

Neopit Community Meeting
March 4, 2003 - 5:00 p.m.
Neopit Community Building

1. Neopit Community Committee Chairman Gary Besaw called the meeting to order at 5:09 p.m.

Legislators present: Anthony Waupochick, Laurie Reiter and Laurie Boivin.

Community members present: Shirley Peters, Barbara Reiter, Debra McPherson, Roger McPherson and June Miller.

Gary Besaw informed the people present that there wasn't an agenda for the meeting and that the Legislators were present to listen to any concerns they may have. Gary let the people know that there was only one item that they were asked to address which was the issue of releasing imported beetles.

Gary stated that Doug Cox from Environment Services is working with the Menominee County Land Conservation office to eradicate the plant species known as Purple Loosestrife which is threatening the ecology of the waters on the reservation. The proposed solution is the use of beetles that are imported from Europe, which is where the plant is native from.

Some community members were totally against placing the beetles here. Some community members expressed concerns on how a couple of years ago, lady bugs were released and how they were really bothersome to everyone's homes.

Community members wanted to know why Doug Cox wasn't present to answer questions. Gary informed everyone that Doug Cox was at the Keshena meeting and the next night will be at the South Branch community meeting. Here are some the questions/concerns that were brought up;

- o How far can the beetles fly?
- o Will they just die off? If yes, how long will it take?
- o How soon is the project going to start and when will the beetles be released?
- o Is this the only option?
- o Did Environmental Services study what happened in the other places where the beetles were used?
- o Where exactly will the beetles be placed?
- o Will houses and businesses become infested like it did with the lady bugs?

Community members would like answers to the questions raised. Gary suggested that maybe the legislators who write the Chairman's Notes in the Menominee Nation News can write something to keep the community informed.

Gary Besaw opened the floor for any concerns.

June Miller wanted to thank the legislators for actually listening and following up with the concerns brought forth in the community meetings.

- o Is something going to be done about the Tribal Courts? June stated that getting the Tribal Courts to do anything is next to impossible. June stated that when she has to go to Shawano Courts with a bounced check from her store, they get working on it right away. June stated that when she takes them to

Tribal Courts, sometimes they don't even get back to her. Laurie Reiter agreed with June because Laurie has the same trouble with her store and bounced checks. Both stated that it's against the law to write bad checks and the courts should do something about it.

- Is it possible to develop an Ad Hoc committee to discuss court issues? Legislators present stated that don't think that it could be done because of the separation of powers between the Tribe and the courts.
- Community members would like to be more informed on what is going on with the Tribe and the Gaming Compacts.
- People on the outside need to be more informed. June stated that there are a lot of misconceptions out there especially with the Non-Indians and gaming money. Maybe something could be put in the Shawano paper letting everyone know what all exactly gaming money funds.
- Is the Kenosha Casino Project Dead? Gary stated that so far the Potawatomi is the only Wisconsin tribe to have a signed gaming compact. In their compact there is a clause stating the Governor (state) cannot allow another gaming facility to open within a 50 mile radius to the gaming establishment they currently have in Milwaukee. If the state allows another gaming facility to open within that 50 miles, the state will have to pay back the 90 million the Potawatomi will pay to the state. Kenosha is only about 35 miles from Milwaukee so right now the tribe has to regroup and see what the options are. Gary stated that the compacts all have to go to the BIA for review also.

Committee went into lengthy discussion regarding Tribal School.

Deb and Roger McPherson were present and were very upset about what happened to their son. Roger explained that apparently his son was involved in a fight with another child in the field at Tribal School. The fight wasn't in the building and wasn't during school hours. Roger stated that Dr. Powless brought the issue to the Labor, Education, and Training committee and there was a motion there to ban the McPherson boy from the school for the remainder of the school year. The motion was sent to the Legislature and was concurred with stating for the remainder of the school year. A letter was sent to the McPherson's stating the child was banned for one year which would be until February 2004. Deb McPherson was concerned that the mother of the other child is pushing everyone like the courts, tribal school and the Legislature to do something more specifically the Legislature because she works for the Chairman's Office. The Legislatures present assured the McPherson's that nothing is being "pushed" through because of any employee and that they were unaware that the other boy was her son.

The McPherson's would like some questions answered.

- Why is Dr. Powless on the committee if she isn't an enrolled Menominee? Roger stated that there is something in the Tribal Constitution that says you must be at least ¼ Menominee to sit on any committee.
- Why did Dr. Powless vote on the motion when the issue directly pertained to her department?
- Why weren't the McPherson's notified telling them there was a meeting to discuss his child being banned? Roger stated that it wasn't fair that he wasn't present to tell his side of the story. Roger stated that all the committee heard was the other side. Tony Waupoichick stated that Dr. Powless brought the issue to the committee and neither parents were asked to be at the meeting. The committee never heard from the other parents either.
- Why does the motion state for the "remainder of the school year" and the

- letter from Dr. Powless states "banned for one year?"
- o Who gives Dr. Powless the authority to change a Legislative Directive?

Committee stated that Dr. Powless should have never voted on the issue and that the committee should have directed Dr. Powless to seek a restraining order.

Gary asked Roger what he would like done about the issue? Roger stated that he wants Dr. Powless investigated and would like answers to the questions he has asked. Gary stated that the issue will be looked at. Roger also stated that the he would like the Dean of Students at Tribal School looked at because he isn't state certified. Roger stated that he would like the issue taken care of soon because he has some other issues about Tribal School he needs to bring forward but wants this issue to be taken care of first. No one else had any other issues.

Meeting adjourned at 7:20 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted by
Legislative Staff Services