



Saugeen First Nation #29

Background

In November 2022, an individual and an Ontario numbered company were charged with disturbing a registered archaeological site at 6 South Rankin Street, Southampton, under s. 48(1) of the *Ontario Heritage Act*. An additional charge was laid under s. 8(1) of the *Ontario Building Code* for demolishing a building without a permit. The charges were brought before the Ontario Court of Justice.

Following a number of discussions, in which counsel representing Saugeen First Nation participated, Justice of the Peace Michael Cuthbertson of the Ontario Court of Justice recently accepted a guilty plea from the numbered company. A joint submission – an agreement between both parties – about what the sentence should be is expected.

As part of the plea arrangement, the land located at 6 South Rankin Street was transferred, free of charge, to Saugeen First Nation.

On May 5th, 2026, formal court proceedings will take place for the sentencing of the numbered company. This sentencing would normally take place in the Ontario Court of Justice building. However, following discussion with Saugeen First Nation counsel, it was agreed that the formal sentencing proceeding should take place within Saugeen First Nation.

Plan for Events on May 5th, 2026

On April 15th, 2026, representatives from the Ontario Court of Justice, including Regional Senior Justice M. Edward Graham, Justice of the Peace Michael Cuthbertson, and members of the Ministry of the Attorney General's Indigenous Justice Division and local Court Services staff, met with Saugeen First Nation Chief Conrad Ritchie, as well as Saugeen First Nation Councillors and administrators. A plan of how the events on May 5th will unfold was discussed and agreed upon, as follows:

- 1. Sunrise Ceremony and Sacred Fire | 6am James Mason Recreation Centre**
[Open to Saugeen First Nation Community members, Saugeen First Nation Chief and Council, Justice of the Peace, counsel for the parties (Crown and Defendant), and Saugeen First Nation counsel]

6 Cameron Dr,
Southampton, Ontario NOH 2L0
519-797-2781 / sfn@saugeen.org

2. **Site Visit and Museum Attendance | 10am 6 South Rankin Street**

[For the counsel for the parties, Saugeen First Nation counsel, and the Justice of the Peace] The parties to the proceeding and the Court will visit the site at 6 South Rankin Street. They will then attend the Bruce County Museum to meet with an expert about the significance of the items found at the site.

3. **Ontario Court of Justice Sentencing Proceedings**

At approximately 1 pm, Justice of the Peace Michael Cuthbertson will preside over a formal sitting of the Ontario Court Justice at the James Mason Recreation Centre in Saugeen First Nation, to conduct the sentencing proceedings in this case. These proceedings will be open to the public, and members of Saugeen First Nation are welcome to attend.

Formal Court Proceedings:

The formal court proceedings are expected to follow the following order:

- **Elder Opening Remarks:** To begin the court proceedings, an Elder from Saugeen First Nation will provide opening remarks.
- **Statements from the Court and Parties:** The Justice of the Peace will then address the charges. The parties to proceeding – counsel representing the various sides, including Saugeen First Nation – will explain the resolution they have arrived at to the Court.
- **Victim and Community Impact Statements:** Statements from Chief Conrad Ritchie, and others, will be formally read into the court record explaining the impact of the offences.
 - Justice of the Peace Michael Cuthbertson has also indicated that members of the Saugeen First Nation community will be able to provide victim impact statements, orally or in writing, on May 5th. These will be added to the court record.
- **Decision of the Court, with Written Reasons to Follow:** Justice of the Peace Cuthbertson is expected to provide an oral decision about the outcome of the case on that day, May 5th, 2026. A written judgment is expected to be prepared and provided following this.

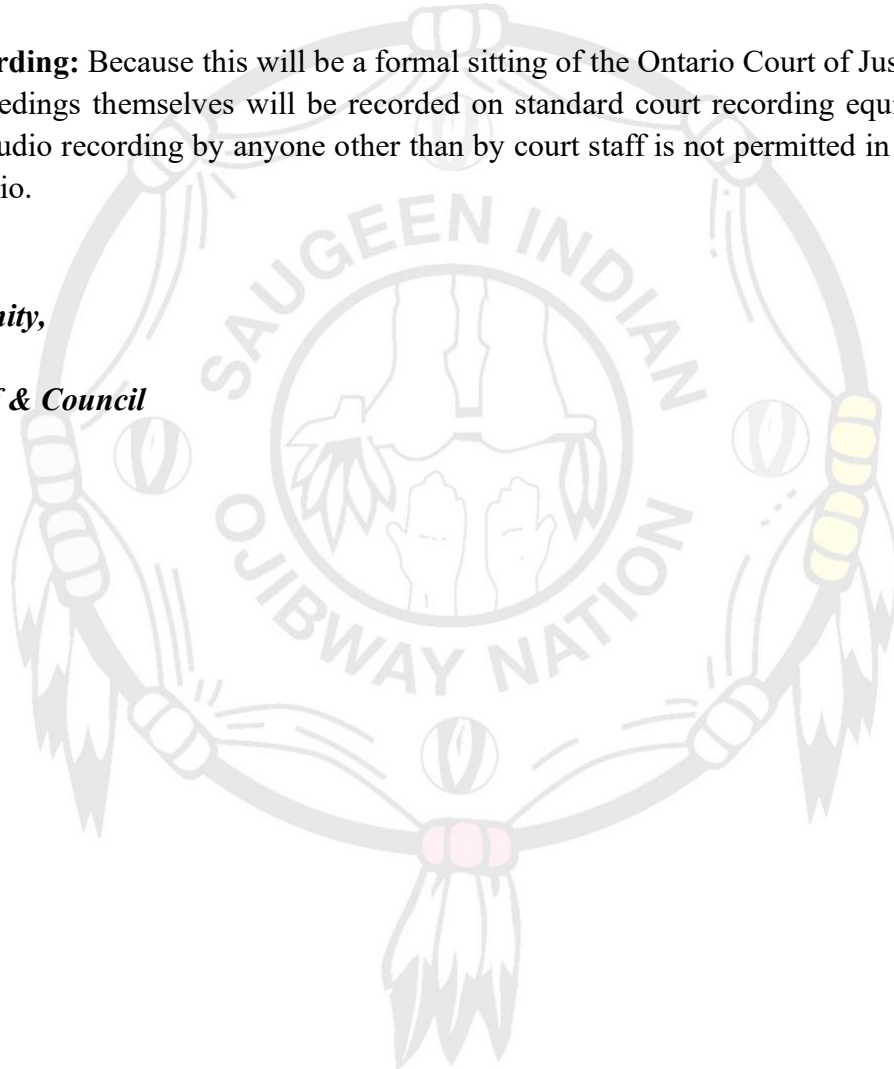
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Security: Because this will be a formal sitting of the Ontario Court of Justice, Saugeen First Nation has agreed that the same security requirements of the Ontario Court of Justice that apply to every courthouse in Ontario will be followed on May 5th. Saugeen First Nation has agreed to work with the Ontario Provincial Police to arrange for court security. A Saugeen First Nation Elder will be present to assist, provide guidance, and ensure the comfort of community members.

Recording: Because this will be a formal sitting of the Ontario Court of Justice, the proceedings themselves will be recorded on standard court recording equipment. Video and audio recording by anyone other than by court staff is not permitted in courtrooms in Ontario.

In Unity,

Chief & Council



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