

Training Tower Fund in memory of fallen firefighter Steve Gavin, who hose raced for Owego teams for 34 years before his passing in the fall of 2003. I commend the winners for this noble tribute in honor of a man who gave so much to his family and community.

On behalf of the entire 24th Congressional district, I congratulate the Owego teams for their achievements, and for their tireless service to the Owego community.

STEM CELL RESEARCH
ENHANCEMENT ACT OF 2005

HON. MARY BONO

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, July 19, 2006

Mrs. BONO. Mr. Speaker, I would like to commend Representatives CASTLE and DEGETTE for their tireless efforts on behalf of H.R. 810, the Stem Cell Research Enhancement Act of 2005. This important legislation provides much needed expansion of federal policy while implementing stricter ethical guidelines for this research.

I would be remiss in my commendation if I failed to mention the work of former first lady Nancy Reagan, who has been a true leader on this issue. I would like to reiterate a point made in one of her oft quoted statements on this issue, "We have lost so much time already. I just really can't bear to lose any more." Time is one commodity that we cannot create, we cannot stop and we cannot afford to waste. The American people have made clear their support for this research, and I am proud that Congress has acted. We have passed this critical stem cell legislation in both the House and the Senate. We are on the brink of moving forward in a scientific endeavor that has the potential to ease the pain and suffering of millions—to be stopped here is to deprive millions of hope.

While I commend President Bush for taking the initiative in 2001 to provide Federal funds for stem cell research, I am deeply disappointed with the decision to move ahead with this veto. Many human diseases arise from a defect in a single gene; muscular dystrophy, cystic fibrosis, and Huntington's disease, to name a few. Embryonic research provides an unparalleled opportunity to understand and perhaps correct some of the errors that result in these medical conditions.

My own State of California has already moved ahead by establishing the Institute for Regenerative Medicine, which will devote \$3 billion to embryonic stem cell over the next 10 years. As the people of California did, Congress now has the opportunity to permit embryonic stem cell research, which will allow scientists throughout the entire country to search for cures and to stay competitive with the rest of the world.

The President's veto today is not in line with the hope that he created in 2001. His leadership at that time opened a critical door to some of the most promising research of our generation, and embryonic stem cell research will enhance and advance that vision of progress. I will be voting to override this veto and I urge my colleagues to do the same.

BRIDGING YEARS OF TENSION

HON. WILLIAM D. DELAHUNT

OF MASSACHUSETTS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, July 19, 2006

Mr. DELAHUNT. Mr. Speaker, sometimes we get it right. When we do, it's worth celebrating.

Next week on Cape Cod, in my congressional district, leaders of the Wampanoag Tribal Council will sit down with officials of Mashpee, Massachusetts, to discuss the future of the town—together.

Just a few years ago, such a meeting would have been inconceivable. The chasm between the aspirations of the Wampanoags and the fears of other local residents resulted in a generation of ill will among neighbors. Today I take to the floor of the House of Representatives to salute the people—all the people—of the Town of Mashpee for finding the higher road.

As my colleagues may know, the federal Bureau of Indian Affairs recently granted preliminary approval to the Mashpee Wampanoag's petition for tribal designation. After a public comment period now underway, it is expected that the BIA will authorize full tribal status next spring.

This designation has national significance for the tribe that originally welcomed the Pilgrims to our shores. Closer to home, its anticipation could have salted old wounds. Instead, it has inspired new collaboration. When town and tribal representatives meet next week, it will affirm our collective respect for the quality of life that has long defined Cape Cod—weaving diversity with common purpose.

This is uncharted and perhaps challenging territory, but it is an opportunity that most communities never enjoy. It begins with the considerable financial benefits—for the Tribe, for the Town and our region—that accompany tribal status. However, the decision of the Town and the Tribe to embrace this opportunity will also yield a benefit less tangible but at least as valuable: a spirit of renewal as a community, in the name of all Mashpee residents and their families.

