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Mohawk Council of Kanesatake

Office of the Grand Chief

April 20, 2021

Council's vision for policing in Kanesatake

Shé:kon,

The list of priorities for our community is very long, but the fact is that many of the priorities that we have cannot be properly implemented without the existence of an indigenous policing service in Kanesatake.

The truth is that the SQ cannot deliver proper security to our members or help us build long-lasting stability, as it is too often caught in political minefields with our community. We have many accounts of illegal dumping, some of our members, our children and our elders experience now and then various acts of violence, we have people grabbing land and cutting our pines without Council or community approval, we have high speed races on the territory, gunshots and so on. There is no question that a police service is necessary if we are to ensure safety, stability and build a better future for our all people rather than just a few.

It is no secret that Council has been working to get our policing service back for many years now. Negotiating with the different levels of government. Finding the right balance in order to appease both the reservations of the Feds and Provincial governments as well as our people's is no small task. But the fact is that if our community is to prosper in the future, a policing service is paramount in order to protect our people and permit us to develop our community assets.

Acknowledging reservations towards a police service

It is also very important for Council to acknowledge and address the reservations that some members might have when we are talking about getting our policing back. We recognise that mistakes were made in the past in regards to policing and we have long pondered these mistakes in order to not repeat them, but rather learn from them.

A policing service in Kanesatake will have a mandate of protection, never one of repression. It will need to be completely credible, ethical and properly managed.

Management and implementation of a policing service

I believe everyone would agree that Kanesatake's former police force was less than perfect. It did however bring comfort to many people for a few years, and could have continued if only it had had a proper structure and safeguards in place that would have prevented political interference and corruption. Policing's main focus must be the protection of our people as well as the community's interests such as land use, land distribution as well as present and future economic investments.

Any future policing service will not be managed by any present or future Grand Chief or Council. The police commission itself will be managed by other Mohawks for the time being until the department is sufficiently stable



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and experienced to stand on its own. Council will approach our sister communities of Kahnawake, Akwesasne, Six Nation, Tyendinaga to see if they are open to the challenge of coming over here and lending us some people with policing experience in order to help us to get the security and stability that we need, and to build our policing service. It will be **police by the Mohawk, managed by Mohawks, for the protection of Mohawks.**

Additionally, we are looking at special accreditations from the Commission on Accreditation for Law Enforcement Agencies, Inc. (CALEA®) for our policing force, which would guarantee higher standards and oversight in all aspects of our organization.

Recently we've had many cases where the Child Protection Services of Quebec threatened to come over here and take children away from their mothers simply because they are poor, or are victims of acts of violence by their spouses. While we do have our first line services ... the fact is that it's just not enough. Any future social worker that we might employ for the protection of our children and our elders will need to have solid indigenous police service to help them.

We need to make this absolutely clear, a Kanesatake policing service will never be a tool of oppression, but rather one of protection.

Understanding the role of policing in the context of cannabis stores

Additionally, a policing service will not be put in place to shut-down any of the cannabis stores, at least, not until the community puts its own laws in place. Cannabis regulation must however be done in a credible fashion. The fact is that this industry is legal now, it is not going anywhere, and we do need to find our place in it, but we need to do it together, and we need to do it right. The community needs to be protected from outside influences within the industry, and the source of the product also needs to be protected in order to make sure that the product itself is safe and meets certain standards.

We need to do this together, as a community. We need to re-establish some much-needed balance, some form of respect, because often times, we are stuck in situations where we have to rely on outside agencies, when we can do these things ourselves in much better ways.

We're hoping community members will understand the bottomline as well as what's at stake : We need to protect our children, our elders, our land and environment, we need to protect infrastructures like our Youth Center, as well as current and future businesses and economic projects if we are to prosper.

We owe it to our children and our elders, our community as a whole and future generations.

In a spirit of peace and friendship

Grand Chief Serge Otsi Simon