

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts
Massachusetts Gaming Commission

Meeting Minutes

Date: August 8, 2012

Time: 4:45 p.m.

Place: Western New England University
Rivers Memorial Hall
1215 Wilbraham Road
Springfield, Massachusetts

Present: Commissioner Stephen P. Crosby, Chairman
Commissioner Gayle Cameron
Commissioner James F. McHugh
Commissioner Bruce Stebbins
Commissioner Enrique Zuniga

Absent: None

Call to Order:

Chairman Crosby opened the 21st meeting. He stated that the purpose of the meeting was, in part, to address questions submitted by the audience to the Commission during the just-completed forum.

Commissioner Stebbins read the first question, “I am interested in the process, is there any way I can help and in what ways might I participate?” Commissioner Stebbins recommended that anyone who is interested in process should follow the Commission on social media and stay on top of the process. Commissioner McHugh stated that the Commission welcomes ideas from the public on any aspect of its business. Commissioner Zuniga stated that the process for promulgating formal Commission regulations requires a series of public meetings and public comment at, and in advance of, these meetings will be helpful.

Commissioner Stebbins read the next question which was, “What safeguards are there in the expanded gaming act that would ensure proposals for development are for resort casinos and not gaming parlors?” Commissioner Stebbins stated that the Commission has the ability to license one gaming parlor/slot parlor, but for the destination style casino the minimum investment required is a half billion dollars and due to these requirements the end product will be resort casinos. He stated that as a proposal goes through the local process, the public can demand a resort casino. Commissioner McHugh stated that two portions of the statute focus collectively on a resort casino and not simply a hall with slot machines and table games. The statute has been carefully written to drive the Commission’s attention, the attention of the cities and towns, and the developer, toward a resort casino.

Chairman Crosby asked if Commissioners thought any topics touched on today should be discussed now. Commissioner Zuniga stated that a recurrent theme today was partnerships and the idea of having memoranda of understanding. He thought that there would be value in having

cities and towns report on the execution of the responsibilities the memoranda of understanding contain so that a record would be available for future phases of the Commission's work or other work involving the same participants. Chairman Crosby asked whether specific marketing and advertising requirements be put in place as the Commission moves into the Phase 2 RFA process or whether the Commission should simply advise applicants to be creative about, for example, joint marketing ideas. Commissioner McHugh stated that listening to the speakers raised for him broad questions about close the Commission wanted to achieve through the casino licensing process. For example, did the Commission want to open up downtown areas thereby bringing people into a region they otherwise would not visit? If so, a series of decisions and criteria would flow from that decision. He stated that starting to think about broad goals on a regional level would be a great start, with a number of decisions flowing from the goals on which the Commission decided. Commissioner Cameron stated that the Commission should not value one type of scenario over another, e.g., an urban versus a suburban location. She stated that each application should be considered on its merits and the Commission should see what the applicant's plan would bring to the region. Successful models exist for urban and rural casinos and the Commission should not have any predetermined ideas about whether an urban overall development is better. Commissioner Zuniga stated that he sees the location as a proxy for other things, such as whether one proposal has a better workforce development plan than another. He thought that the Commission will have to set up criteria in advance and grade each respondent on its own merit, regardless of location.

Commissioner Stebbins stated that the statute lays out some pretty clear criteria and how the Commission evaluates a license application is going to differ based on region and the goals of the local region. He stated that one of the takeaways he had from the community mitigation component of today's forum was that the Commission should explore entering some type of agreement with the regional planning agencies to have them as a partner in the evaluation of the RFA-2 phase because they will see some of the community impacts the Commission will not see.

Chairman Crosby stated that the Commission will have an ombudsman for the communities and developers on board within a month or so. He suggested giving thought to having a point person to coordinate the workforce development process.

Chairman Crosby then announced that the Commission is today formally beginning the licensing process and he welcomed all developers to file an application fee and thereby obtain the status of applicants, with the access to permitting authorities that status will bring. He stated that the Commission will be distributing a certification form for applicants to fill out to accompany deposit of the \$400,000 non-refundable application fee. The form was made available at the meeting and will be available on the Commission website.

Thereupon, on motion made and unanimously approved, the meeting was adjourned.

/s/ James F. McHugh
James F. McHugh
Secretary