



Listuguj
MI'GMAQ GOVERNMENT

Nnuimtmō'taqan Agnutas'g Listugujg: Interview with Councillor Marsha Vicaire

November 22nd, Listuguj, QC – This is the transcript from a video interview with Councillor Marsha Vicaire that was published on our YouTube channel, ListugujMigmaqGov. This is the fourth interview for our segment, Nnuimtmō'taqan Agnutas'g Listugujg.

Transcript:

H: Hilary Barnaby

C: Councillor Marsha Vicaire

H: Me' taloltioq, Listugujewaḡ. Ni'n teluis Hilary Barnaby. Hi everyone. My name is Hilary Barnaby. I'm the Communications Officer for the Listuguj Mi'gmaq Government. Thank you for tuning in to this episode Nnuimtmō'taqan Agnutas'g Listugujg. Today, I'm joined by Councillor Marsha Vicaire. Me' talein?

C: Welei. Pas'g getu'igantluei wela'lioq ta'n telpipanimioq ugjit jugu'wen nige' gisgug aqq mi'watm nige' ta'n telagnutmaigw gisgug nige' ula tett.

H: Thank you. First of all, I would like to congratulate you on first being elected as Councillor. What have you taken from this experience so far?

C: O', pugwelg ta'qwei gi's genu'tmasi nige' pisgweto'siap. Amgwesewei getu'tluei – I think the biggest thing that I have learned is really the amount of decisions that need to be made in order to maintain the LMG, to maintain the day-to-day functions, I think. Before, perhaps, I had taken it for granted, but now it really has given me an insight into all the different decisions that are needed.

H: Thanks. Has your opinion of Chief and Council changed since being elected?

C: I think I've developed a new appreciation for Chief and Council. What I believe may have been rather easy or a little simpler in terms of making decisions, I think that may have changed. Now, I do understand that there's a lot of work that we do at the Council table in terms of reaching an agreement that everybody is comfortable with, you know, certainly for the best interest of our community.

H: Great. I understand you just came back from an engagement session for Canada's Indigenous Languages Act. Can you tell us a bit of what you learned there?

C: Yes. What is happening right now in Canada – across Canada – is there are a number of engagement sessions that are being held with First Nations, Inuit and Métis. The federal government proposed creating an indigenous legislation act in terms of protecting indigenous languages within Canada. This is actually happening rather quickly. It's set to be drafted within this month and then presented into the house. Following that, the timeline, I am told, is that it's going to become legislation by June 2019. I think that was something that they had stressed is that the timeline is really short, and it's to make sure that Indigenous languages are protected. My role in attending these engagement sessions was to understand how this legislation act is going to impact our community of Listuguj.

H: How are you providing political support to this initiative?

C: In terms of the legislation act? Before attending, I guess I'll give a little bit of a background just to contextualize it a little. In October of 2017, we were invited through Education to attend the pre-engagement sessions and because the language is a part of education that's how we received the invitation to attend. At that time, I made a presentation in my current role as the Curriculum Development Manager for the Listuguj Education, Training and Employment Directorate. So, I did attend just to provide information on the state of our language here within our community along with services and programs that are being provided within our community. That was my initial participation before I ran for political office. What had happened afterwards is that I wanted to have a clear indication of my role going into these engagement sessions. Was this going to be something that I'm applying as an employee, as a curriculum development manager, since I did that the first time or am I going on a political level? So, within one of our council meetings, I did receive council approval to go and speak as a Councillor on this initiative. It was very interesting because I think it's the first time that I've entered into this type of process as a political individual but it was very good. I think having and showing that the leadership is listening and is engaged in these processes is very important.

H: What is your opinion on the Code of Conduct?

C: I think the Code of Conduct generally is very important. The Code of Conduct here within our community provides – the way I perceive it – an ethical standard of how we need to conduct ourselves within our community and for the people that we service. Certainly for me, it's something that's very important. I try to make sure that I am respectful in all of my interactions with our community members, with any individual that I interact with on a daily basis. So for me, I'm always mindful of that. I think it's important as well because it also is, in highlights, the vision, the mission, our values as Listugujewaq and what we're striving to do for our community.

H: So we'll now be moving on to our community questions. The first community member asked, "How can we have more Mi'gmaq history and presence in the area?"

C: That's a very good question. I've always believed that language and culture are interconnected. I always felt that one cannot exist without the other so I think they're very

closely intertwined. I think that would be the will of our community, so it really needs to come from the people to determine the amount of presence that they want. Certainly, I think there are programs and initiatives out there that we can access in order to help that happen, but truly I think that has to come from our community members. It could be through voicing their concerns. Certainly, if I speak to the language and the amount of language used within our community, that has to come from our community members.

H: Great. Our next community question is, "How do you envision Mi'gmaq governance in Listuguj and in Gespegewa'gi?"

C: I think that's a very interesting question and certainly I can only speak for myself when I talk about this. Historically, you know, we've been within or operating within a structure that hasn't been truly ours, that it has been – maybe for lack of a better word – imposed upon us. Certainly for me, that's one of the ways of governance that I was raised knowing, so since a young age. I think though and I'm hopeful that in the future we'll be heading to a structure that embraces more of our Mi'gmaq values. When I say that, I think it would be one that's truly based on respect, one that values the teachings within our Mi'gmaq language, and also understanding – for instance, in the past – the role that each individual had and the gift that each individual had in terms of contributing to governance and leadership. I like to think that those are the three main ways that we as Listugujewa'q can embrace a new form of governance.

H: Thank you so much for taking the time to sit down with me today, Marsha. For everyone watching, if you have any questions that you would like asked in future episodes, please feel free to send a message to the Listuguj Mi'gmaq Government Facebook page. Thank you for tuning in to this episode of Nnuimtmo'taqan Agnutas'g Listugujg. The next one will be coming very soon. Wela'lioq.