

COMMONWEALTH OF MASSACHUSETTS
MASSACHUSETTS GAMING COMMISSION

PUBLIC MEETING

(VOLUME 2)

COMMISSIONERS

James F. McHugh

Bruce W. Stebbins

Enrique Zuniga

RE: HOST COMMUNITY HEARING IN LEOMINSTER

January 28, 2014

5:37 p.m. to 6:20 p.m.

LEOMINSTER CITY HALL

25 West Street

Leominster, Massachusetts

P R O C E E D I N G S

COMMISSIONER MCHUGH: All right.

Good evening, everybody. I'd like to call the meeting to order, please. Good evening to all of you. And I would like to call to order the continuation of the hearing, statutory hearing pursuant to Chapter 23K Section 17C that we began on December 3rd of last year when we were in this beautiful hall surrounded by Christmas trees, that I understand all were sold and the proceeds went to the charities that they normally serve.

This evening's proceedings are limited in scope. They're designed to focus on the major changes that have occurred since the December 3rd meeting, and will focus on comments about the surrounding community agreements between the applicant, PPE Casino Resorts and the town of Bolton and the town of Fitchburg. And the topics and the comments that we'll receive tonight will be limited to those

1 subjects, as our notice of the meeting
2 suggested.

3 To start off, the order of events
4 tonight will be a brief welcome from the
5 Mayor, who we look forward to hearing from.
6 And then a brief presentation by a
7 representative of the applicant. And then
8 we will open the floor for the comments
9 from those who have signed up to speak.
10 And then we will close the hearing.

11 And then that marks, as I'll say at
12 the end, and explain in greater detail, an
13 important milestone for this process.
14 Unfortunately Chairman Crosby and
15 Commissioner Cameron had conflicts that
16 presented -- prevented them from being with
17 us tonight. We're here because of the fact
18 that the closing of this hearing does begin
19 a time clock and we wanted to keep that
20 clock running.

21 So, without further adieu, but with
22 enormous thanks for your hospitality, Mayor
23 Mazzarella, I look forward to your
24 comments.

1 MR. MAZZARELLA: Thank you. Just
2 want to welcome you to the city again.

3 COMMISSIONER ZUNIGA: Thank you.

4 MR. MAZZARELLA: And in keeping with
5 the scope of comments tonight, I won't make
6 any because I think mine have been made.
7 And we're hoping that everyone will stay
8 within that scope tonight, but let me just
9 say it's been an interesting process. I've
10 been mayor for twenty years, I just started
11 my twenty-first year and I never thought
12 I'd be involved in a process like this.
13 So, as I have said we're pioneers to some
14 extent. And it's been an interesting, and
15 I've been very impressed by the process.
16 It's not only interesting, but impressive.

17 And I think you've done a wonderful
18 job and deserve a little pat on your back.
19 And you've been more than fair and willing
20 to listen to as many people that wanted to
21 come here to this auditorium last time.
22 And I think it was around five hours. So,
23 I'm glad you got to come here preholiday to
24 see all of the trees and learn a little bit

1 about who we are and picture of my mother
2 and Johnny Appleseed, and everybody else in
3 between.

4 So, thank you and welcome.

5 COMMISSIONER MCHUGH: Thank you very
6 much, Mr. Mayor. Mr. Snyder, on behalf of
7 the applicant, would you like to make a
8 presentation?

9 MR. SNYDER: Thank you, Mr. McHugh.
10 I'm Jeff Snyder. I'm vice president of
11 development and the development director
12 for this project for the Cordish Companies.

13 We're really here after the multiple
14 times that -- that we've testified before
15 the Commission, we're here really to
16 listen. We're very proud of the fact that
17 we've signed agreements with all six of the
18 surrounding communities. Including Bolton.
19 And then also we signed an agreement with
20 Fitchburg, which we're very gratified that
21 we were able to -- able to sign, even
22 though they were not designated as a
23 surrounding community.

24 So again, we thank you. And if you

1 -- if you have any questions, I'm here to
2 answer, but really I'm here to listen
3 tonight and to -- and to close this session
4 and hopefully to get to the end of the
5 process. Thank you.

