

PEACEMAKING PROPOSAL TO WAHTA COMMUNITY MEMBERS

JUNE 2016

CONFLICT OR PEACE

Oral tradition states that over a 1000 years ago our Haudenosaunee people were divided and warring amongst ourselves when the Peacemaker and Hiawatha brought the Great Law of Peace. With the Great Law we were able to establish peace amongst ourselves for hundreds of years before the arrival of the settler population. Since then, despite the continuation of our confederacy, we have struggled to maintain peace between and within our territories. The disruption of the peace has been attributed to the interference created by the ways of the settler population. However, some amongst us believe, as our prophecies foretold, that the great peace will reign again amongst us. The Great Peacemaker has been called upon to return to help us and many believe that the Peacemaker has returned and is now within or amongst us. Is this possibly true? It is the belief of many First Peoples that we are currently in the healing time that has been prophesized within all of our teachings. If this is true is the conflict that currently divides our communities a replication of the experiences that preceded the Great Peace? At the least we know that as Haudenosaunee people we have been given a gift that enabled us to create peace amongst ourselves that we sustained for hundreds of years. We also know that that knowledge remains amongst/within us. So the questions we now face may be the same questions that our ancestors faced many generations ago. Have we had enough of the pain and hurt that we have caused to each other by fighting amongst ourselves? Have we had enough of weakening ourselves by fighting amongst ourselves and reducing our true capacity? The major advantage that we have today over that of our ancestors is that they showed us the ways of peace for hundreds of years and demonstrated to us and the world that lasting and profound peace is possible. So do we have it within us today to reawaken this sacred knowledge and recreate the Great Peace again? This is the challenge that faces all of our First Peoples communities at this time. Our prophecies say that during the time of healing we will return to our ways of being in the world and that if the settler population accepts the wisdom of our ways then there will be a prolonged and lasting peace on Turtle Island. However, the settler population will not be able to discover the wisdom of our ways if we are not able to live these ways of peace.

Kevin Ka'nahsohon Deer and Ed Wabenung benasi kabe tweetung Connors are offering to assist your people to explore the future visions of peace that your community longs for and the actions that you believe will be necessary to achieve this vision.

DETERMINING COMMUNITY INTEREEST

As a starting point we have spoken by telephone with the following community members in order to explain our offer and to determine if they would be willing to engage in this process.

Karen Commandant
 Ryan Decaire
 Grace Franks
 Phillip Franks
 Teresa Greasley
 Bill Hay
 Shirley Hay
 Carol Holmes
 Stewart Lane
 Terry Sahnatien
 Danny Stock
 Davey Stock
 Tim Thompson

All of the community members that we spoke with indicated that they wished to resolve the conflict within your community in order to create a peaceful community. Only two of the people we spoke with were unwilling to participate in our proposed peacemaking process. We believe that there is sufficient interest and motivation to engage your community in our proposed process.

Based on our initial contact with your community members we identified five separate interest groups. In addition to Chief and Council we identified four other groups. Wahta Fire, Wahta Long House, United Church Elders, and Wahta Youth. The people we have spoken with have been recognized for their leadership within each of the above groups. We have asked these individuals to share what we have spoken of with the members of their group. We have also asked them to invite their members to participate in our Peacemaking process.

THE PROCESS

It is our intention to meet separately with each group in order 1) to gather their vision of their peaceful community; 2) identify the issues that are at the heart of the points of conflict and 3) state the actions that will enable them to achieve their vision. Our process will enable each group to prioritize the points from each of the above areas.

Once we have completed the above phase we will then bring the five groups together in a cultural event that will allow them to interact in a nonthreatening and peaceful manner. These events are intended to build the common spiritual foundation that your community can build on in order to achieve a common vision of your peaceful community.

In our third phase we will bring the five groups together in a process that will enable them to debate the pros and cons of the top 5 points from each groups vision, conflicts and actions. For each point selected for debate the members of the five groups will be asked to choose the pro or con side of each point that is debated. Each point will be debated until consensus is reached on each point.

The end result of this process will be 1) community wide agreed elements that make-up your peaceful community, 2) the points of conflict and 3) the actions that need to be taken to resolve the conflict and create peace. These agreed to points will then serve as direction for community and chief and council to proceed with creating, developing and maintaining peace within your community. This process will then be used repeatedly in order to vision, identify conflict and to develop the actions to create peace within your community.

TIME AND COSTS

We are not sure how long this process will take as we will commit to following through with each step until each step is complete. Completion of each task will be the determining factor as opposed to time. As a result it is not possible for us to quote the full cost of this process. We anticipate that the full process will occur over a two year period.

Dr. Connors charge will be set at his lowest hourly fee which is \$150.00 per hour.

Kevin Deer will also bill at \$150.00 per hour.

Kevin will also bill \$800.00 per visit to cover travel expenses, travel time, accommodation and meals from Kahnawake to Wahta.

During the preparation phase Dr. Connors completed 14 hours of work. Equivalent of \$2,100.00 of work.

Kevin Deer completed 8 hours of work during this phase. Equivalent of \$1,200.00 of work.

Since the Chief and Council and community have not accepted our proposal we will not initiate our billing until there is an agreement from Council and the Wahta community to begin this work. Our work to date has been without cost to your community.

Ed and Kevin will each submit itemized billings as each phase of the process is completed. In order to be transparent in all phases of this work our itemized billings will be available to all band members throughout the process.

COMMUNITY FORUM

If council accepts this proposal we will initiate our work by conducting an open community information session during which we will meet and greet all community members who would like to meet us, learn more about our proposal pose questions and present concerns. If at this point our proposal receives general acceptance from the Wahta community we will commence the process.

We recommend that in the interest of transparency that this document in its complete state be published in the community newsletter and on the Wahta website along with the invitation to the community information forum. If at any time during this process the community should decide to discontinue this work we will listen to the concerns and create a procedure that will enable us to reach a consensus on how the community as a whole wishes to proceed.

We believe that Wahta is well positioned to create a peaceful, united and sustainable community that can demonstrate again the power of our Haudensasaune way of being on Turtle Island.

We look forward to receive your questions, comments and response to our proposal.

Aiawens tiohtkon skennen akenha:ke
Hoping peace will always prevail

Ka'nahsohon
Kevin Deer

Wabenung benasi kabee tweetung
Ed Connors