



PALMER TOWN COUNCIL INFORMATIONAL MEETING
WEDNESDAY, September 2, 2009 @ 7:00 PM
Town Council Meeting Room, Palmer Town Building
Minutes

1. Called to order at 1905
2. Roll Call:
 - a. Present: Mr. Magiera, Mr. Burns, Mr. Backus, Ms. Barry, Mr. Duguay, Mr. Williams, Mr. Hebert, Mr. Streeter
 - b. Absent: Mr. Dinuovo, Mr. Remillard
 - c. Guests: Sen. Brewer, Rep. Smola
3. Pledge of Allegiance
4. Agenda Item: Discussion of casino issues and questions for our Reps.
 - a. Council inquired about the time line of casino development:
 - i. Sen. Brewer:
 1. Thank you for your service to town and country, Mr. Backus
 2. 17 bills have been filed at the State House over casino issues
 3. Hot button issue is filling Mr. Kennedy's senate seat
 4. Bills concerning casinos will be debated sometime in the fall
 5. There are major differences between leaders about provisions of these bills
 6. All these negotiations must be completed by Nov. 17 end of session
 7. We will try to get you as much info as soon as we receive it
 - ii. Rep. Smola:
 1. Echoed thanks for Mr. Backus's service to town and country
 2. Casino idea is not new; difference this time is that the Governor proposed idea
 3. We want to hear what the Council says about the casino issue in order to properly represent the town's concerns
 4. A Supreme Court decision earlier this year has altered format of discussions
 5. We have to be prepared for debate on casino issues
 6. It is up to us to perform due diligence and make recommendations sooner than later
 7. Most issues will be heard at some point in the debate process
 - iii. Mr. Burns:
 1. Is a Palmer site dead? Rumor or fact?
 - a. Sen. Brewer: No. Mr. Bulger and Mr. Morrissey don't work on anything together; State Gaming commission will set rules and policies on gaming issues

- 1 b. Everything is speculative at this point; don't follow rumors
- 2 2. How do we assure that we are on the table? That we get a fair shot?
- 3 a. Kudos to WMASS Task Force for their work on the Casino Project
- 4 b. Take what you like from that and what would be beneficial to the people
- 5 of your district
- 6 c. Protect education and quality of life issues
- 7 3. We should come up with our own recommendations as to what we want in the
- 8 bills.
- 9 4. Rep. Smola:
- 10 a. Whether you want it or not you need to be prepared, because it is
- 11 coming. If it doesn't happen you still need to prepare for the discussion
- 12 b. There is a big difference between host agreements and gaming
- 13 regulations that apply to the whole state; provisions of each must be
- 14 properly applied to the proper venue
- 15 c. Make sure to look at other states beyond CT to get information
- 16 d. Let us know what you're thinking about, your concerns; we can help you
- 17 craft them and get them into the right hands
- 18 5. Sen. Brewer:
- 19 a. Discussed the closing of Monson Development Center, and how he
- 20 helped delay the closing and develop a redevelopment plan
- 21 b. Recommended that the Council be proactive in planning
- 22 iv. Ms. Barry: Will Chapter 70 aid formulas be changed?
- 23 1. Rep. Smola discussed lottery formulas and local aid supplements
- 24 2. Revenue that would come in from gaming would supplement lottery aid revenues
- 25 v. Would a host community be negatively impacted re Chap 70 or local aid formulas?
- 26 1. Rep. Smola: This issue has come up in discussions.
- 27 2. Mr. Burns: There is no provision for mitigation
- 28 vi. Mr. Magiera:
- 29 1. Should we draft two letters to you, one about attaching to Quabbin and one
- 30 addressing Palmer-specific concerns? Rep. Smola: Any concerns that you can
- 31 identify should be brought forward
- 32 2. Are we in Palmer going to have a say on this issue? If that language (requiring a
- 33 local vote) is not in the bill, both lawmakers will vote No.
- 34 3. Bills that come before us are very specific; local referendum is very important to
- 35 us. Previous referendum is not pertinent to evolving issues; new issues need to be
- 36 confirmed at the ballot box
- 37 vii. Mr. Burns: We need some kind of mechanism to allow a sliding scale of mitigation and
- 38 community protection from financial injury for host communities and impacted abutters
- 39 1. Mr. Brewer discussed formation of regulations and the process of refinement and
- 40 fine-tuning in the debates
- 41 2. Rep. Smola:
- 42 a. Palmer doesn't have a monopoly on casino gaming
- 43 b. Palmer is in a unique position because of location and transportation
- 44 issues
- 45 c. Palmer may be either host or abutter community; the town must prepare
- 46 for both options
- 47 viii. Will there be a mechanism to encourage local economic development in the region to
- 48 minimize negative impacts?
- 49 1. Sen. Brewer: End of day you're dealing with private companies, lowest bidders
- 50 and best deals

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- 2. Rep. Smola: Massive, new technologic entity (such as a casino) has the impact to “float all boats”; getting legislation to pass is the easy part; fine tuning is where the real difficulty arises
 - ix. Mr. Hebert: Regional vote concerns: other towns should not have a say in what we do.
 - 1. Rep. Smola: We have to represent all the people in our districts; every concern has to be addressed and vetted; question is how much say do others (abutters) have about what you do or don’t do in your town? This issue will be presented and vetted in the legislative proposals
 - 2. Sen. Brewer: Legislation will be framework but hearings and regulations that implement the law can be problems also
 - x. Ms. Barry: Will you have an expanded role in the development of this because of its location?
 - 1. Rep. Smola:
 - a. We are very involved in this issue and staying on top of the legislation, but at present we don’t know what it’s going to look like yet.
 - b. Some communities are being silent about their position; we are doing our homework on the issue. Make sure you are prepared for this issue
 - 2. Sen. Brewer: You have already done due diligence and thoughtful planning; other communities will want to use the information you have gathered
 - b. Mr. Magiera: We should form a subcommittee to investigate, address and present concerns to our reps; consensus agreement. Get ideas to Mr. Magiera by the end of the week for discussion at our next meeting.
5. Mr. Backus moved, Mr. Burns seconded motion to adjourn; Council voted 8-0-0 to adjourn at 2006.

Respectfully submitted by:
Ramon M. Dole
Recording Secretary