

Minutes
Gaming Study Commission
Meeting: Tuesday, March 2, 2010

Commissioners present: Joe Foster, Vice Chair; Jim Craig, Tom Ferrini, Bob Odell, David Bailey, Lew Feldstein, Michelline Dufort, Maggie Pritchard, Ned Densmore, Mary Heath; Karen Pollard; Mark MacKenzie present via teleconference: Andy Lietz, Chairman

Commissioners Absent/Excused: David Bailey, Bonnie Newman

Staff Present: Gail Wolek

Commission Vice Chair Joe Foster called the meeting to order at 1:05 p.m.

Vice Chairman Foster asked Gail Wolek to conduct the roll call. A quorum being present, Vice Chairman Foster then asked for a motion to approve the minutes of the February 16, 2010 meeting. Commissioner Pritchard motioned for the minutes to be approved, seconded by Commissioner Feldstein. Vice Chairman Foster called for a vote to approve the minutes. The minutes were unanimously approved.

Vice Chair Foster mentioned that he would ask Legislative Services if they could perform a side-by-side analysis of the NJ legislation with existing and proposed NH legislation. He will report back to the Commission if this is possible in order to assist the Center in its work.

Vice Chair Foster then introduced Laura Scott, Adjunct Faculty at UNH in the MPA program and Community Development Director for Windham, NH who gave a presentation (see separate Power Point) to the Commission on community planning impacts when significant development is being proposed for a town. Ms. Scott emphasized the importance of zoning regulations, which differ from town to town throughout New Hampshire. These regulations should be thoroughly explored and determinations made on how they will be applied to new development proposals. Ms. Scott included a list of infrastructure components that must be considered with development proposals including: water, waste water, transportation networks, storm water systems, police/fire/ambulance services, electric and gas utilities, telecommunications to include Internet connections, as well as site design and architecture approvals. Ms. Scott cautioned that not giving this planning process the appropriate time and due diligence BEFORE a development is approved for a town will cause many problems that could have been avoided.

The subject of impact fees was also explored. Impact fees are just for infrastructure expansions and enhancements required as a result of the new development. Impact fees are not to underwrite or support the infrastructure that is already in place. Planning boards can ask for an impact study to be paid for by the developer. They can also request that a qualified planner be hired at the expense of the developer to assist the town in evaluating an impact study. Ms. Scott recommended that assistance be requested for both host and abutting communities to help plan for development impacts. She emphasized that planning at the local level is vital to the success of any new development.

Vice Chair Foster introduced the next speaker, Gerald Chudy, chair of the Citizens Casino Impact Study Committee for Palmer, Massachusetts. Mr. Chudy presented the Study Committee's findings which can be referenced via their report on-line at http://www.townofpalmer.com/Pages/PalmerMA_BComm/casino. Mr. Chudy emphasized several key points, including:

- Local law enforcement needs the resources to back-up whatever regulations are put in place.
- Hire professionals to negotiate with legislators to assure appropriate and adequate revenue distribution from gambling profits to host and abutting communities impacted by the development.
- Anticipate that local schools will need to absorb extra students, including some with language (ESL) needs.

- It is important to work closely with state legislators, most of whom in his experience are less than interested in what they perceive as small town priorities. Local communities must maintain a strong voice in planning for and regulation of new development proposed for their towns.
- Towns should insist in getting a comprehensive cost-benefit analysis of casino development.
- A statewide gambling commission should be set up to include at least one elected official from each host/abutting community to oversee casino/gambling interests in the state.
- A mitigation trust fund should be established and replenished annually with guaranteed percentage of gambling revenues. Funds must be proportionately distributed to surrounding communities to set up and support infrastructure needs caused by new development.
- Include local health professionals, law enforcement officials, and EMT services early in the planning process to assess how expansion will impact their abilities to respond.
- Development planning should include consideration of how environmental and quality-of-life impacts will affect surrounding communities.
- Make sure job creation is the priority.

Commissioner MacKenzie asked if Palmer experienced any issues around the topic of job creation in the local communities. Mr. Chudy said that the town is including in its negotiations the stipulation that all jobs created by the development be filled by Massachusetts workers first; they prefer that the workers be union members paid union wages; and have included a shop steward on the negotiating committee. Mr. Chudy noted that Mohegan Sun provides full, 100%, health/dental/vision benefits to its employees (which he said equates to about \$15,000 per employee).

Ben Frost, Director, Public Affairs for New Hampshire Housing, provided a presentation on workforce housing in New Hampshire (see separate PowerPoint presentation). In addition to the information provided in Mr. Frost's presentation, he concluded that any project, such as a casino, that would have major impacts on local communities should require a state-level regional impact study, something that may fall under the state's Site Evaluation Committee's authority. Smaller communities simply would not have the resources to fully and adequately address all the concerns, considerations and impacts of a major casino development project.

Dr. Andy Smith of the UNH Survey Center spoke briefly to the group regarding the context of questions to be included in the spring Granite State poll to be conducted at the end of the month. He cautioned the group to be sensitive to the fact that most average citizens don't know much about the topic of gambling and they need to be certain that the questions asked can actually be answered by the average citizen. Commissioners Babson and Craig said that, with last fall's poll, the legislative hearings, the weekend deliberative democracy sessions, and the upcoming public hearings, they weren't sure there was much left to ask. Dr. Smith responded that it is important not to underestimate the value of understanding as completely as possible, across as broad a spectrum of citizens as possible, opinions about gambling and what the political consequences could be of not understanding the range of misinformation that may be prevalent in the public arena. Michelline Dufort is following up with Dr. Smith on construction of the questions to be included.

Commissioner Odell briefed the group on related legislation currently making its way through committees at the State House. Concern was voiced that legislation may preempt the work of the Commission. Vice Chair Foster said he would speak with Chairman Lietz about the issues discussed relative to legislative activities.

Vice Chairman Joe Foster concluded by reminding commissioners that the next meeting is scheduled for March 16th and will include presentations on topics relative to social costs, including addictive behaviors and public safety. The meeting was adjourned at 4:02 p.m.

NEXT MEETING: TUESDAY, March 16, 2010, 1:00 P.M., NHHEAF

Respectfully submitted: Gail A. Wolek, Executive Director