

Security fence being built on Kanonstaton with neighbours help

By Donna Duric
Writer

A controversial fence bordering properties backing onto Kanonhstaton, the former Douglas Creek Estates (DCE) subdivision, is building neighbours not divisions.

The Haudenosaunee Confederacy Chiefs' Council (HCCC) agreed earlier this month to install a privacy fence along the northern perimeter of Kanonhstaton with work beginning Monday.

Haudenosaunee people joined by a number of Caledonia residents, whose homes border the property, cleared brush for the installation.

An estimated 400 feet of chain link fence poles were installed by Tuesday in a largely peaceful atmos-

phere. Between Caledonia homes' property lines and Kanonhstaton.

The HCCC instructed its planning department, the Haudenosaunee Development Institute, (HDI) to install the fence.

HDI Director Hazel Hill said she was pleased to see the construction start in such a light-hearted mood. "I'm very happy with our people," she said.

Only one incident occurred when a neighbour, Donna Reid, a member of an activist group that has been protesting at Kanonstaton, called the OPP to her Thistlemoor Street home.

Her yard has encroached onto Kanonhstaton with a garden that extends at least 30 feet out from her exist-

ing fence line and backyard. She told HDI director Hazel Hill that officials from the Province of Ontario, Diane Woods and John Nolan, had given her permission to extend her backyard.

When asked if she spoke to anyone from Six Nations about her plans, she told the Turtle Island News, "I don't have to talk to anybody at Six Nations."

Reid was one of 800 people in Caledonia who won a \$20 million class-action lawsuit against the province after the reclamation. Reid has also been a visible presence at rallies held by Binbrook activist Gary McHale.

Six Nations people reclaimed the land in 2006 and have maintained a protective presence on the site ever since. Ontario bought out housing development company Henco Industries for \$16 million in 2006 and gave permission for Six Nations people to remain on the land.

One neighbour, John Chmiel, whose Thistlemoor Street backyard abuts the north side of the site, joked with Six Nations people as he watched the installation Monday morning.

"I understand where you guys are coming from," he told Six Nations people at the site. "I always have." Chmiel has lived in the subdivision since 1999.

He said he even had a few beers in his backyard during that tense summer with one of the well-known faces of the 2006 reclamation, Michael Laughing. "We had a couple of beers and shot the breeze," said Chmiel.

That didn't sit well with some of his neighbours, he said. "Through out the whole occupation, I've treated you guys as neighbours and I've been treated the same way back," said Chmiel.

Six Nations man Jeff Hawk shook hands with Chmiel after the two joked about having a barbecue in the man's backyard.

"Thank you, sir," Hawk told him.

Hill was heartened to see



Twenty fence poles went in Monday with work continuing this week. (Photo by Jim C Powless)

everyone working in unity on Monday.

"I'm very happy with our people and their demonstration of keeping a good mind even in the face of some of the racism and difficult situations that we've had to deal with," she said.

She said it will take a few weeks to install the 1000-foot long fence.

Hill said she was surprised and disappointed to learn that Ontario, while at the negotiation table, was actually fueling the animosity between the two communities.

"It is disappointing to learn that two of the Ontario representatives, at the negotiation table, were party to the situation that escalated tensions to the point that the fence is now required."

She said, "The Haudenosaunee have continually asked Ontario to deal with the issue of the encroachment, and now we have learned from neighbours, that in fact, Ontario was party to the encroachment. It makes it difficult for our chiefs to participate in a meeting with Ontario when the people across the table are not honourable people."

She said Ontario has been part of the more than two-month-old discussions sur-

rounding the installation of a fence.

"They were aware it was being considered and that quotes were received during the tendering process and they even suggested a wooden fence be installed," Hill said. "They were very much aware the fence was going ahead until they walked away from the Communications Protocol table in May," said Hill.

The Communications Protocol is a communications framework between the Haudenosaunee and Ontario Minister of Aboriginal Affairs. It is the first in a series of established processes for the Ontario government, as part of the Crown, in how Ontario and the Haudenosaunee will relate to each other, with its basis in the Two Row Wampum.

Hill said Ontario is reviewing the protocol and has, since May, refused to attend meetings with the Haudenosaunee Confederacy Chiefs.

"Instead of returning to the table they appear to be trying to unilaterally set a new table that appears to include the Six Nations Band Council and Haldimand County Council and attempts to bring the Haudenosaunee Confederacy under the Indian Act

system," she said.

Phyllis Bennett, a spokesperson for the Ontario Ministry of Aboriginal Affairs, said the province does not agree with the installation.

"We do not support unilateral actions with respect to DCE," she said. "We are supportive of an all-party process."

Hill said Ontario was part of the discussions on the fence. "The only unilateral actions that have taken place during any of the negotiations were by that of the Crown who have continued to work behind the scenes to undermine the Haudenosaunee throughout the entire process, and have clearly made no real effort or attempt at reaching a peaceful resolution to the matter".

She said "while Ontario was allowing residents to extend their yards, Haldimand County councillor Craig Grice allowed snowmobiles and ATV's onto the site running over newly planted trees and archaeological sites that had been designated as significant and were supposed to have been placed within Ontario's archaeology registration protected from future development."

Construction will continue this week.



Only one resident along the new fence line protested the installation, Donna Reid, a member of an activist group that protests along Highway 6, had actually extended her yard 25 feet into Kanonhstaton claiming Ontario representatives told her she could extend her yard during 2006 negotiations. (Photo by Jim C Powless)

phere.

The fence is going up along the north, east, and south sides of the site in response to increased confrontations from non-native political activists at the site this summer.

It is being installed with a five to 10-foot buffer be-