

MEETING MINUTES OF THE
PALMER CITIZEN CASINO IMPACT STUDY COMMITTEE
GENERAL GROUP MEETING II
PALMER TOWN BUILDING, MEETING ROOM I
JUNE 25, 2008 – 6:30 PM

Meeting opened at 6:35 pm by Anthony Dimitropolis, Vice Chair.

ATTENDANCE

PRESENT Charlotte Burns, Anthony Dimitropolis, Joseph Mastalerz, George Roy, Carol Sugrue, Michael Swiatlowski, Paul Wisnewski

ABSENT Rocqueline Blazejowski, Gerald Chudy, CathyAnn Gehlhausen, Ranjan Ghosh, Albin Les, Gene Olearczyk, Stephen Sears, Mark Shea

OTHERS PRESENT Ken Somerville, Maria Donato (Re/Max Realty)

MINUTES APPROVAL

No minutes under review due to length of time between meetings.
Minutes for General Meetings 9 and 10 will be reviewed at next meeting.

DISCUSSION WITH MARIA DONATO

Maria Donato discusses current housing market for Palmer and the surrounding areas. Donato states that it is obvious the market is very tough right now for sellers and no relief is in sight.

When asked her opinion on how a casino in Palmer might affect the market, Donato answers that the more people that come into town would mean more growth to the real estate market as far as house prices are concerned. She states that it would be a boon to single and multi-family units.

A. Dimitropolis asks how much of an increase in property values would there be? Donato replies that it would depend on a number of factors, but perhaps double for multi-family houses.

Ken Somerville asks if there are real estate agents buying property in town, with the intention of holding it until a casino is built? Donato answers that this practice is not a normal procedure for agents. There may be rumors of this around town, but not everyone is certain about the outcome of either a growth to the market or that a casino will ever be built in town.

P. Wisnewski states that there is no evidence of this type of behavior. There has been talk of a casino for years and the town has not seen any growth or any wave of land purchases from new developers. Donato agrees that there hasn't been activity from investors looking for big property.

A discussion follows surrounding the percentage of rental units that Palmer has. It is noted that Palmer has the highest percentage of rental units in the immediate area. The town also has the ability to place restrictions on types of housing and promote various development options.

G. Roy asks about current house sales in Palmer. Donato answers that she is still selling, but the market is down everywhere. She also states that this down turn does

not have anything to do with the prospect of a casino in town. This is questioned by C. Burns and C. Sugrue.

C. Burns asks Maria Donato if she has any knowledge of the real estate market in Ledyard and Montville, CT? Donato responds that she is not very familiar with it, but has heard the real estate planning for the casino was not in place in those towns.

A discussion follows about the house prices in Boston. Donato states that due to the high cost of gas, people are opting to buy property closer to where they work instead of driving.

Ken Somerville asks Maria Donato's own personal opinion the development of a casino in Palmer? Donato responds that if the casino is done properly, meaning if a great deal of thought and planning goes into the development, she feels it could be very favorable to the town.

P. Wisnewski asks how long a house stays on the market today and if she can compare that time frame to a few years ago. Donato answers that today a house in Palmer is typically on the market for over 160 days. Last year it would have been approximately 120 days. A few years ago it would be 60-90 days and in the best of years it was hard to hold a house on the market for more than 30 days. She restated that there are lot of factors contributing to this.

Maria Donato was thanked for her time and opinions.

GENERAL DISCUSSION

M. Swiatlowski states a growing confusion surrounding our sub-committee reports and a schedule of upcoming meetings. He will contact G. Chudy to try and resolve these issues and email the entire group with the information.

A motion was made by P. Wisnewski to contact the Chairman with a schedule and agenda for upcoming meetings. J. Mastalerz seconded. The vote passed (7:0).

It is discussed and agreed by the group that we should hold one general meeting in July and one general meeting in August. In September we should resume two meetings a month to develop our committee report to the Town Council.

UPCOMING MEETINGS

Wednesday, July 9 – sub-committee overview

Wednesday, August 6 – (no agenda set, perhaps a guest speaker)

Wednesday, September 3 – all sub-committee reports DUE to the general committee

ADJOURNMENT

A motion was made by C. Sugrue to adjourn meeting at 8:15 pm.

P. Wisnewski seconded. The vote passed (7:0).

MINUTES SUBMITTED BY MICHAEL SWIATLOWSKI.

APPROVED – JULY 9, 2008