nations Elected Chief Wellington Staats.

Staats told the Teka Monday that proposed amendments currently being hammered out by Community Elections Code Committee cannot be considered for inclusion in an updated code, because they have not yet been submitted to band council for review.

Because the process of amending the current code was launched by band council's 2000 Elections Code, he said, the development of proposed revisions for community review remains a "council initiative."

"We've had a problem with some of the (current Elections Code) committee members because they're saying this is a community initiative. It wasn't initiated by the community — it was initiated by a Band Council Resolution, and that's where we're having a little bit of difference in the interpretation of what's going on."

Staats says it remains council's responsibility to steer the process that it started.

"As a council we said there seems to be a lot of loopholes in this Elections Code, so we struck a council committee up that was supposed to look at the code along with our legal advisor," said Staats.

"What they were supposed to do was look at it, bring it to council, then take it out for some public input or at least suggestions or recommendations or whatever you want to say, and ask the general public 'Do you agree or disagree?' That's really the process that's supposed to be going on."

What has happened instead, he said, is rather than adding comments of suggestions to recommendations made by council, community mem-

bers have gone a step further by developing proposed amendments on their own.

Staats added that while the community is welcome to offer their own amendments, such submissions must first be sent to council if they are even to be considered.

"According to the code it says that the people would present a petition or a suggestion or a recommendation to council, but that didn't happen. Nobody presented anything to us," said Staats.

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