

Brantford pulls financial plug on Kanata Mohawks

By Donna Duric
Writer

Brantford City Council will stop paying utility bills at Kanata Village.

The decision came at a council meeting Monday night after Bill Squire and Jason Bowman, representing the Kanata Mohawk Workers, demanded the city include them in decisions affecting Mohawk territory in Brantford.

never given the Six Nations any right or permission to surrender, lease or dispose of any land holdings of the Mohawk people," said Squire.

Bowman, a non-native man who described himself as a special assistant to Bill Squire, read a statement objecting to Brantford's dealings on Haldimand land without consulting the Mohawk people.

tain or pertained to Haldimand Territory issues."

Council. Richard Carpenter challenged them to answer why the city should keep paying the bills at Kanata Village.

"You talked about covenant responsibility...don't you think you have a responsibility to pay the bills you've run up while you've occupied Kanata Village?" asked Carpenter. "That's what you're here for, right? I know you're saying something else, but that's why you're here."

Squire replied, "I think we can pay our bills if Brantford paid theirs."

He was referring to an invoice totalling hundreds of billions of dollars the Mohawk Workers sent to the city, which is a debt they claim the city owes them for past fraudulent land leases and purported surrenders.

Carpenter asked, "666 billion dollars? Who does that cheque get written to?"

Squire answered, "the Mohawk Nation" and Carpenter continued to press him on who exactly to sign the cheque out to, with Squire simply saying the Mohawk people.

When Carpenter asked another question about the invoice, Bowman asked him if he was "totally ignorant", at which point Mayor Chris Friel shut the microphone off and demanded that he



The city of Brantford will no longer pay utility and phone bills at Kanata Village after being hit with a \$2,000 phone bill recently.

use more respectful language.

"That is not acceptable in council chambers. I would suggest that you tailor your language to speak more ef-



Mayor Chris Friel

fectively to members of council. If you are unable to, you will not continue to speak."

Carpenter wanted to know if the Mohawk Workers wanted to be included in every single decision the city makes, including by-laws.

Bowman said, "Without question, anything within Mohawk territory, you better believe it."

Mayor Friel said "enough is enough" and taxpayers should not keep footing the bill for utilities at Kanata Village.

"We're going to stop paying for it. We've been trying to keep good relations (with the Mohawk Workers) but we can't have the taxpayers of the city of Brantford paying for them." In 2009, the Mohawk Workers took over the former cultural and interpretive centre that houses an authentic replica of a 17th century longhouse. They've been using it as a "base of operations" in pursuing land claim grievances, said Squire, adding that the occupation at Kanata will continue.

"I think the Mohawk Nation has to take responsibility to take care of ourselves," he said. "We have to do what we have to do to keep things going here."

He said he did not believe Brantford taxpayers are responsible for footing the bills.

"It shouldn't be a burden on the taxpayers," he said. It was alleged at a city committee meeting last Monday that one phone bill ran up to \$2,000.

Squire says he believes that happened when Kanata opened its doors to various activist groups, including Occupy Toronto, who stayed at the village for weeks at a time.

"We should have monitored them a lot closer," said Squire.

Carpenter said he met with elected Chief Bill Montour last month and that Montour told him he was okay with the city shutting off services at Kanata Village. Squire said they will continue to operate Kanata Village as a tourist destination.

"We keep this open as a public place. It continues to be maintained and we're doing guided tours through the longhouse."



Kanata Mohawks spokesman Bill Squire and Jason Bowman asked city to pay their bill for outstanding land rights money. (Photo by Donna Duric)

The city has been paying utility bills at Kanata Village since the Mohawk Workers took it over five years ago.

Squire and Bowman told councillors that only the Mohawk people have sovereignty on Haldimand Tract lands and that the city should be consulting with them and not the elected council or Confederacy Council.

"The Mohawk Nation has

"The Mohawk position in respect to the city of Brantford is such that we need some questions answered," said Bowman. "The Mohawks never ceded any right to their territory. Take notice that any and all future meetings set to take place henceforth without our involvement, and indeed all such meetings prior, constitute unauthorized dealings if indeed such decisions made per-