

Nene Hutke Square Ground Governance Document

Purpose and Basic Beliefs of Nene Hutke Square Ground

The purpose of this exposition is to serve as a governance document for the benefit of the assembly and functionaries of our sacred, ceremonial Square Ground. In olden times, the Square was the center of a town with both political and sacred, civil and spiritual functions. However, as we all know, the town structure in the East completely disintegrated under the pressures of relocation and assimilation. Even in tribes which have achieved state or federal recognition, the Square, if they have one, no longer functions in a governmental capacity but is the focus of spiritual and ceremonial activity only.

Because of this, most tribes, recognized or not, separate the Square from the tribal administration. They also do this to avoid inevitable tensions between the spiritual, ceremonial, and medicine requirements of the Muskogee traditions and the political expedience of tribal government.

Thus, the purpose of this Ceremonial Square Ground is to provide a location for traditional Muskogee worship and religious/spiritual expression regardless of tribal affiliation or lack thereof. Also, it is to educate our people and, when appropriate, the larger native community and general populace on Muskogee culture, history, and religious practice. We are not a tribe, town, nation, band, village, clan, or business, but a sacred Ceremonial Square Ground and, as such, answer only to ourselves and the Creator – which is as it should be.

We will therefore comport ourselves and govern ourselves according to Square Ground methods and traditions – not by the mandate or fiat of tribal, state, or federal government. Further, we will worship in accordance with our beliefs in the traditions of the Muskogee Way.

To this end, we affirm that there is one Supreme Creator, known to us as Hesaketemese (Breath Master, i.e., God) or Ofvnga (One Above, i.e., God) who sent the Hiyaulgee (Light Beings, i.e., Angels) to give unto our ancestors the Square, the sacred Fire, the Medicines, and Ceremonies which teach us how to live in accordance to His Ways and how to worship Him. We respect Creation, as the good gift of Hesaketemese, reverence the Fire, Ceremonies, Medicines, and Spirit Beings of the Upper World; but worship only the Creator. We declare that the Ways given to us are both appropriate and proper for us and that we have a sacred compact with the Creator to continue them. We are non-proselytizing; for though we know these Ways are right for us, we know they may not be right for all.

As descendents of a remnant of Christian mixed-bloods, whose Fire is derived from their Church Fires, we are a Christian Square. We affirm that the Square Ground is compatible with the Christian Church and that the God of the Square Ground is the God of the Bible. We also affirm that the Square Ground does not violate Christian tenets and beliefs, nor does the Christian Church violate Square Ground tenets and beliefs. However, we do not allow evangelization or non-Square Ground practices in the Square, nor exclude non-Christians from it.

Furthermore, we affirm that the Mekko Heleswv, more commonly known as the Mekko of the Grounds or Heles-hayv, is the High Priest of the Square Ground and that the Osempunvye (or Speaker), Henehv (or Medicine Maker), and the Tolkv-oktidija (or Firekeeper) are the priests thereof. We also affirm that the Head Clan Mother oversees all matters pertaining to Women or Women's Medicine.

Additionally, we declare that there are four essential High Holidays instituted by God for us which are Green Corn, Little Green Corn, Harvest, and Berry. It is our sacred duty and obligation to observe them with the utmost care and dedication.

We affirm that all Square Ground congregants must agree to, and abide by, this basic statement of purpose and belief and obey the provisions of the following internal Square Ground document, the decisions of the various Square Ground councils, and the directions of the Mekko Heleswa and/or Head Clan Mother on all matters under their traditional authority. We further stipulate that failure to do so may constitute legitimate cause for excommunication (banishment) from the Grounds.

Traditional Square Ground Governance

The Square Ground is a free assembly of worshippers under the guidance of its traditional, consecrated priesthood; as such, it is protected by the establishment clause of the United States Constitution. The Square Ground will operate as a 501(c) 3, but even without the 501(c)3 non-profit incorporation, is automatically considered a "church" under IRS tax regulations. The Square Ground will operate, however, according to the traditional ways of the Muskogee Square; and does, and will, abide by all local, state, and federal laws applicable to a 501(c)3 corporation; and operate as a religious non-profit so that its assembly and priesthood are protected; financial operations may be conducted with integrity, oversight, and ease; and to assure donors that their donations are both tax deductible and properly administered. Therefore, although our legal structure is a 501(c) 3 non-profit religious corporation; we shall still operate and govern ourselves as a sacred Ceremonial Square Ground.

