

Timothy Michano-Election Platform Biigtigong Nishnaabeg
Election 2017

Vision Statement- Standing up/speaking/informing community
Community Participation and Engagement/Empowerment

***Note:** I will not follow current electoral platform guidelines; instead I will use an unorthodox approach to inform community members. It's my way on honoring our ancestor's. The current practice of doing imposed/forced election platforms is a Federal initiative. As a contender vying for a place as your council representative I will approach/advocate (for community members) community leadership to discuss (bring forth community input regarding changes to electoral guidelines and possible changes to these present colonial practices and request to have these practices sidelined or improve wording which will be better for all, and not so paternalistic or restricted from freedom and responsibilities. (Realistically, federal guidelines may prohibit extreme changes to community/leadership/election guidelines).

I am not a radical. After much thought and seesaw deliberation I have chosen the path of empowerment as my electoral platform.

My vision statement cover's a wide range of empowering subjects and language used (sometime language that benefits imperialist ideology's) by chosen/community leadership. Listed below are a few, if not common terms of what I experienced throughout my working life, education, and life lessons.

Becoming an effective leader requires the patience, ability, and will power to find balance in all areas of our lives (we have our own unique ways of finding that balance) it may be academic work, personal health, family, and an informed community. Maintaining this balance requires healthy leadership for a better community.

Some issues to address- Current agreements with local industry and government (ie: Barrick and Pukaskwa Park) need to be upgraded to protect community members of our community from loss of job. Illegal practice must stop. Families and children will have difficulty living a life that we all deserve. (A sense of financial freedom/independence). When one experiences loss-we all lose! The sense/feeling of empowerment goes out the 'back door and unhealthy social habits emerge.'

Off Reserve Community Members: Questions that I will ask and advocate on behalf of off reserve community members. I will post updates as time progresses as your elected representative.

- As an off reserve member I have retained a strong connection to Pic River as my home community. Pic River will always be home. I will share my reasons for leaving my home community and issues I faced as a ‘off reserve community member’ and ‘on reserve community member’ during candidates night.
- Is information easily accessible?
- Do we have the same right/place to voice their input or do they we difficulties with community leadership in terms of obtaining/allowing ‘time to speak at council meetings?’
- Are off reserve community members being discriminated against (in terms of same service) based on choice of residence?
- Do off reserve members have difficulty accessing both federal services provided on-reserve and provincial programs available to the general public?
- What can we do to address those challenges?
- What can we do for off reserve community to have same access to important information and decision-making?
- Off reserve members have knowledge to share for everyone.
- If off reserve members have more questions please address to me at 807-630-7597 or tpmichan@lakeheadu.ca

What is *community empowerment*? There are a multitude of meanings. The best one related to my election platform covers ‘*our traditional territory.*’ I’ve focus on this phrase because it doesn’t identify our community as Anishinaabe or self governing people. It is a colonial phrase imposed/forced upon us by a society with imperialist values. Their sole purpose being: to make as much money as they can and get the hell out of here! This has to stop. Stop stealing/robbing what is rightfully ours. Inclusion not exclusion!

What have I done to empower myself? I made a promise to my children unfortunately; due to tragic events they could not physically see me graduate from Lakehead University. I went to school for approximately six years to get and earned an Honor’s Degree in Political Science. I spent the first two years upgrading my skills to succeed academically! **Don’t ever say you**

can't do it! One of my greatest achievements (and I still work very hard at it) is communication. From the beginning of my academic process I've made life lasting friendships with my younger peers. I was finally accepted, they saw me as 'just another student' no longer 'the ole man.' I became involved with many committees such as, student success and retention committees, vice-president and finally president of Lakehead Native Student Association Union. I've encouraged new Anishinaabe students to become involved in Lakehead University's student orientation week. I attributed my hard earned success by becoming involved with as much students/faculty as possible. Never stop asking questions, an answer will follow!

Education- Get Involved and have your say (Parents need to get more involved including administration, educators, community and leaders. Our children need our family support)- I was the LUNSA representative on LU's 'Student, Success, and Retention Committee (with no voting right) I felt like the token Indian. Its not just LU, it is other PSE Institutions across Canada. I once did my own research on how many courses at LU had Indigenous content. I was astounded what I found. Out of all available courses there were only approximately a dozen courses out of a few hundred or more.

Fact- "Nearly two-thirds of *non-Aboriginal* adult Canadians—approximately 65 per cent—reported that they had attained a post-secondary education degree/credential or qualification compared to Aboriginal students. Only 48 per cent could declare a similar education."