As the following newspaper editorial outlines, "Federal recognition . . . is not simply for tribal members . . . it's about Mashpee, and that can be good for all of us. It's hard to contemplate a firmer foundation for . . . the months and years ahead."

[From the CapeNews.net]

MASHPEE EDITORIAL: A MOST ENCOURAGING LETTER

Since March 31, when the Mashpee Wampanoag received initial recognition as a federal tribe, Mashpee selectmen have been eager to get talks underway to find out what full federal acknowledgment next year will mean for the wider community. As weeks passed without any tangible response from the tribe, selectmen became a little impatient and also a tad wary, asking why tribal council members seemed unwilling to talk. From the tribe's standpoint, the lack of response was more akin to: "What's the hurry? We've waited 30 years for federal recognition. Be patient, talks will happen in due time."

Then, on May 10, Town Counsel Patrick Costello had an initial discussion with William McDermott, an attorney for the tribe, at Mr. McDermott's West Roxbury office. A month passed before the next exchange.

On June 12, Mr. Costello wrote a letter to Mr. McDermott laying out seven topics the

selectmen want to discuss with the tribal council. Mr. Costello wrote: "I believe that, most, if not all, of these topics are typical subjects for discussion between federally recognized tribes and neighboring local government entities."

Perhaps so, but the dominant theme was land. What was the tribe going to do with its own land in Mashpee? What were its plans for acquiring additional land in town? What role would land claims play in acquisition?

Tribal council members have repeatedly said that there would be no return to the land suit days and that Mashpee property owners have nothing to fear from federal recognition. They have also promised that they would not bring casino gambling to Mashpee or anywhere else on Cape Cod. But selectmen believe they have a responsibility to get these two issues formalized. Town Manager Joyce Mason and the selectmen released Mr. Costello's letter and we published the full text June 16. This public airing took Mr. McDermott by surprise because he said it was his intention to keep the initial talks private.

What comes into play here is something that can add perhaps unintended tension: the very different standings of the town and the tribe. The Mashpee Wampanoag have both political and cultural leaders. They are a large extended family and a private corporation. Meetings of the tribal council are not open to non-tribal members. They don't have to make their every move public.

While selectmen can and do meet in executive session, the substance of those meetings is known in outline, whether it's litigation, for example, or a personnel issue. But outside of his carefully defined framework, selectmen are bound to conduct the town's business in public. As political leaders, they also have a vested interest in the public's knowing that they are acting responsibly in regard to the \$42 million town budget and the approximately \$5 billion worth of property in Mashpee. Releasing Mr. Costello's letter may not fit into the tribe's more private way of conducting business, but it lets Mashpee residents who are skeptical of unwritten agreements know that town officials are taking their fiduciary responsibilities seriously. If the tribe's delay in wanting to open talks raised concerns at town hall, these must have been somewhat alleviated Monday with the arrival of a letter from Mr. McDermott to Mr. Costello. At the selectmen's meeting Monday night, there was an almost palpable sense of relief at the most encouraging tone of Mr. McDermott's words on the tribe's behalf.

In response to the selectmen's seven topics for discussion, the tribe lists six of their own: affordable and stable housing; local public education; police and fire protection; healthcare; transportation infrastructure; and preservation and conservation of lands and waters.

The encouraging and positive tone is set in Mr. McDermott's first sentence. The six issues detailed in the letter are ones "the tribe believes are mutual objectives for the both the town and the tribe, and should be discussed when the two meet."

Mr. McDermott's second sentence gets to the nub of selectmen's concerns: "First, however, the tribe has asked me to reiterate, in response to Items 3 and 4 in your June 12 letter, the tribe's prior commitments that it will not conduct gaming activities in the Town of Mashpee or on Cape Cod, and that it will not make any claims to private lands or file suit asserting such a claim in connection with the tribe's efforts to acquire lands within the town."

The discussions, which can begin "any time during the week of July 24 that is convenient for the town," Mr. McDermott