The Mekko Heleswv is the High Priest of the Square Ground and has authority over all of the Ceremonial Complex, High Holiday, Ceremonial issues, or Medicine matters. He is the Head of the **Heritage Council** which consists of the confirmed (consecrated) Osempunvye, Henehv, Firekeeper, and Head Clan Mother. All Heritage Council

meetings are closed except to someone invited by the Mekko Heleswv. Meetings are discussion, training, or planning sessions only. There is no voting, except for impeachment or to veto an Elders' Council vote. Mekko Heleswv decides all matters except for those involving Women's Medicine, which are decided by the Head Clan Mother.

In order that the Square Ground not be left leaderless, the Mekko Heleswv must always have a named replacement – even if that person does not meet all of the requirements for a Mekko Heleswv. The current named replacement of our Mekko Heleswv in case of death, incapacity, or impeachment, is Dale Taylor.

Elders' Council decides all expenditures, judicial matters, or changes in Square Ground governance. **Elders' Council** is the Board of Directors of Nene Hutke, Inc; the three permanent members of the Elders' council are the Mekko Heleswv, who is the President of Nene Hutke, Inc; the secretary of Nene Hutke, Inc, who is a male Heritage Council member, and the Head Clan Mother; the other two Elders' Council members are eligible congregants selected by majority approval of eligible congregants from the assembly of eligible congregants. Elders' Council shall have no authority to alter, change, or infringe upon the duties, responsibilities, or authority of Mekko Heleswv, Head Clan Mother, Osempunvye, Henehv, Firekeeper nor any other Square Ground office, including but not limited to: Yaholv, Head Warrior, Gatekeeper, Tvbalv, Light Horseman, Head Caller, or Head Shaker.

Initial **Elder's Council** shall be appointed by Mekko Hellswv and serve till Berry of 2012 when elections will be held with elected members thenceforth to serve for four- year terms as discussed previously. Should a council seat become vacant due to death, impeachment, dereliction of duty, incapacity, or resignation, Mekko Heleswv shall appoint a replacement from eligible congregants to serve out the remainder of term. Council members may serve an unlimited number of terms. Dereliction shall be defined as failing to attend two regularly scheduled councils in a calendar year, January 1st – December 31st, (after having a minimum of two weeks notice), except due to death in the family or in the case of a legitimate illness; or as failure to carry out duties including but not limited to, overseeing approved projects, maintaining their eligible congregant status, or filing reports, accounting, or paperwork required by council or this document.

Either of the three permanent Elders' Council members may call for a special meeting of the Elders' Council; regular Elders' Council meetings are determined by majority vote of the Elders' Council.

Elders' Council meetings are open to all congregants except in cases involving legal issues or impeachment. All closed meetings are to be held in strictest confidence. Failure to do so may result in impeachment.

Judicial hearings of council are open to all congregants, but deliberations are closed.

From time to time Elders' Council may form a workforce, which is the ad hoc task force committee described in the Bylaws of Nene Hutke, Inc, from the assembly of congregants to carry out or oversee projects approved by the Elders' Council or Heritage Council. Elders' Council may select volunteers from both eligible and ineligible congregants. Elders' Council must approve plans of any such workforce, oversee their work, and insure that all accounting and reporting procedures of the council or this document are adhered to.

If Mekko Heleswv disapproves of any project of the Elders' Council, the Heritage Council must also approve the project by majority vote for the project to be adopted.

Elected members of Elders' Council may be removed upon the recommendation of Mekko Heleswv or Head Clan Mother and majority vote of Elders' Council.

At least once per year, Elders' Council shall provide to the assembly of congregants a financial accounting report that shall meet approved accounting standards and shall detail all receipts, expenditures, and funds disbursed.

Providing funds exist, Mekko Heleswv shall be provided with a discretionary fund of \$50 per quarter for Square Ground operations. Mekko Heleswv shall provide accounting to council for funds spent with receipts from valid expenditures at the end of each quarter.

