

Site Committee

July 16, 2012

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

Meeting Started at 5:05pm

Public Speak out

Matthew Mahoney- Springfield Resident in favor of the casino. Says we have tried the Status Quo and it is not working for Springfield. He handed out an Article from the Cleveland Dealer Newspaper supporting casinos in their city which cited several reasons Cleveland needed a casino. He said Springfield needs a Casino as bad as Cleveland did.

Archbishop Timothy- Totally opposed to a Casino. He says Casino's bring empty promises of economic growth. He cited crime stats from Detroit showing that all major crimes have increased since a casino was opened in their downtown. He believes a Casino will promote the kind of future we do not want.

Joe- Springfield Resident- Handed out an article he published in 1995 in the Valley Advocate about casinos. He cites three problems with casinos. The first he says is that a Study done in Atlantic City shows the costs of casinos far outweighed the benefits. He says there was no economic spinoff. He cited a 40% decline in local business revenue by 1987 in Atlantic City. Gamblers are not good tourists. They want to gamble, eat cheap food and leave. Casinos also increase street and white collar crime (stealing from employer).

Steve O'Neil- Springfield resident opposed to a casino. He says casinos will only increase the social problem the city has. A casino will bring much too much traffic to areas that already have too much traffic problems. He also said casinos are a magnet for prostitution both inside and outside the facility. He does not believe a casino will do much to drop the unemployment rate.

Donald Dissinger

He is Vice President of Ewingcole in Philadelphia. He has over 30 years experience in Casino development. He has been active in such inner-city casinos as Yonkers, Philly and Hileah Park.

He talked a good deal about the benefits Yonkers has received from their casino. The city gets around \$4 million a year in property tax revenue. Local businesses have not seen a drop in business. Currently the casino employs 1300 full time workers. To date the casino has far exceeded the expectation of the city.

He stressed the importance of being prepared to engage the gambling commission and support the selection of the site in the community. Full involvement is important in helping the community get the license. It is critical for the city/ state to be fully engaged at every step of the process.

Stressed the need to start from the grassroots (planning, resident input). Want to make sure developers know what the city wants/ needs and works with them in the process. Important to pick a site or sites that will support the long term growth potential of the project.

Developers need a partner in the process. The city needs to support the developer they choose. This support needs to extend well beyond the selection point. The developer will need the city's support in getting all necessary permits, licenses, etc. The city and the developer both need to show residents the benefits they receive by having a casino in their city.

He talked about businesses in the area will grow when they see an opportunity to serve. He said many local restaurants in projects he has been involved in have teamed up with the casino to open a place in the casino. He said a critical mass developer (casino) could lead to other businesses setting up shop around the casino.

He talked about the importance of infrastructure. Infrastructure needs to be consider in great detail. Water, Sewer and roads are very critical in any setting. Water and sewer need to be both available and accessible. Growth can be limited by water availability. He cited a Canadian casino as an example. Power is also very important to casino success. Casino will have large power demands that must be met.

Bill Pepin- Economic Summit Report

Summit was held in Worcester and conducted by the state's gaming commission.

The summit was designed to look at the economic and social impact of casinos. Significant time was spent on forecasting expected revenue.

Things that were discussed include:

- Robust comprehensive bidding process
- Public policy- Max investment
- Non smoking casino- viewed positively
- Lots of market demand. Currently mass residents spend between \$800-900 million at casinos in neighboring states
- \$1.5 -2.0 Billion in revenues each year
- Local lottery may have a downturn at the start but rebounds usually in 2-3 years

Complete text available online at the commission website

Paula Meara- Framingham Meeting Update

Location of the casino is more important than size or format. Location needs to max the benefits to the city and its residents.

Need to have clear discussion of the negative impacts and find ways to mitigate these negatives.

Need to engage residents of both the host and neighboring communities.

Need to get clear information on traffic pattern and demand on city resources (police, fire, emt, etc).

Copy of full text can be found online

Dr. Markey- Problem Gambling Meeting

More likely to have problem gambling in a city where residents have very little entertainment options. About 2-5 percent of gamblers become problem gamblers.

People most likely to become problem gamblers include

- People who start at an early age
- People who work low income jobs
- People who lack education
- People who live within 50 miles of a casino
- People in a casino after 11pm