6 COMMISSIONER MCHUGH: Thank you, Mr.
7 Snyder. I want to, before you sit down, I
8 want to congratulate you, and I want to
9 congratulate the officials of Fitchburg and
10 the officials of Bolton. I know Mr. Lowe
11 is here someplace tonight in the back, for
12 reaching voluntarily the surrounding
13 community agreements that you were able to
14 reach.

15 The fact you were able to do so
16 allows us to move forward with this process
17 more quickly than we would have been able
18 to do otherwise. And more importantly, the
19 kinds of agreements that you can reach
20 consentually, voluntarily, by sitting down
21 at a table and talking over sometimes
22 difficult issues are far better than the
23 agreements that could come out of
24 arbitration or be constructed

1 involuntarily. So, I congratulate all of
2 you who participated in the process for
3 reaching -- for reaching that result.

4 MR. SNYDER: Thank you.

5 COMMISSIONER MCHUGH: I note as well
6 that Representative Rosa is here tonight.
7 He's been here. He was here the last
8 meeting, a strong interest in this. I
9 understand Representative Rosa that you do
10 not wish to speak tonight. But I want to
11 note your presence.

12 MR. ROSA: I'll pass on speaking.
13 I've already spoken on two separate
14 occasions. I did send you a document on a
15 transportation plan that I'd like to see
16 put in place. So, if you would just read
17 that, I'd be happy.

18 COMMISSIONER MCHUGH: All right.
19 Sir, thank you very much. That raises an
20 important point. We have, in addition to
21 those who have signed up to talk tonight,
22 received a number of comments by e-mail,
23 and by letter. All those are comments that
24 we've read. There are some that have come

1 in very recently and we will continue to
2 read all of those. You may be assured that
3 we pay close attention to all of them.

4 And I also note that Mr. Marchand is
5 here, the president of the City Council.
6 Do I have that correct? Is here, and but I
7 understand does not want to speak either.

8 So, with noting the presence of
9 those gentlemen, I'm prepared to move
10 forward now with those who have signed up
11 to speak. We are going to limit, as I
12 mentioned and as the notice of the hearing
13 mentions, the commentary to commentary on
14 those two agreements. And we are going to
15 have, as the order of notice also
16 mentioned, a five-minute time limit.
17 We've, for the assistance of everybody,
18 brought a timer here, which we'll start as
19 each person speaks, so that we can keep
20 track of the time.

21 And with that in mind, I'm going to
22 go in the order that we have people on the
23 sign-up sheet. And the first of those is
24 Mary Healey (sic) if I've got that correct.

1 MS. HEAFY: Close.

2 COMMISSIONER MCHUGH: Good evening,
3 ma'am.

4 MS. HEAFY: Thank you. My name is
5 Mary Heafy.

6 COMMISSIONER MCHUGH: Heafy, I'm
7 sorry.

8 MS. HEAFY: Good Irish name. I am
9 the CEO of the ARC of Opportunity in North
10 Central Massachusetts, located in
11 Fitchburg.

12 The ARC is a sixty-two-year-old
13 civil and human rights movement supporting
14 people with disabilities and their
15 families. Our office is located in
16 Fitchburg. We're the largest employer in
17 downtown Fitchburg, and we contribute
18 greatly to the Fitchburg economy.

19 As I said, we support people with
20 disabilities throughout North Central. My
21 suspicion is that many of the folks in the
22 room are friends and neighbors, go to
23 church with, and know the people we
24 support.

1 What I want to be clear about is
2 that that group of people has a seventy-
3 seven percent unemployment rate. Far
4 greater than the rest of the population,
5 even in a tough economy. The reason the
6 ARC is supporting this initiative is
7 because of the Cordish Group's commitment
8 to employment of this grossly under served
9 population. Not only are we talking about
10 jobs, real jobs that add meaning to
11 people's lives that allow them to be
12 taxpayers, but also to design training that
13 will help us skill build in the area of
14 customer service. Maybe that will benefit
15 the people who have jobs with the Cordish
16 Group, but it will also benefit other
17 employers as well.