No funds over five hundred dollars, other than Mekko Heleswv's discretionary fund, shall be disbursed without prior approval of Elders' Council. Any paid work over one thousand dollars must have at least three bids and selected bid approved by Elders' Council. Pay to any congregant must be pre-approved by Elders' Council and be normal and reasonable for work done. In general, congregants are expected to donate their labor to the Square Ground, but exceptions may be made when specialized labor needed would exceed the usual expectations of donated labor or the contributions of the congregants at large.

Reimbursement for expenses of any authorized work shall be promptly paid providing legitimate receipts are provided to the Elders' Council. Notwithstanding the above, no one shall be paid for serving on any council or performing the duties of any Square Ground office. Elders' Council may authorize the payment of travel, lodging, and meals expenses for council members or Square Ground officers. Congregants or Elders' Council may bestow a love offering upon any congregant.

In order to avoid even the appearance of impropriety, other than Mekko Heleswv's Square Ground Discretionary fund, the Mekko Heleswv, Head Clan Mother, Osempunvye, Henehv, and Firekeeper are expressly forbidden from disbursing any funds; nor shall they accept or validate the receipts of any funds.

At the discretion of the then existent Elders' Council, the number of elected council members may be increased from two to four by majority vote of the then existent Elders'

Council. Should elected members be increased to four, a quorum shall be five members with four affirmative votes necessary to pass a motion.

Congregant Eligibility Council

Because we are a free assembly of worshippers guided by a consecrated priesthood, we have no “membership” requirements. However, we believe the Square Ground was given to the Muskogees by the Creator and is to always be operated for and by them. To insure that our ceremonial Square Ground always remains for those of Muskogee blood, we hereby institute a **Congregant Eligibility Council** which shall consist of the Head Clan Mother, one male Heritage Council member, and five eligible congregants over the age of 21.

The congregants Eligibility Council shall determine if any individual congregant is eligible to vote in the assembly of congregants or serve as a Square Ground officer, Clan Mother, or Heritage, Elders’, or Eligibility Council Member. An ineligible congregant is not allowed to serve in any of these capacities or vote in an assembly of congregants, though they may enjoy all other benefits and privileges the Nene Hutke Ceremonial Grounds provides.

An eligible congregant must be:

- 1) 18 years of age to vote in assembly vote,
- 2) 21 years of age to serve on the Eligibility Council,
- 3) 40 years of age to serve on the Elders’ Council,
- 4) provide proof of current or former membership in a Muskogee, Seminole, or Yuchi state or federally recognized tribe (or) provide all documentations necessary to be qualified to become a member of a state or federally recognized Muskogee, Seminole, or Yuchi tribe, or have the recommendation of the majority of the Eligibility Council and majority approval of the Heritage Council.

If eligible, to remain eligible, the congregant must:

- 1) contribute at least two (2) work days per ceremonial cycle, though exception may be granted by the Heritage Council for hardship or for those who live more that two hours for the Square Ground; and
- 2) attend at least two High Holidays and one full moon Social Stomp or social gathering per ceremonial cycle or they shall become ineligible until requirements are current.

This is to ensure that the ceremonial Square Ground is governed only by congregants who are eligible, involved, and contributing to the Square Ground. Congregants who do not meet the above stipulations are ineligible congregants.

Founding congregants must submit proof of age and current or former membership in, or prove they are eligible to join, a Muskogee, Seminole, or Yuchi state or federally recognized tribe to be eligible congregants or have the majority approval of the Eligibility Council and the Heritage Council. After the Berry Ceremony of March 24th of 2012, no one may become an eligible congregant without completing two consecutive ceremonial cycles in which they have attended six of the eight High Holidays and two full moon social stomps or social gatherings and contributed all Square Ground upkeep donations, fulfilled all required work days during said cycle, and have been vetted and approved by majority vote of the Eligibility Council and approved by majority vote of the Heritage Council. Exceptions may be granted only by unanimous vote of the Heritage Council and majority vote of the Elders' Council.

