



St. Regis Mohawk Tribe

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PRESS RELEASE

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St. Regis Mohawk Tribe Appoints Tribunal to Decide Land Disputes

New Land Dispute Ordinance Takes Effect

Akwesasne Territory – The new St. Regis Mohawk Land Dispute Resolution Ordinance went into effect on February 1, 2010. From now on, a Land Dispute Tribunal and the Tribal Court will be handling land disputes occurring within the Reservation.

In January, Tribal Council appointed Land Dispute Tribunal members after an independent selection committee reviewed candidates through a competitive process. The Legal Department, Tribal Clerk and Tribal Court staff provided a two-week training period to the appointees. The Tribunal members are: Paul Boots and Rowena General, five-year terms; Tsiorasa Barreiro and Minerva White, three-year terms, and Darlene Francis, appointed to a one-year term. Jamie White Porter, Jarrad Terrance, Steve Cook and Terrilee Ransom were appointed as alternates for five-year terms. Tribal Court Chief Judge Peter J. Herne administered the oath of office to all Tribunal members who were duly sworn in by on Thursday, January 28, 2010, at a small dinner ceremony held in the lobby of the Tribal Community Building.

The new Land Dispute ordinance will improve the management of land disputes. There will be a public notice of all land disputes filed, which will contain the names of the disputing parties and information about the particular parcel of property in dispute. This is to allow other community members who may have information or an interest in the disputed property to come forward. Each party to a dispute will also have the opportunity to examine all of the information provided by the opposing side. The Tribunal also has deadlines to hold hearings and make decisions. The cooperation of the parties to disputes will lead to quicker resolutions for everyone.

New or pending land disputes can be filed only on Wednesdays in the Tribal Clerk's office. Even if a dispute is pending, meaning Tribal Council has considered it but not yet made a decision, it must still be re-filed in the Tribal Clerk's office. The Clerk's staff will provide additional information necessary for Tribal members to file land dispute claims. The fee for filing new disputes before the Tribunal is \$100. Complaint Forms and the Land Dispute Resolution Ordinance are available in the Tribal Clerk's Office.

Finally, either party to a dispute has 30 days to appeal a Tribunal decision to Tribal Court. If there is no appeal, the Tribunal decision will be final and be adopted by the Court as such. Past Tribal Council decisions can be appealed to the Tribal Court, but only for decisions made *no more than ten (10) years* prior to February 1, 2010. In order to file an appeal to Tribal Court, a Notice of Appeal

Form must be filled out and filed at the Tribal Court, accompanied by the \$100 filing fee. The appeal forms are available at the Tribal Court.

If community members have questions, please contact the Tribal Clerk's office, the Tribe's Legal Department at 358-2272, or the Tribal Court at 358-6300. An informational mailer with more details will be sent out to all Tribal members the week of February 15th.

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The St. Regis Mohawk Tribal Council is the duly elected and federally recognized government of the St. Regis Mohawk People.

