Leisnoi Shareholder Group Seeks Board Recall

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Diana Gish/KMXT

After years of legal struggles and lengthy court battles some members of Leisnoi are hoping for a fresh start for the native village corporation.

In spite of being one of the largest land-holders on Kodiak, Leisnoi shareholders haven’t received corporate dividends for years. Some have expressed growing frustration with what they see as a lack of communication and accountability by the corporation board. Leisnoi keeps an office that sits empty in Anchorage and the headquarters is located in Arizona where some of the current board members live.

Jeff Chester is a former Leisnoi director and a spokesperson for a recently formed ad hoc shareholders group.

Chester resigned his position as board member in the wake of an action that sent shockwaves through the membership. Following a five year long lawsuit that pitted a group of shareholders against its leadership, the Leisnoi board of directors authorized an account sweep of eleven of the shareholders named in the suit. The sweep was intended to recoup enhanced legal fees for the corporation. The action came without warning and some of the affected shareholders were elders or disabled and on fixed incomes others had retirement accounts emptied. That action, while within legal bounds, seemed to be the last straw for some of the Leisnoi membership.

-- (Leisnoi 1 “The fact that … not a good way.”)

The newly formed shareholder’s group is calling for a special meeting with the intention of installing a new

board. Chester
said they’re currently taking steps in that direction.

-- (Leisnoi 2 “The group is
…call this meeting.”)

Some of the
current Leisnoi directors served during the corporation’s protracted legal
battle for land ownership. That 33-year old case finally ended this summer with
a Supreme Court ruling in the village corporation’s favor. That’s something Chester and the group he
represents wants to acknowledge.

The former
board member didn’t divulge the names of any of the prospective leaders, but he
said that the group has a very clear idea of the direction they’d like to see
the corporation take in the future.

-- (Leisnoi 3 “What
we’re currently … leaders of Leisnoi.”)

In order to
make sweeping changes to the Leisnoi leadership, the splinter group is now working
to gain a broad base of support for their campaign.

-- (Leisnoi 4 “We don’t have …
if we can.”)

Frank
Pagano is the president of the Leisnoi board, other directors include Carole
Pagano and Kane Wolf. Quint Wolf and Jay Baldwin were recently appointed to
fill the positions left vacant when Chester
and fellow board member Shannon Johnson resigned.