In order to avoid nepotism, favoritism, undue influence, or the appearance of impropriety, we also affirm that Head Clan Mother can not be the spouse, mother, daughter, or sister of Mekko Heleswv, or anyone on the Heritage or Elders' Council. We further affirm that neither father and son, father and daughter, mother and son, mother and daughter, nor siblings may simultaneously serve on the Heritage or Elders' Council. The only exception to this will be with the unanimous approval of both the Heritage and Elders' Councils

Duties and Qualifications of Square Ground Positions

The **Mekko Heleswv** or Heles hayv must have completed 16 total years of Square Ground training and be selected by the previous Mekko Heleswv or Square Ground Leader. This position must know Osempunvye position, Firekeeper position, Henehv position, Gatekeeper position, Yaholv position, as well as the Head Warrior, and Light Horseman positions. As of Green Corn 2011, Mike Kendrick has completed 17 plus years of Square Ground training.

The **Osempunvye** or Speaker must have the approval of the Mekko Heleswv and must have completed 8 total years of Square Ground training and be selected by the current Mekko Heleswv. This position must know the Henehv position, Gatekeeper position, as well as the Yaholv, Head Warrior and Light Horseman positions. Must also have been given training and have a working knowledge of the Firekeeper position and know how to set up and run ceremonies. Osempunvye is constantly in training under the direction of the Mekko Heleswv. As of Green Corn 2011, Dale Taylor has completed 9 plus years of Square Ground training.

The **Henehv** or Medicine Maker must have the approval of the Mekko Heleswv and have completed 4 plus years of Square Ground training. This position must have

knowledge of herbs and know how to prepare and utilize all ceremonial medicines for Square Ground use. At Green Corn 2011, George McKeown will have completed 4 plus years of Square Ground training.

The **Firekeeper** must have the approval of the Mekko Heleswv and must have completed 4 plus years of Square Ground training. This position must know the proper way to kindle and tend the Fire for all ceremonies and High Holidays as well as developing a deeper level of understanding of the spiritual ramifications of the Fire.

These four positions are lifetime positions unless unable to perform their duties. Osempunvye, Henehv, and Firekeeper must also, with Mekko Heleswv approval, select and train a Tabalv in their position. Their Tabalvs, when ready, may be confirmed as an Osempunvye, Henehv, or Firekeeper and begin to select and train Tabalvs of their own. However, only the original Osempunvye, Henehv, or Firekeeper may sit on the Heritage Council; and the new Tabalvs can not be raised (confirmed) to Osempunvye, Henehv, or Firekeeper level until their mentor assumes a seat on the Heritage Council. Thus, there can never be more than one Osempunvye, Henehv, or Firekeeper on the Heritage Council nor can there ever be more than two Osempunvyes, Henehvs, or Firekeepers. Although these positions are lifetime positions, the Mekko Heleswv may “sit down” either temporarily or permanently any of them – which means to exclude them from performing any Square Ground or medicine duties.

The **Head Clan Mother** must be over 40 years of age, have brought at least one child into the world, be a person of high integrity, be able to supervise the women and oversee women’s medicine. Must insure separation of the sexes prior to ceremonies; segregate women who are pregnant or on their moon cycle from the men, from the Square Ground, and from the medicines. This is a lifetime position; she can only be removed by majority vote of the Heritage Council and majority vote of the Elders’ Council.

The **Gatekeeper** must be appointed by the Mekko Heleswv from the eligible men for a term of 4 years. He may be appointed as often as the Mekko Heleswv desires. He appoints from the group of Light Horsemen the ones that are to have duty at the gate during ceremony. He must know how to escort people into, out of, and within Square Ground. Additionally, he must insure that all Square Ground preparations have been completed prior to the beginning of the ceremony.

The **Yahohv** is appointed by the Mekko Heleswv for a term of 4 years from the eligible men. He must know how to perform the Black Drink Ceremony.

The **Head Caller** is appointed by the Heritage Council; to be confirmed, he must know Feather, Conjure, Turkey, Tadpole, Ball Game, Prophecy, Snake, Eagle, and Buffalo dances; must train and supervise other callers and responders. He serves as long as he is able.

