

## Assembly Rejects Stratman Request

Friday, 20 February 2009

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Erik Wander/KMXT

At the Kodiak Island Borough Assembly regular meeting Thursday evening, assembly members took up the issue of Kodiak rancher Omar Stratman's appeal for an Amicus Brief to the U.S. Supreme Court in his battle over land with a local Native group. Stratman's contesting of Leisnoi Incorporated's right to approximately 115,000 acres of land dates back to 1976, when the Native corporation received lands on Kodiak and Woody islands under the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act of 1971.

The depth of interest in the community to the issue was evident at the meeting, given the number of people who spoke to the assembly under the "citizens comments" portion of the meeting. Among those who spoke, was Iver Malutin, former President of the Afognak Native Corporation.

-- (Stratman  
1 58  
sec. "It  
really upsets me to see ... really interesting to hear.")

Stratman's son, Craig Stratman, also spoke at the meeting, saying the issue is not a Native versus non-Native one.

-- (Stratman  
2 52 sec. "I don't think it's my dad's ... over  
them and look at them.")

Mike Schneider, Stratman's attorney, disputed Malutin's claim of a Native, non-Native fight. He said the assembly should look at the facts of the case in making their decision whether or not to file a brief with the high court.

-- (Stratman  
3 58 sec. "There's a comment that ... 300  
Leisnoi shareholders.")

After a late executive session, during which the assembly consulted with borough attorney Matt Jamin, the assembly voted down the request. The drawn-out legal process has resulted in several court decisions and overturns since 1976, the most

recent coming in 2008, when the Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals decided in favor of Leisnoi.

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