

MEETING MINUTES OF THE
PALMER CITIZEN CASINO IMPACT STUDY COMMITTEE
GENERAL GROUP MEETING 21
PALMER TOWN BUILDING, MEETING ROOM 1
DECEMBER 3, 2008 – 6:30 PM

Meeting opened at 6:35 pm by Gerald Chudy, Chair.

ATTENDANCE

PRESENT Rocqueline Blazejowski, Gerald Chudy, CathyAnn Gehlhausen, Joseph Mastalerz, Stephen Sears, Michael Swiatlowski, Paul Wisnewski

ABSENT Charlotte Burns, Anthony Dimitropolis, Mickey Ghosh, George Roy, Carol Sugrue

GENERAL DISCUSSION

A group discussion is had regarding the extent of infrastructure impacts that Mohegan Sun will be responsible for improving. S. Sears states that thus far, Mohegan Sun has only made commitments to build the two entrances to the site. It is assumed they will be responsible for any improvements directly involved with the site, but it is not known who will be responsible for the indirect improvements.

The discussion moves to the presentation of this committee's final report. Some suggestions are: a formal presentation to the Town Council; a turnover of our final documents and our availability should the Town Council have questions; each sub-committee present their findings separately.

MINUTES APPROVAL

A motion is made by P. Wisnewski to accept the minutes for Meeting 20 as written. G. Chudy seconded. The vote passed (5:0 with 2 abstentions).

OLD BUSINESS

P. Wisnewski distributes his write-up and documentation of his discussion with Top Floor Learning and the Palmer Public Library.

G. Chudy reads a letter he received from Senator Brewer and Representative Smola thanking the committee for our efforts.

REVIEW OF EDUCATION SUB-COMMITTEE REPORT

S. Sears begins by making the point that we are working towards a moving target. He cites the inconsistent employee figure of 3,000 to 4,000 jobs projected by Mohegan Sun as an example.

S. Sears notes that Superintendent Gerald Fournier has done his homework with regards to a casino in Palmer. Fournier paints a very expensive picture if Palmer needs to hire a number of ESL or ELL teachers (English as a Second Language or English Language Learners). P. Wisnewski comments that Top Floor Learning may be able to use certified ESL personnel to teach adults in the community.

S. Sears states that there are 750 empty desks in the school system right now, but that number is spread over three different schools. He asks what if we see a major

increase in only Old Mill Pond? The school age of the children may not fit with our existing structure.

P. Wisnewski asks if new school construction funding would come from the state as opposed to Mohegan Sun directly? A discussion regarding how and where the town would receive funding for any needs—from the state or from the developer?

S. Sears clarifies that this report notes the sub-committee's interview with Dr. Fournier.

S. Sears states that with regard to Pathfinder and their interview with Dr. Gerald L. Paist, the town doesn't have the sole authority power with regards to expansion. It is a regional issue involving eight towns. Pathfinder currently enrolls 670 students and could accommodate 80 more students. However, Palmer is only entitled to 20% of the student population and Pathfinder is under no obligation to expand.

S. Sears begins discussion regarding a Hospitality Management class on the Mohegan Sun site. G. Chudy asks if this would be similar to other on-site training facilities? S. Sears answers that Dr. Paist has a course taught at the hotel complex, not in the school in mind. Having this off-campus course would potentially free up space at Pathfinder for more students.

A discussion takes place with the committee regarding the funding for communities near tribal casinos. Those communities may receive funding from the Bureau of Indian Affairs and in our case, Palmer would not qualify.

The discussion continues to the subject of population increase and the notion that proximity to a casino does not always indicate a higher population impact. The example of Norwich, CT is given because of their large number of rental properties.

S. Sears takes the committee through the bullet points of his interview of Fred Allyn, Jr, Mayor of Ledyard, CT. There are no direct payments to Ledyard made by the casino on an annual basis. The town does receive 1.1 million dollars from the state as part of the state's collection of 25% of slot revenues.

S. Sears also takes the committee through the bullet points of his discussions with the Norwich and Montville Superintendents. He also discusses other school districts such as Tunica Ms, Henderson Nv, Aurora Il, and Biloxi Ms. These towns and cities were mentioned by Mohegan Sun as having benefited directly by hosting a casino. S. Sears has not found any direct funding from the casino to the host community.

S. Sears takes the committee through a discussion on the different scenarios of the population increases. P. Wisnewski disagrees with the presentation of scenario 1 and scenario 2 as he states the numbers included are beyond possibilities. This leads into large discussion regarding all the variables that can go into a scenario to make it feasible.

C. Gehlhausen adds that educational impacts go well beyond ESL. Other impacts could be the number of free lunches, classroom size, etc.

Consensus of the committee is to find out facts on Wilkes-Barre and gain information from their statistics. P. Wisnewski volunteers to contact Wilkes-Barre mayor.

ADJOURNMENT

A motion is made by P. Wisnewski to adjourn meeting at 9:00 pm.

R. Blazejowski seconded. The vote passed (7:0).

MINUTES SUBMITTED BY MICHAEL SWIAȚŁOWSKI.

APPROVED – JANUARY 21, 2009