Yadikv: Anyone appointed by Osempunvye, with Mekko Helesv approval, to talk in the square ground. This person serves on a per-ceremony basis.

Head Warrior: This person is selected by the Elders' Council with heritage Council approval. He must be a male, over 40 years of age. He oversees the Warriors and Light Horsemen while on ceremonial grounds. He enforces Square Ground rules and regulations and the orders of the Mekko Heleswv or Elders' Council. He serves as long as he is able.

Head Shaker: This person must be female and be over the age of 21; and is selected by the Heritage Council. She must have 4 or more years of shaking experience and must shake with turtles.

Gatekeeper, Yaholv, Yadikv, Head Caller, Head Warrior, or Head Shaker may be "sat down" by Mekko Heleswv. Head shaker may also be "sat down" by Head Clan Mother.

Removal from Office (Impeachment)

Removal from office (impeachment) is a serious matter not to be done lightly or easily because it is disruptive, causes chaos and discord, and weakens the Square Ground. However, there are times when it might be necessary for the good of the Square Ground. In the old way, this required that the person be "broken." This reflects the inevitable damage done to both the individual and to the Square Ground. We affirm that the following is how a position will be "broken" should it ever be necessary.

Mekko Heleswv may only be broken by unanimous vote of the Heritage Council, majority vote of the Elders' Council, and majority vote of the eligible congregants as determined by the Congregant Eligibility Council. If the Mekko Heleswv is broken, his named successor shall immediately assume his duties and office even if not yet fully qualified.

The Head Clan Mother may be broken by majority vote of the Heritage Council and majority vote of the eligible congregants. If Head Clan Mother is broken, Heritage Council shall select an eligible candidate who must be approved by majority vote of the eligible congregants.

Osempunvye, Henehv, or Firekeeper may be broken and removed from the Heritage Council, Elders' Council if applicable, and Square Ground service by recommendation of the Mekko Heleswv and majority vote of the Heritage Council and the Elders' Council.

Head Warrior may be broken by majority vote of the Heritage Council and majority vote or Elders' Council.

Gatekeeper, Yaholv, Head Caller, or Head Shaker may be broken by majority vote of the Heritage Council.

Elected Elders' Council members or Congregant Eligibility Council members may be removed upon recommendation of Mekko Heleswv or Head Clan Mother and majority vote of the council that they serve on.

Concerning Women's Medicine

In keeping with the ancient way, and in honor of the importance of Women's Medicine as the necessary balance to Men's Medicine, the women shall have a collective four structure hute with a hearth fire in the center of the inner courtyard. This is in remembrance of the houses of old which were built as a small model of the Square Ground. It is here that women shall conduct their Medicine Circle, hang ribbons in memory of the tradition of their ancestors to hang them in their homes, conduct female and infant naming, hill of life ceremonies, and consume dark day bundles, sweet gum bundles, and old ribbons in the hearth fire. Additionally, the Head Clan Mother will teach or oversee the teaching of women's issues, and the old Muskogee ways. They will also touch their medicine and prepare for the ceremony.

Discipline of Congregants

It is the Muskogee Way to forgive; however, forgiveness does not mean immunity from one's actions. Unpunished public sins, "law breaking" in the old way, results in discord, distrust, disruption, and weakens the Fire and the Square Ground. In the old way, the acceptance of the consequences of one's actions demonstrates contrition and thus mends the law which was broken and in turn permits true forgiveness. Once forgiven, the law breaker was fully restored to communion with the Creator and the people. Forgiveness without this discipline is not only spurious, but damaging to both the law breaker and the Square Ground.

Therefore, disregard of the Square Ground protocols or Square Ground, Ceremonial, or Medicine instructions of Mekko Heleswv, Osempunvye, Henehv, or Firekeeper could result in congregant being brought before Elders' Council which could impose fines, extra work days, or suspension from office or Square Ground activities.

Blatant disrespect of anyone or slander, threats, or violence towards anyone could result in not only the above, but if habitual or excessive with excommunication from the grounds.

Theft or misappropriation of funds shall not be tolerated and shall result in at least suspension from the grounds and could likely result in excommunication and criminal charges.

Adultery may result in impeachment, if applicable, and suspension from the grounds with excommunication possible.

