

Springfield Casino Site Committee

Present: Chairman Paula Meara, William Pepin, Zaida Luna, Bud Williams, Timothy Rooke, Timothy Allen, James Ferrera, Maurice Thomas, Martin Loughman, Moses Gonzalez, Dr. Bobbie Rennix, Richard O'Connor

Absent: Dr. Martin Markey, Therese Plasse, Reginald Green

Meeting started at 5:03pm on May 15, 2012 in City Hall with welcoming of members and Introductions. The meeting was called to order in the City Council anteroom, then moved to the City Council chambers.

Open Meeting Law Requirements/ Handouts

Clerk Waymann Lee provided an overview of the open meeting law. He encouraged everyone to read and sign the certificate of receipt of open meeting law at the end of the handout he provided. He also handed out and went over the summary of the Conflict of Interest law for municipal employees. He also requested that everyone sign the back page stating they have received this information. Submit the receipts to the Clerk.

Appointment of Vice- Chair and Clerk

Chairman Meara has chosen William Pepin to be Vice Chair and Richard O'Connor to be Vice Chair and Clerk.

Councilor Rooke made a motion which was seconded by Councilor Ferrera appointing them to Vice Chair and Clerk positions. Approved by Voice Vote.

Alternate Members

Chairman Meara is going to have Bob in the Council office keeps a list of people interested in being an Alternate. Members of the committee can provide Bob with names as well.

Comcast Live Meetings

Comcast is willing to show the meetings live as long as they are held on Monday, Tuesday, or Wednesday Night.

Meeting Dates- Day/ Time

Discussed when meetings should be held. Several members in favor of having meetings on Monday at 5pm before regular City Council meetings.

Councilor Williams asked about frequency of meetings. Chair Meara seems them as monthly at first but possibly more frequently as determined by the committee.

Special meetings will be held as needed.

Sub- Committees

Chair Meara proposes two sub-committees. One will focus on sites and one on gaming companies. No members were appointed to these sub committees to date.

Purpose/ Mission of the Committee

To help determine the best possible Casino development for the City of Springfield- For its residents and businesses. To ensure that all residents and business owners are well informed of any casino suggestions.

Chairman Meara stated our end goal is to produce a report that can be used by the City Council, Mayor and others.

Councilor Rooke suggested any meetings with Developers or Vendors be held in executive session due to confidential negotiations in which they may be involved.

Councilor Williams asked about the scope of the Committee. Looking to see what the committee can and can't do. Chair Meara responded we are here to collect information to pass up to the City Council. She sees the committee looking at sites and examining the pluses and minuses of each site.

Chair Meara also mentioned the City Council will be involved in any Land/ Issues and special permits. Site committee report will be helpful to the council in making these decisions.

Members of the Committee encouraged viewing the Mass. Gaming website. Councilor Williams also has some casino materials that may be helpful. Bob Arieti will be the person who sends information to all members of the committee.

Formal Invitation to Mayor Sarno

Chairman Meara will draft a letter on the committee's behalf to the Mayor. She will discuss our willingness to work with the Mayor. She will also inform him that he is welcome at all the meetings.

Councilor Williams encouraged this to be done in light of recent comments the Mayor has made about Casino's and the Site Committee.

Public Speak Out

We will have a public speak out session 15 minutes before each regularly scheduled meeting.

Discussion/ Questions

Discussed having a website so residents can give the committee suggestions and feedback. Andy Doty from the IT department said he would be willing to help the committee with setup. He also said he would be willing to set it up so we can have e-mail blasts go out to members of the committee.

Moses Gonzalez talked about going out and talking to residents in the possible site areas to get feedback. He said they need to be informed of what a casino will bring to their neighborhood so they can make an informed decision before voting. He also talked about how the city has voted down a casino before.

Councilor Williams stated the city voted down a casino gambling in 1995 when it was illegal in Mass.

Councilor Allen stated he hears casinos are 3-5 years away from being opened in the state. He was looking to see when a referendum may be held. No clear answer available.

Atty. Tom Moore from the City Law department spoke- He said issues such as referendum voting will be clear as the State's Casino Commission gets up and running fully. More information has been coming from the Commission in the past few weeks.

He discussed what is called a Host Agreement- Mayor is responsible for negotiating the agreement and the City Council will need to approve it.

Talked about the RFP for a Consultant. The consultant will be helping the City with the Community Host Agreement.

He sees the committee advising the council on land use, zone changes and special permits. He did caution that all negotiations are functions of the executive office.

Councilor Allen asked if the law department could put together a brief summary for the Committee. Mr. Moore agreed to do this.

Next meeting will be held at 5pm on June 4th in the City Council Chambers.

Meeting ended at 5:52pm.