

HDI reports on its dealings with energy companies

By Jim Windle
SIX NATIONS

The HDI made a report of their activities to the Confederacy Chiefs this past Saturday at the Onondaga Longhouse regarding their ongoing talks with several energy companies, big and small.

The biggest three include Samsung, Capital Energy and NextEra.

According to Hazel Hill, Director of the HDI, an agreement between the Confederacy Chiefs Council and Samsung, outside of whatever arrangements they have made with the Elected Band Council, is very close to being signed.

Exact details of the agreement are still being developed, but should it conclude well, the Confederacy would be receiving \$250,000 per year for 20 years which is earmarked for language programs and traditional Haudenosaunee ceremonies, says Hill.

The funding arrangement seems to be the first order of business moving forward.

"Samsung and their partners, the Six Nations Elected Council, have insisted that any possible funding comes through Band Council," she says. "The Confederacy says no."

It is their position that the Confederacy already deals with two funding agencies, both reputable and audited and they do not understand why they insist on channeling the money through Band Council.

Both GREATI and Oswe:ge Consulting Management Services, which Ontario has had no trouble using in the past, are audited every year and have handled well over \$50 million without a problem. The Confederacy has used GREATI in the past while the HDI uses Oswe:ge.

"There is no reason that be stipulated in their agreement," says Hill. "At our most recent meeting, Samsung was advised that they needed to talk to their minority partner (Band Council) and that they are risking the whole project (on an issue easily rectified)."

It is the Confederacy's position that Band Council has negotiated its \$50 million, and any agreement through the HDI is to be kept separate.

"We're happy for you (Band Council) now you go over there and do what you are going to do with that \$50m for this community," says Hill.

Hill is convinced that this stumbling block in the Samsung talks is not a big issue to overcome.

"To us, that is not a big area to overcome," she says. "But what is if the Band Council was going to stand in the way of the Confederacy striking an agreement with Samsung on their own. We think we are close to an agreement with Samsung, however, Band Council administering Confederacy funds is a sticking point."

Capital Power is another kettle of fish, according to Hill.

Following the rolling protests of a couple of weeks ago, Capital Power sought and was granted an injunction to stop future protests at their sites.

"Capital Power has been operating in less than good faith," says Hill. "We have our position and they have theirs, but the Chiefs council supports a mediated resolution and Capital has shown a willingness to be a part of a mediated pro-

cess as well. But we also spoke clearly about Haudenosaunee law to be respected. Yet they have ignored a cease and desist order from the Confederacy. It is the responsibility of our people to ensure it is being respected. By Haudenosaunee Law, we are obligated to shut down that project."

The Chiefs gave the HDI a timeline to continue to find an avenue of respectful communication with Capital.

"We need to demonstrate something very quickly and effectively to show if this mediation process is going to work," Hill says. "Otherwise we will put it out to the people that the mediation has failed and that we have to move back to respecting and upholding our own law."

What she means in plainer English is that there may be on-the-ground direct action called for by the Confederacy similar to the rolling set of protests that recently shut a number of Capital Power sites down.

Regarding the NextEra project, Hill treads a little softer. NextEra was also visited by the rolling protest, however, that visit was not

to shut them down as much as to deliver a message that Six Nations was not happy with their decision to remove an active Bald Eagle nest to make room for their project and that they did so without consultation with the HDI or the Confederacy Council directly.

According to Hill, NextEra has been in meaningful consultation with the HDI and continues to do so.

The deal being looked for over the next 20 years includes land, financial benefit to the Confederacy, but also a treaty style lease arrangement.

This lease arrangement with NextEra as well as others will not affect third party people currently living and farming on the land, but is rather more of a use of the land agreement with the Energy company itself.

The Confederacy's position regarding the Band Council negotiating lands or



HDI Director Hazel Hill

even usage agreements on behalf of Six Nations is that they have signed no treaties and therefore have no right to interfere and undermined them in any fashion.

There are also smaller companies and farmers the HDI are engaged with at this time not only on the Haldimand Tract but within the Nanfan Treaty lands as well.