A congregant could be held liable by the Elders' Council for the actions or misdeeds of his or her guest.

This being said, as will be clear from the basic Square Ground protocols, the Elders' Council is invoked only as a last resort or for very serious matters where failure to act would be immoral, weaken the Fire or Square Ground or encourage further bad behavior.

Excommunication

Excommunication is a serious matter. Anciently, banishment was a fate worse than death to our ancestors. A person who is banished is stricken from the congregant roles, forbidden from the grounds, and denied the services and sacraments of the Square Ground whether on site or off.

Therefore, after the Green Corn following one calendar year from the date of the excommunication, the excommunicant shall return as a guest of the Heritage Council

and, even if otherwise eligible, may hold no Square Ground office for four years. During this probationary period, to be considered for permanent reinstatement, the excommunicant must fulfill all attendance, service, and Square Ground upkeep requirements; and should Heritage Council rescind the excommunicant's guest status during this period, the excommunication order shall immediately, permanently, and irrevocably be reinstated.

Freedom of Congregants

In the old ways, the people governed themselves by mutual respect, civility, and consensus. No one was ever expected to violate their conscience or contribute to an activity that they opposed. Indeed, even in war, each warrior freely chose whether or not to go on the warpath. Likewise, it is not the way of our Square Ground to coerce anyone.

Similarly, although congregant may counsel congregant for or against any activity or association, the Square Ground imposes no restrictions or sanctions against any legal outside activities, associations, or memberships. Congregants may be members of any group, tribe, organization, or religious affiliation. Furthermore, they may participate in the activities, programs, or ceremonies of any other Square Ground, tribe, church, political or civic group.

Guest and the Square Ground

In the old way, it was traditional for people of one Square Ground to attend the ceremonies of another. We therefore encourage guests – for it is not only proper and traditional, but also builds rapport between peoples and establishes friendly relations between them. Thus there will normally be no objection to a guest. However, do not expect a person of poor reputation to be allowed to attend a High Holiday – for if the reputation is justified their very presence is dangerous, polluting to the Fire, and a contamination to the people or the medicines. Therefore this is a risk we will not take.

Because we also believe in fairness and the possibility of reformation, if there are no strenuous objections from Mekko Heleswv, Head Clan Mother, Heritage or Elder's Council, such a guest might be allowed to attend a social activity or a full moon stomp on a trial basis. Host should seek permission before extending an invitation to avoid embarrassment or hard feelings on the part of the host or potential guest. In any case, guests are the responsibility of the host who invites them.

If a guest wishes to call a stomp dance during the daytime portion of a ceremony; he and his host must first seek permission from the Head Caller. If Head Caller does not object, he will inform the Osempunvye who in turn will seek the permission of the

Mekko Heleswv. The guest must abide by our Square Ground protocols – he can not call up his own shaker unless Head Shaker agrees and that shaker must be using turtles; he must call a double file stomp unless instructed otherwise, and must start and stop the stomp according to Osempunvye's instructions, and not turn his back towards the Fire. If the guest wishes to call a night time stomp he and his host must seek permission of Head Caller and this would normally be granted.

If a guest wished to shake during the daytime portion of the ceremony, she and her host must first seek the permission of Head Shaker. If Head shaker has no objections, she must notify Head Clan Mother who will consult with Mekko Heleswv. If they both have no objections, guest will be allowed to shake as long as she follows the instructions of the Head Shaker. If she wishes to shake at the night time stomp, only the approval of the Head Shaker is required – though she must still follow Head Shakers directions. Request to shake at night will normally be granted.

Guest are not allowed to dance in the Prophesy, Feather, Ribbon, Tadpole, Turtle, Eagle, Ballgame, Conjure, Buffalo, or Snake dances. If they are frequent guests, however, these dance restrictions may be lifted.

It is proper protocol for a guest to bring an offering to the Square Ground and a small gift to the Mekko Heleswv as a token of appreciation. A small amount of items such as herbs, natural tobacco, leather, deer antler pieces, turkey beards and turkey feathers are typical gifts and all are suitable – though not limited to these listed items. Hosts should always review basic protocols of the Square Ground with any guest.