Parents- become involved and encourage our young people to pursue their academic dreams and goals. Your (students) future depends on you to become independent in this economic competitive generation. Academic education results: in better paying jobs.

Housing- Inadequate Housing and or repair/maintenance in Pic River

- **Advocate for community members who have home/health issues related to mold!**
- **Is the responsibility of Pic River leadership/housing manager to address these serious health issues and make them a priority?**
- **Mold is a serious health issue in Pic River and should be first priority issue addressed by housing manager and leadership.**
- **I've heard from community members that no one cares or ignore all together.**
- Shelter is recognized as a *fundamental (having adequate suitable housing/shelter) prerequisite*(something required as a condition)

- “Adequate housing maintenance is essential to one’s sense of dignity, safety, inclusion and ability to contribute to the ‘well being’ of our community. Without appropriate housing/maintenance it is often not possible to get and keep employment, to recover from mental illness or other disabilities, to integrate into the community, to escape physical or emotional violence or to keep custody of children.”
- “The right to shelter, to have one’s own bed to sleep in, a roof over one’s head, a place where a person and necessary possessions are safe is a human/community. First Nation housing committee in Pic River??? Where are the housing committee reports? Transparency and accountability is a building foundation for trust in our community. A well-informed community is a healthy community!

Elders- It is important to remember that we must respect all Elders, even if we may not agree with their viewpoints on some things. **I will advocate for our Elders for a decrease in Ontario Hydro’s exorbitant rates.**

Remember, some day we too will be Elders. An Elder should be recognized for his or her efforts because they carry with them the wisdom, spirituality, culture, about life. The community, including Leadership will normally seek the advice and assistance of elders in various areas of traditional as well as contemporary (they are still here with us) issues. The generation before us are slowly preparing for their journey into the next life, as we to will someday. Pic River is slowly losing that generation, be they our parents, aunts, and uncles. Elders have earned the right to pass this knowledge on to others and they give freely advice and guidance on personal issues, as well as on issues affecting their communities.

The younger generation of today must learn the importance of ‘saving for retirement.’ They may not have the benefit of Indigenous rights as we’ve had today. I will seek (and advocate) the advice on behalf of today’s younger generation who may or did not have the time to ‘invest’: for personal reasons (having/the birth of their own children). We must seek their advice at the ‘table’ for their valuable insights.

***The biggest challenge- 100% community involvement, a goal in progress. Achievable, yes!**

- **Community-** they are more than just people of a geographical territory. They have strong bonds, they are sisters and brothers, aunts and uncles and grandparents. We are a collective and thrive to live

sustainability with our environment and respect, in the context of social values, identity, uniqueness, and responsibilities which all define our sense of community. In the end we all thrive for the same values: our independence, and reliance from state or government and to rid our community of chaos and discord to regain harmony and agreement.

- **Empowerment**-the process of becoming stronger, mentally healthier, and more confident, especially in controlling one's life and claiming one's rights
- **Informed**- having or showing knowledge of a particular subject and/or situation
- **Capacity**- the ability or power to do, experience, or understand something
- **Consent**- permission (issues to be discussed with leadership) for something to happen or agreement to do something. With constant community evaluation
- **Common Consent**- agreement of all (basic, simple)
- **Community Knowledge**- I attended a constitution information session a few years ago. Here's what I heard from community members during question time. (1) What is a constitution? (2) I don't understand or know what a constitution is? First of all, a constitution within our traditional territory is not 'the law of the land/Pic River traditional territory. I will keep community members fully informed on meaning of phrases and complicated words related to such jargon that is written in policies/information, thereby empowering community members. *During my time in University I struggled with complicated words/phrases and their meaning. I literally had to research several texts to finally understand its context and meaning!*

Community engagement is:

- "A dialogue focused on a particular topic that lays the groundwork for a shared sense of direction, resources and responsibilities"
- A long term effort to surface the communities' insights questions and

concerns about issues;

- A means of empowering citizens understand the issues confronting our community and seeking possible solutions.”

Community Engagement isn't:

- We have to agree on consensus with limited ‘bickering’ and finally get rid of that attitude of, “why should I care, nothing changes and I won't benefit from it?” These are not empowering attitudes! These are ideas engrained in our minds by a government whose goal was to eliminate our language, ceremonies, and us as an Anishinaabe people.

