

End of Enrolment Community Sessions

Flat Bay Report

General Information

The Flat Bay Community Session occurred on February 13, 2017. It is estimated that 60 people were in attendance and the session lasted approximately 2.5 hours. The representatives for QFN and the FNI were as follows;

- Chief/President Mitchell
- Councillor/Director Bennett
- Elder Odelle Pike
- Howard Thistle, NIHB Navigator
- Alison White, Communication Officer
- Randy Drover, Band Manager

Member/Applicant Question Period

The following issues and concerns were raised by members/applicants:

1. Members have come to depend on the NIHB benefits. These members will find it very difficult in 2018 if they lose their status.
2. The enrolment process is hurting the community and is causing conflict in families.
3. What confidence can people have in this process? Members received a letter confirming their status before Band creation in September 2011. They believed those letters were final and binding, yet this doesn't seem to be the case. How can people trust the letters they are receiving this month?
4. Founding Members should be able to relocate without having to worry about residency.
5. It appears FNI members are not receiving points when being assessed for group acceptance. Several stories were shared by those in attendance. Several people indicated they were long standing members of the Flat Bay Band, and hence the FNI, but did not receive any points by the Enrolment Committee.
6. It appears FNI members are being denied based on self-ID.
7. Too many people are hurting in the community. This makes it difficult for those who are retaining status. It is creating divisions.
8. Many felt the Enrolment Committee made errors and did not consider the evidence that was submitted.
9. There was great frustration with the directive regarding Marine Atlantic and Port-au-Basque. People could not understand the logic behind dismissing evidence from Marine Atlantic to show a connection with the community. Marine Atlantic is an extension of the TCH in NL. The Enrolment Committee should have reasoned, on the balance of

probabilities, that the applicant was not staying in Port-au-Basque, but rather that he/she was going to his/her community (i.e. Flat Bay).

10. There was too much focus placed on where you were – not where you are.
11. It is terrible that students and people in the RCMP and the military were not given special consideration regarding residency. Students are not living away from home. They are very much connected and only staying around the post-secondary establishment to complete their education.
12. The points system is hugely flawed.
13. There are far too many anomalies being noted for members/applicants to have any sense of trust or confidence in the process.
14. Given what has been seen with the Enrolment Committee decision letters, people were very concerned about the appeals process. They questioned if it would be done fairly.
15. People need help with the appeals. There are not enough resources in the community to help people understand or take advantage of the appeals process. The five Enrolment Assistants is not enough. People need help writing appeals.
16. A member/applicant reported that five applications for his/her children were apparently lost. He/she submitted the applications but INAC has no record.
17. The Supplemental Agreement was not ratified or communicated to the people properly. While there was some disagreement with the AIP, most FNI members who voted supported it, so it must be accepted. The Supplemental Agreement, however, was approved in secret by the FNI Board and was not brought to the membership. This is wrong, and will likely be legally challenged.
18. The question of 'self-ID' is silly. People didn't go around with a sign on their chest indicating they were Mi'kmaq. They didn't need to. In many cases your Family name was sufficient.
19. Many of our communities encouraged education, and this meant children needed to leave. Now these children are being penalized through the enrolment process.
20. Our people, whether living in an annex B community or not, are connected despite what framework they are assessed against under the Agreements. They remain connected to the land and the people at home.
21. This is a crisis and it's tearing up our communities. Chief and Council must fight – legally and politically – to set things right.