Basic Protocols of the Square Ground

- 1) Under no circumstances shall a woman who is pregnant, or has born a child or miscarried less than one moon prior, or is on her moon cycle, enter the square ground.
- 2) Just as men are guests of the women at the hearth fire, so are women the guests of the men in the Square Ground. Women are responsible for the hearth, and men are responsible for the square ground and each are to be honored and respected for their spheres of authority.
- 3) Mekko Hekleswv or his designees are to be promptly and without dispute obeyed in the Square Ground and on the ceremonial grounds.
- 4) Yellow shall only be worn as an accent color and not as a main color.
- 5) Purple is not to be worn in the Square Ground.
- 6) No illegal feathers or animal parts are allowed.
- 7) No illegal drugs, alcohol, profanity, or violence is tolerated.
- 8) Should a woman have a dispute with a man, she is to take her concern to the head Clan Mother, who shall speak with the Mekko Heleswv. Mekko Heleswv, Head Clan Mother, woman and man shall then attempt to resolve the issue. If it can not be resolved, the issue shall go before the Elders' Council for judgment which shall be binding upon all parties.
- 9) Should a woman have a dispute with a woman, she is to take her concern to the Head Clan Mother. If the Head Clan Mother can not resolve the issue, it shall go before the Elders' Council as in #8.
- 10) Should a man have a dispute with a woman, he shall go to the Mekko Heleswv with his concern. Mekko Heleswv will consult with the Head Clan Mother. If no resolution is achieved, the matter will go to the Elders' Council as in #8.
- 11) Should a man have a dispute with a man, he shall go to the Mekko Heleswv with his concern. If Mekko Heleswv cannot solve the issue, the matter will go to the Elders' Council as in #8.
- 12) Should a man or woman have a dispute with the Mekko Heleswv or the Head Clan Mother, they shall go to the other to attempt resolution. If resolution is not possible, the matter shall go to the Elders' Council – keeping in mind, however, the Elders' Council has no authority to infringe upon the actual duties, responsibilities, or authority of Mekko Heleswv or Head Clan Mother.

- 13) A dispute between Mekko Heleswv and the Head Clan Mother shall be resolved by a ruling of the Heritage Council.
- 14) Only the Head Clan Mother may wear an exposed cord cutter in the Square Ground – and she should do so at all ceremonies.
- 15) Only the Head Caller is authorized to use a turtle rattle.
- 16) Only the Mekko Heleswv may wear all white in the Square Ground. Only the Mekko Heleswv, Osempunvye, Henehv, and Firekeeper may wear white fringe around the bottom of their long shirts or long coats.
- 17) Only the Mekko Heleswv, Osempunvye, Henehv, Firekeeper, Yaholv, and Head Caller may wear columnela in the square Ground.
- 18) No one but Mekko Heleswv and Firekeeper may kindle, tend, or put anything on the fire or breach outer fire circle except when specifically authorized to do so for that instance by Mekko Heleswv.
- 19) No one may enter or exit Square Ground during prayers, stomp dancing, or talk, except for medical emergency.
- 20) No one may enter or exit Square Ground during day time portion of a High Holiday unless escorted by the Gatekeeper, (or) by Mekko Heleswv, Osempunvye, or someone designated by Mekko Heleswv.
- 21) Only women may wear any sort of turtle bags in the Square Ground.
- 22) No bone items are to be worn in the Square Ground – for they are emblematic of death.
- 23) If turtles or deer toe shakers are present, can shakers cannot lead stomps in daytime portion of the ceremony.
- 24) No one, whether congregant or guest, male or female, infant or elder, may enter Square Ground without taking or touching all of the prescribed medicines.
- 25) No funeral fire or memorial fire service shall be conducted in the Square Ground.
- 26) Square Ground or Ceremonial Complex cannot be utilized for anything without Mekko Heleswvs prior approval.
- 27) Only Mekko Heleswv, Osempunvye, Henehv, Firekeeper, Gatekeeper, or someone designated by Mekko Heleswv may move within the Square Ground during ceremony without escort.

