

# Teme-Augama Anishnabai



HONOURING THE PAST, PRESENT, AND FUTURE



## Honouring the Present

### Draft Citizenship Law Engagement Session March 18, 2023

*Aanike- Ogimaa John Turner*

In the afternoon of March 18, following that morning's Teme-Augama Anishnabai Assembly, Citizenship Committee Chairperson Dwayne Becker opened the 2<sup>nd</sup> Citizenship Law Engagement Session on Bear Island with a welcoming and brief update on the Draft Law, the currently scheduled engagement sessions and the opportunities for smaller groups sessions where people may participate in forums they may find better suit them. Chairperson Becker then called on Aanike-Ogimaa John Turner to present the report of the citizen feedback to date in the Draft Citizenship Law Process.

Aanike-Ogimaa Turner presented dozens of comments and suggestions that were expressed at the February session and that had been received since. Also presented were feedback from our lawyer, Bruce McIvor, that mostly concerned the form of the text, proper capitalizations, generally concerning terms defined, or that ought to be defined in the draft.

The very title of the draft had brought comment at the last session, and these were discussed further. The terms "Citizenship", "Law" and "Tribal" were considered more deeply, as was the use of Anishinaabemowin for the title, "Inaakonigewin Kidibendaagwozimin" which had been obtained from fluent speaker Alex Mathias.

It seemed clear that people generally agreed with the suggestion to remove all references to "outside authorities" from the opening recitals, such as references to court cases and the United Nations etc. so that the document is more clearly an expression of our own sovereignty.

There was discussion around the term "Direct Bloodline Descendant" as being perhaps too broad a notion and not a good term in-itself. This led to some interesting discussion on alternative criteria for citizenship tied rather to somehow to the land and community or odoodem (clan).

Some provisions of the draft included stipulations derived from Assembly convention, such as an individual citizenship issue coming to the Assembly floor. The sentiment today was that this practise would best be dealt with at the Citizenship Officer and Council levels with a proper Citizenship Law and processes in place.

The issue of dual citizenship (understandably an ill-fitting term) is always of concern. Some serious and thoughtful approaches considering how this may be resolved were shared. The text of the 1987 Assembly Resolution was discussed in how it recorded all recognized citizens as of the date it was adopted, and the process it established for members of Bands, (presumably other than Temagami First Nation, -perhaps today add Inuit and Metis-) to deregister from that Band within a certain period of time to become a citizen of the Teme-Augama Anishnabai. The notion of different "levels" of citizenship were discussed as an approach to resolve the issue; for example, a Teme-Augama relative who is a member of a Metis, Inuit or other First Nation may have their aboriginal rights of hunting, fishing and gathering recognized, perhaps their right to reside in the community, and address assemblies in a non-voting capacity without having access to Band programming. This discussion did seem to suggest that there may be a sensible resolution to this question that could garner broad support.

## Honouring the Present– March 18 Citizenship Law Engagement Session *cont'd*

The work on the Draft Citizenship Law will continue; a new draft will be developed that will begin to incorporate and track proposed changes, deletions and additions going forward.

The Draft can be viewed here:

<https://temagamifirstnation.ca/negotiations/>

If you would like to submit your ideas to the effort, please contact:

Email: [citizenship@temagamifirstnation.ca](mailto:citizenship@temagamifirstnation.ca)

Post: Teme-Augama Anishnabai Citizenship  
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*Below, Going to the Fall Assembly: Elizabeth (Lizzie) McKenzie Paige and Annie Potts Leduc, Teme-Augama Anishnabai Elders who were “non-status Indians”, by Canada’s rules.*



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# Teme-Augama Anishnabai

HONOURING THE PAST, PRESENT, AND FUTURE

## Teme-Augama Anishnabai Biboon Assembly

March 18, 2023

*Aanike- Ogimaa John Turner*

*On March 18, Timiigamiing Anishinaabeg gathered at the Minowaabandan gamiing Maawanjihidiwining for their annual Teme-Augama Anishnabai Biboon (Winter) Assembly.*

After a light breakfast in the hall, the Assembly open with a prayer in the language and Paula Potts shared a song on the drum. The seating was arranged in a circle, and included a large screen and camera for those citizens who chose to attend the Assembly via Zoom.

Ogimaa Leanna Farr offered a welcoming and opening remarks, giving an update on the work of the evolving Citizenship Law, and expressing appreciation at the significant level and scope of feedback received at and since the first engagement session held on Bear Island the previous month. Already, the developing law had seen a hands-on, community driven approach that is really unprecedented in terms of constructing a Principle Document of our own on this scale.

Ogimaa Farr shared that it would be wise for the Teme-Augama Anishnabai to have a ratification/ referendum process for making important decisions where we desire a broader expression of the views that citizens hold on significant issues, such as concerning potential IBAs, Land settlements and constitutional matters for example. It would be reasonable to want to have a higher level of agreement on such matters rather than have such important decisions made only by those citizens that are able to be in attendance at an Assembly on a particular day.

We are considering such a process for citizens to contemplate the Citizenship Law upon its final draft form, one where citizens may participate more easily through providing them access to mail-in and/or online ballots and advance polls in addition to the regular poll. Teme-Augama Anishnabai Councilor Mary Laronde and her brother, Citizen David Laronde, who managed ratification of the Land Code for Temagami First Nation, will be presenting a process for consideration that may be utilized for the Citizenship Law.

David and Mary presented and shared a ratification process to be considered for the potential adoption of the Citizenship Law. The process for ratifications and referendums has largely become standardized to a degree among many First Nations with the assistance of “One Feather”, a business that has served these specific needs of First Nations, including their elections also.



*David Laronde presenting*



Temagami First nation contracted One Feather previously to administer the vote on the Draft Land Code. In the few years since then, One Feather has administered hundreds of such processes for First Nations and has continued to upgrade their services and fortified the security of their systems.

With many Bands, certain votes, due to their own rules, relevant court decisions, or government conditions require that certain participation thresholds and support levels to be achieved for such decisions to be deemed legitimate and duly made. Although in the case of the Teme-Augama Anishnabai, even though we are not a part of the colonial legal machinery in this regard, it would certainly still be a wise and good practice to ensure that we respect and recognize what a greater portion of our citizens have to say on these important matters, and that this be done in a way that exceeds international democratic standards.



Accordingly, the process shared with the assembly included provisions for a reasonable period of time allotted for the preparation of documents, ballots and process information to be shared, considered, and returned, how citizens may also choose to have their voice acknowledged by voting online or at advance polls. Also, there were provisions included for potential appeals.



The process presented was quite thorough and has now been shown by One Feather to be very effective with a very high percentage of success, with upheld appeals at less than 1%. However, Ogimaa Farr acknowledged that this cutting edge process was still new to us, and recognized that it would best require more time to review. With that, Ogimaa Farr stated that the ratification process would not be brought to the floor for adoption at this Assembly and that more engagement would be carried out on the process in the coming weeks and months.

This month's events:

*Wednesday, April 5*– Elder's Engagement 10am– 4pm  
Native People of Nipissing Housing,  
120 Massey Dr. North Bay– Common Room

*Monday, April 17*– Youth Engagement Dinner 4-7pm  
North Bay Indigenous Friendship Centre,  
980 Cassells St., North Bay

*Saturday, April 22*– All ages Engagement 10:30am–  
5:30pm North Bay Indigenous Friendship  
Centre, 980 Cassells St., North Bay

*-See flyers in this issue for details.*



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