

MEETING MINUTES OF THE
PALMER CITIZEN CASINO IMPACT STUDY COMMITTEE
GENERAL GROUP MEETING IO
PALMER TOWN BUILDING, MEETING ROOM I
APRIL 2, 2008 – 6:30 PM

Meeting opened at 6:40 pm by Gerald Chudy, Chair.

ATTENDANCE

PRESENT Rocqueline Blazejowski, Gerald Chudy, Anthony Dimitropolis, CathyAnn Gehlhausen, Ranjan Ghosh, Joseph Mastalerz, George Roy, Stephen Sears, Carol Sugrue, Michael Swiatlowski, Paul Wisnewski

ABSENT Charlotte Burns, Albin Les, Gene Olearczyk, Mark Shea

OTHERS PRESENT Ken Somerville, Phil Hebert (Town Council)

MINUTES APPROVAL

No minutes under review. Minutes for Meeting 9 will be reviewed at Meeting 11.

DISCLOSURE OF APPEARANCE

Town Manager, Richard Fitzgerald, has asked that each member of the PCCISC sign the “Disclosure of Appearance” which asks members to identify any possible conflicts they may have between the committee and the casino interests. G. Chudy will collect the signed paperwork.

GENERAL DISCUSSION

G. Chudy is still working on a date for Representative Smola and Senator Brewer to attend a PCCISC meeting.

G. Chudy begins discussion on the future of the PCCISC regarding recent action by the State Legislature with a suggestion that the committee possibly take a month off from meeting, perhaps in the summer. M. Swiatlowski asks for a more definitive goal for the PCCISC and what our action plan going forward might be?

It is discussed that our goal should be a written report that is presented to the Town Council. It is suggested that the report follow a similar framework that the town of Middleborough had published. M. Swiatlowski will email everyone the link for the Middleborough report to review if they have not yet received it.

A motion was made by A. Dimitropolis that all sub-committees prepare a draft of their findings for the entire committee to review which will be due to the PCCISC on June 25, 2008. P. Wisnewski seconded. The vote passed (11-0).

It is discussed that on June 25th, the entire PCCISC will be given a chance to take home and review the sub-committee findings. At the following meeting the group will discuss any concerns and questions and begin to prepare a single report. No date is assigned for the final report to be presented.

C. Sugrue asks if it is necessary for the PCCISC to meet as a general committee every other week if all of the work at this point is in the sub-committee’s hands? It is discussed that the general committee would like to continue to invite guests to our general meetings.

The following people/groups were identified to invite:

- Representative Todd Smola and Senator Stephen Brewer
- Northeast Reality
- Mohegan Sun
- Paul Burns and David Whitney of the Town Council/Regional Committee

Town Councilor Phil Hebert thanks the committee for it's efforts.

SUB-COMMITTEE REPORTS

Impacts on Infrastructure

The sub-committee has met with the Water, Highway, Water Pollution, and Police Departments and are planning to meet with the Wing Hospital. They have received documents on casino impacts from department heads.

Impacts on Social and Cultural Issues

The sub-committee met with Dave Johnson, Chair of the Conservation Committee, at their last meeting. Mr. Johnson had concerns about wetlands on the proposed casino site and was interested to hear how a developer would address drainage problems coming off if the hill. There are number of underground springs in the area.

The sub-committee is also planning to mail out surveys to all local businesses this Friday. Next week, the sub-committee has invited Stephen Nowak, Chair of the Historical Commission to their next meeting on Thursday, April 10th.

It is discussed that the sub-committee should look into the laws that enable the town to claim open space properties by eminent domain.

Impacts on Housing

The sub-committee did not meet in a formal setting last week but had a general conversation with Lori Stabile, writer for the Republican.

Impacts on Schools

The sub-committee has meet with both superintendents and are preparing drafts of the interviews and information from the casino impact reports both school departments have worked on. Topics such as school choice and English as a Second Language will be addressed.

It is suggested that the sub-committee meet with the school committee.

GENERAL DISCUSSION

It is discussed that any casino impacts on seniors should be addressed in our final report as well as impacts on the employment of other businesses in town. An example of possible job-loss at Big Y as a result of workers finding higher wages at a casino is given. Data on employment should be researched.

The projected population growth that a casino would bring to Palmer should be studied as some members of the PCCISC believe that an 8,000-person increase is exaggerated.

NEXT MEETING

The sub-committees will meet during next week.

G. Chudy will reserve Town Building, Meeting Room 1 for Wednesday, April 16, 2008 at 6:30 pm.

ADJOURNMENT

A motion was made by A. Dimitropolis to adjourn meeting at 8:35 pm.
P. Wisnewski seconded. The vote passed (11:0).

MINUTES SUBMITTED BY MICHAEL SWIATLOWSKI.

APPROVED – JULY 9, 2008