- 28) No one may speak in the Square Ground, except the Mekko Helleswv, without the Osempunvye's permission.
- 29) Men must wear a head covering in the Square Ground at all times, even when just working in the Square Ground. A hoodie attached to a jacket will not suffice.
- 30) The night time stomp after a High Holiday is part of the ceremony and is to be treated as such – even though it is less formal.
- 31) The Ceremonial meal may not begin until authorized by the Mekko Heleswv.
- 32) Women on their moon cycle are not to prepare the ceremonial meal.
- 33) No time pieces, cell phones, pagers, etc are allowed in the Square Ground during ceremony unless Mekko Heleswv authorizes an exception for a doctor or first responder on call. Even so, they must expect to not be allowed to enter Square Ground.
- 34) No pictures, videos, or recordings are to be made of any Square Ground function, High Holiday, or ritual unless authorized by Mekko Heleswv. Any authorized pictures, videos, recordings are the exclusive property of the Square Ground and under the control of the Heritage Council. Any unauthorized pictures, videos, or recordings whether by a congregant or guest is subject to seizure. Such a seizure could lead to action by the Elders' Council and possible excommunication.
- 35) No namings may take place without approval of Mekko Heleswv.
- 36) Generally namings are allowed only at Green Corn and Little Green Corn after completion of at least two ceremonial cycles and attendance of at least six of the eight High Holidays within that time period. However, exceptions may be granted for emergency or hardship cases.
- 37) Weddings or memorial services must be pre-approved and coordinated with Mekko Heleswv and Head Clan Mother and will normally not be allowed on High Holidays.
- 38) Weddings should normally take place between the summer solstice and the fall equinox. Memorial services should take place after the spring equinox and before Green Corn.
- 39) Confirmations should take place only at Green Corn or Little Green Corn.
- 40) Do not turn your back to the Fire or go clockwise in the Square Ground unless directed to do so by Mekko Heleswv or Osempunvye.

These are the basic protocols of the Square Ground which all congregants and guests agree to honor and obey.

Amendments to Square Ground Governance

Because this document delineates the legitimate, traditional ways of our sacred, Ceremonial Square Ground, it may only be amended by:

- 1) Majority approval of the Heritage Council, and
- 2) Majority approval of the Elders' Council, and
- 3) Majority approval of eligible congregants.

Except that changes to required work days, upkeep fees, and discretionary fund amounts may be amended by a simple majority of Elders' Council.

Notwithstanding the above, the duties, responsibilities, or authorities of Mekko Heleswv, Osempunvye, Henehv, Firekeeper, or Head Clan Mother cannot be amended.

All congregants understand and agree to all provisions of this Square Ground Governance Document and agree to abide by it.

Addendum:

The **Mekko of the Grounds** shall serve as long as willing and able and serves at the pleasure of the Board of Directors. Only an eligible male member, recommended by the Heles hayv or the Head clan Mother, and approved by majority vote of the Board of Directors may serve in the capacity of Mekko of the Grounds. Mekko of the Grounds serves as an executive officer representing the Board of Directors in civil capacities and as a liaison of Nene Hutke with other organizations, entities, tribes, and grounds. The office in no way empowers the Mekko of the Grounds to supersede, abrogate, or contravene the Board of Directors nor to enter into any agreements on behalf of the Board of Directors unless authorized to do so by virtue of a concurrently held position. The Board of Directors may, however, authorize the Mekko of the Grounds to act as an executive to execute or oversee board directives or implement board decisions. The Mekko of the Grounds can only be removed by majority vote of the Board of Directors, with at least one vote for removal being from either the Heles hayv or Head Clan Mother. Such removal would in no way affect any other Square Ground, corporation officer, or board positions the individual may concurrently serve in. The Mekko of the Grounds may hold concurrent corporation officer, board, or Square Ground positions but if a board member, must be recused from board votes to elect or to remove from this position.

Change History

This document was adopted by the Board of Directors on the 30th day of July, 2011.

On January 26, 2013, the following amendments were approved by a majority vote of the Elder's Council, attending Heritage Council Members, and eligible Members:

1. Created a new position, Mekko of the Grounds, which was added as an Addendum.
2. Removed the \$10 a month membership dues requirement.