Land Claims

- This is my opinion about land claims. Land claims have been (and continues to be) a thorn in our side since confederation. I have a simple answer/opinion: Federal, provincial, and municipal governments stand to lose million's if not billion's of dollars in revenue from huge corporations willingly through statutes such as Ontario's Mining Act with soft regulations so these corporations can fast tracked to start extraction of renewable and non-renewable resources. Why would they want to settle land claims? Realistically, we are in for a longer battle. When land claims are finally settled we also stand to lose much more: in terms of territory/land base, our rights as indigenous peoples, education, medicine, our homes, *and we will still be under the power of the Minister! Having a constitution does not protect us from the government or leadership from expropriating the land we live on for ie: a right of way (to make a highway).*
- Comprehensive Land Claims-
- Specific Land Claims-
- Aboriginal Rights-
- Aboriginal Title-
- The Duty to Consult-
- Contemporary Colonialism-

During candidates night I will provide information to the above 5 subjects. And the nature and length of “why claims take so long to resolve.” We have to provide proof and research and present this

evidence before the courts to satisfy their (courts/governments) requirements.

- **Expropriation-** the action by the state or an authority of taking property from its owner for public use or benefit. "The decree or taking of land by legal authority provided for the expropriation of church land and buildings" the action of dispossessing someone of property.
- **Community Garden a time for real self-governance and independence-** this dream has always existed in my mind or conscious. It will be everyone's garden with community members doing the brunt of the work. Its time for this dream to come to fruition.
Facts: "These gardens have become increasingly common over the past two years. The trend continues towards community gardening and it's certainly going to be a regular occurrence in communities across northern Ontario. A garden is started for unique reasons: helping local food banks and teaching people gardening skills." (CBC News)
- "Remote First Nations communities throughout British Columbia will receive \$700,000 from the Heart and Stroke Foundation, through funding from the Provincial Health Services Authority, to grow community gardens - helping to provide fresh produce to those who would otherwise have limited access to these healthy foods."
- "This program will help to further integrate the gardens into communities by providing community engagement workshops and training. It will also provide food preservation training to ensure that healthy food is available year-round. It will also help some communities develop their gardens into small-scale agricultural businesses, helping to build the local economies. At the end of next year, communities will have the tools needed to continue the gardens on their own as part of a community agriculture food plan."
- "The 15 First Nations communities are located in remote areas of the province where access to fresh produce is often very limited. Having access to healthy, fresh vegetables and fruit are fundamental to preventing chronic illness and being able to live a healthy lifestyle."

Self-government- (We must define our own term for self-government and equal participation in decision making) I have borrowed the current federal government practise from their website. I have italicised and underlined written information indicating we are still under the influence of a foreign language. These are their guidelines we 'must' follow. "Agreements set out arrangements for Aboriginal groups to govern their internal affairs and assume greater responsibility and control over the decision making that affects their communities. Self-government agreements address: the structure and accountability of Aboriginal governments, their law-making powers, financial arrangements and their responsibilities for providing programs and services to their members. Self-government enables Aboriginal governments to work in 'partnership' with other governments and the private sector to promote economic development and improve social conditions." We must have equal decision making powers with less bureaucratic BS!

"Because Aboriginal groups have different needs, negotiations will not result in a single model of self-government. Self-government arrangements may take many forms based on the diverse historical, cultural, political and economic circumstances of the Aboriginal groups, regions and communities involved." (definition by...it could be government or researchers on behalf of government).

Comprehensive claims settlements also include self-government arrangements.

These are just some of the items I plan to address as your elected representative. Invite community members for their input into changing the length of time from 2 years to 4 years. As it stands now with federal bureaucratic guidelines it is a no win situation that only set us up for defeat. The 2-year timeline just isn't enough for chief and council to succeed!

Elected council should be given greater responsibility. Communication is a basic fundamental human right. Speaking should not be condoned as bad behaviour and not reprimanded in any way. Rebuking an official does not warrant dismissal or silenced.

If you have any questions (for clarity) do not hesitate to contact me at 807-630-7597 or tpmichan@lakeheadu.ca

On Election Day, I ask/seek your support as your Council representative- Timothy Michano.

“Doing our best with what’s available!”

For your reading pleasure

“Although expropriation (the taking of private property without the consent of the owner) is one of the most extreme uses of government power, Canadian governments have almost complete discretion over when they resort to it. Governments often justify this violation of their citizens’ common-law property rights as being necessary to carry out public purposes. But concepts so nebulous as necessity and public purpose provide no protection for landowners. Expropriations that serve private rather than public interests, and those that are unnecessary, have become commonplace. Expropriation is used as a convenient tool to reduce property acquisition costs for favoured industries. Legislation leaves citizens with little recourse against arbitrary, unfair, and unjustified expropriations.” (See Expropriation Act section 4 Part 1-Expropriation.”