

My name is Richard Squirrel. I have been a member of the Shawnee Tribe since birth, and became an enrolled citizen of the Shawnee Tribe shortly after the tribe received Federal recognition status in the early 2000's. My "late" father, James R. Squirrel, was the Shawnee tribe's initial chairman, and was recognized by the AARP in 2009, as being instrumental in the Shawnee Tribe becoming federally recognized.

I became interested in the Shawnee Mission while attending tribal Business Council meetings in late 2022. Often "hearing" brief, yet incomplete, stories and versions, of pursuit to acquire land in the Shawnee Mission, KS area. I became aware that most, if not all, Shawnee citizens were unaware of why the tribe was spending so much money in Kansas.

(700k - 1 Million range budgeted for 2024 alone from various sources)

After several B.C. meetings it became apparent that Chief Barnes was not interested in sharing information with Shawnee citizens. I became engaged and sought information from the Shawnee Mission staff, city officials at Fairway, KS., and other prominent Kansas tribal representatives with "History" at the Shawnee Mission. I began this effort initially for the sole purpose of informing Shawnee Citizens, and in some instances, I became aware Shawnee Tribe Business Council members were not aware of many details.

The following information is based upon my personal experiences involving the Shawnee Tribe B.C., Shawnee Tribe District Court, and "personal" involvement concerning the tribal government in general. I offer this testimony for use by The State of Kansas, for the purposes of making informed decisions regarding Kansas HB 2204. I am including recent Shawnee District Court decisions that exemplify "direction" of Shawnee Tribal law. Additionally, it should be noted that the Shawnee Tribe Constitution is amended with great regularity. This fact should be noted in the event Kansas officials are influenced by Shawnee Tribe officials with "promises" regarding future plans for the mission.

Many Shawnee citizens have stated that they are unaware of the future plans for the Shawnee Mission. Expressing that the Shawnee Tribe B.C. has Legislated the tribal government with the greatest amount of secrecy, non disclosure, and "conflict of interest". Exhibiting the most extreme amount of NON transparency.

In the past 2-3 years Chief Barnes and, or the Shawnee Tribe Business Council have:

1. Closed the Shawnee Tribe Cultural Center in Miami, OK. Indefinitely
2. Fired / Dismissed a "Shawnee Tribe Citizens" cultural committee, composed of qualified tribal citizens with anthropology & cultural backgrounds related to such matters.
3. Fired / Dismissed multiple Cultural preservation Representatives.
4. Utilized threatening methods to intimidate Shawnee Tribe citizens. As witnessed by many, during the August 2023 Shawnee B.C. meetings.
5. Defended Shawnee Tribal Government legal cases vs Shawnee Tribe citizens, By Invoking - "use of sovereign immunity" \*Shawnee Dist Crt case #CIVM-2023-00001  
The Shawnee District Court has ruled it has no jurisdiction over the tribe?  
Unless the Shawnee Tribe B.C. "expressly surrenders such to the court"

The results of such rulings have emboldened the Shawnee Tribe B.C. & Office of the Chief to operate with a great degree of impunity towards the Shawnee Citizens. Furthermore, these “rulings” & “amendments have essentially “weaponized” the Shawnee Tribe legal system with “favoritism” towards an Autocratic Shawnee Government further eroding the concept of “self determination”.

While I understand that the Loyal Shawnee Tribe once inhabited the Shawnee Mission site. History has recorded that many other tribes and indigenous peoples “did so, as well”. Including the Kaw. As a conscientious Shawnee tribal member & citizen, it is my belief that the best steward for the Shawnee Mission historic site is the State of Kansas, The Kansas State Historical Society, The City of Fairway KS. & The Shawnee Tribe, The Kaw Tribe, and “all” of the historic tribes and indigenous people to occupy the “Shawnee Mission story”. There should be additional funding, renewed direction & energy, along with a new appreciation for this historic Kansas gem.

Truthfully,

Richard I. Squirrel