



Tsi Nahò:ten Karihwanákere Nó:nen'k

PRESS RELEASE

Media Inquiries:

Joe Delaronde
Political Press Attaché
450- 632-7500 ext 63251
MCKMedia@mck.ca

Technical

Contact:

Grand Chief Joseph
Tokwiro Norton
joe.norton@mck.ca

Mohawk Council of Kahnawà:ke

Kahnawà:ke Mohawk
Territory
P.O. Box 720
J0L 1B0

Tel: (450) 632-7500
Fax: (450) 638-5958

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Community concerns to COVID-19 Task Force Directives

For immediate release

(Kahnawake – 4, Ohiarí:ha/June 2020) The Mohawk Council of Kahnawà:ke wishes to inform the community of ongoing discussions between the Council of Chiefs and Kahnawà:ke COVID-19 Task Force regarding community concerns on business reopening and non-local access directives.

The Council of Chiefs and the Kahnawà:ke COVID-19 Task Force met on June 2nd, 2020 to review and discuss concerns pertaining to the re-opening of business and access to the territory by non-locals. The discussion took place as a measure to address the strong community reaction to the directives that took effect on June 1st, 2020. In addition to updates on various activities and incidents experienced during the first day of business opening, there was discussion on the scope of the directives and community concerns and reactions.

Following the meeting, the Task Force issued a clarification that the directive for non-locals accessing the territory is intended solely for direct family members of Kahnawa'kehró:non. Regarding the business reopening directive, the Task Force confirmed that by the end of the week, there will be a thorough evaluation of the information in order to identify modifications, such as hours of operation, of the directive. These changes will be in accordance with the information and data being collected over the course of the first days of implementation.

"While the Task Force has been given full and necessary authority to mitigate impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic, it is a non-political entity," stated Grand Chief Joseph Tokwiro Norton. "They are concerned first and foremost with the health and safety of the community, and with proceeding in a way that is based on science and evidence. However, as the elected leaders of the community, the Council of Chiefs also must consider the community responses and reactions to changes of directives which will impact their daily realities. The Council and the Task Force must collaborate to ensure this is done in a balanced manner, and today was a good reminder of the importance of that."

"Council Chiefs have been receiving calls continuously from community members on the measures and directives in place since the pandemic began," the grand Chief added. "Many of us hear directly from concerned parents, grandparents, elders, organizational leaders and business owners on a daily basis. We want to assure the community that we continue to remain available to hear your concerns and will do our utmost to ensure that all community interests are protected, defended and balanced with community needs".

The Council of Chiefs will be holding further discussion with the Task Force regarding the scope and conditions of business reopening during the evaluation process later in the week.