

It's official: Election Code bill will be up to next council

OHSWEKEN — A push to have some type of elections code reform package on the books in time for next month's general election was officially laid to rest during a special meeting of Six Nations council last Thursday.

Council voted 5-4 to delay further action on the issue and leave it up to the next elected council to deal with. Chief Wellington Staats cast the final and deciding vote, breaking a 4-4 tie.

"My concern was that what they were proposing to present was a document that wasn't finished," said Staats. "We put out drafts but that committee hadn't put out something to say, 'Here's the finished document, now what do you think?'"

Staats was also concerned that some technical elements contained in the current election code were not carried over into the proposed code; for example, the powers and duties of the chief.

Staats said the drive on behalf of some of the election code committee members to get a referendum out before the public on the Nov. 17 election day just wasn't realistic. "How could people vote on something they've never seen before?" he asked.

He also objected to the whole format of multiple selections on key elements of the 30-page document, which the committee had been advocating. The committee had been pursuing the idea that voters be given the opportunity to pick and choose between some of the more contentious items on the proposed code, like whether council's term of office should be three years or two, whether an intermission would be required after a councillor served two consecutive terms, and whether candidates for council needed a Gr. 12 education to be eligible.

This difference of opinion underscores the chasm that had developed between the three councillors who had