

Election Code reform

Continued from front page

Band councillor and Elections Code Committee volunteer David General strongly disagrees with Staats' assessment of correct procedure. General said Tuesday that because band council had admittedly started the process of revising the code last year, there was no reason for the community to petition council that the code be revised.

"We're way beyond that stage," he said.

General also noted that band council had already proceeded with the second stage of amending the code by launching the community consultation phase, a stage he said isn't meant to be restricted to debate solely on proposals originating from council.

According to the current code, he said, once the amendment process reaches the community consultation stage, no further intervention from council is warranted.

As a contingency, however, General said the committee is prepared to petition band council with the amendments that have originated in the community.

Staats, meanwhile, said that if band council did receive a petition in the near future, he doubts there would be enough

time to act upon it before the next general election.

"Whether or not it's changed for this election, that's not really a concern to me as long as we change it right. You still have the old code you can work on. You can have an election under the way we had it before."

It may not be a priority for council, band councillor and Elections Code Committee volunteer Roger Jonathan said at last Wednesday's public meeting on the document at Six Nations Tourism, but it has clearly become a priority for the community.

"As an elected councillor I've been asked by the community to have this into place before the election and that's what I'm going by. I can't turn around and say 'No, let's do it next term,'" said Jonathan.

"One reason Dave (General) and myself got into this is because council is not listening to what the community is saying. The majority of the community at every meeting said they want this done before (the election)."

Jonathan, like General, affirmed that amending the current code is a community process free from the intervention of band

council.

"They can't stop this," he said.

"It doesn't fall upon the current council to stop the process that you (the community) have started."

Jonathan was asked if his colleagues on council also believed they couldn't intervene in the ratification process.

"Of course not," he responded.

"That's why they're going to discuss this in an in camera meeting Monday night."

On Monday Chief Staats said although the issue of the Elections Code could come up at that night's political liaison meeting, it wasn't among the main issues council planned to discuss.

"I don't know if we'll be discussing much of it tonight. We've got about three other issues on here. The big one is health right now."

It isn't currently known if that meeting resulted in any new decisions or positions by band council on the Elections Code amendment process.