18 The ARC has a legacy of changing
19 lives of people with disabilities one
20 person at a time. We focus on individuals.
21 We help people find jobs that are
22 meaningful to them. Not everyone will want
23 to work in this environment, but many
24 people do.

1 As adults, if I met any of you in
2 another setting, we would rapidly discover,
3 so what do you do for work. That's a way
4 that adults get to know each other. And if
5 you're somebody who's been chronically
6 unemployed because you have a disability,
7 you don't have that entry into the adult
8 world. And your identity becomes I'm a
9 person with a disability. I have a
10 disability, but it's not the first thing
11 you're going to know about me because as
12 many people with disabilities who are
13 competent and capable and able to work,
14 there are many other features to them.

15 The Cordish Group is really offering
16 a foot in the door that will change lives.
17 They will partner with us to do that. So,
18 I want to stress that for us it will mean
19 employment; it will mean fueling the
20 economy when those dollars go back to pay
21 for shopping and food, and everything else.
22 And that we are very much in support and
23 hope that the Commission will recognize
24 that this will help us change the lives of

1 people with disabilities. Thank you.

2 COMMISSIONER MCHUGH: All right.
3 Thank you. Mr. Ziemba reminded me that on
4 the agenda is an opportunity for the
5 representatives of the town of Bolton and
6 the town of Fitchburg, surrounding
7 communities, to speak. Mr. Lowe, if -- I
8 didn't understand that you did, but if you
9 do, we'd welcome your -- your comments.

10 MR. LOWE: Thank you, Commissioner.
11 Don Lowe, town administrator for Bolton. I
12 will be unusually brief.

13 First of all, I would like to thank
14 the Commission. I think the Commission has
15 been very -- has run a very open process.
16 I think you've run a very fair process, and
17 you've shown great wisdom in granting
18 Bolton its surrounding community status
19 that it sought through its petition. So,
20 thank you for that on behalf of the town of
21 Bolton.

22 The only other thing that I would
23 like to say is that having been granted the
24 surrounding community status and having

1 been given an additional thirty days with
2 which to negotiate with -- with Cordish, we
3 -- I think we used the time well.
4 Selectman Larry Delaney and I negotiated
5 directly with Joe Weinberg, the CEO and
6 managing partner. We had three or four
7 teleconferences which were conducted in a
8 very civil and businesslike manner. We --
9 we were always able to stay on point. We
10 had a very data driven discussion and we --
11 we finally arrived at an agreement that we
12 thought was probably about as fair as we
13 were going to be able to get within the
14 construct of the law.

15 So, again I would like to just
16 acknowledge that I thought Cordish did deal
17 with us quite fairly and evenhandedly. And
18 that's pretty much all I have to say,
19 unless the Commission has any questions for
20 me.

21 COMMISSIONER MCHUGH: Colleagues?
22 Well, I offer to you face-to-face then the
23 same congratulations I offered a minute
24 ago. I think the fact that you were able

1 to sit down and reach this agreement -- is
2 is a service to -- to the -- to your
3 constituents and -- and to the process in
4 general. So, congratulations.

5 MR. LOWE: Thank you.

6 COMMISSIONER MCHUGH: Thank you, Mr.
7 Lowe. And Mr. John Barrett from the city
8 of Fitchburg. Good evening, Mr. Barrett.

9 MR. BARRETT: Thank you, Judge
10 McHugh and Commissioners. I'm John
11 Barrett. I'm the city solicitor for
12 Fitchburg.

13 And the only thing I -- I've come
14 here tonight to do would be to just read
15 for you the letter from the mayor, Mayor
16 Lisa Wong to Joe Weinberg on behalf -- at
17 the time when which the city did agree to
18 the -- the community, surrounding community
19 agreement that we came to reach with PPE.
20 So, if I can just state the letter. It's
21 addressed again to Mr. Joseph Weinberg,
22 president of PPE Casino Resorts, Mass, LLC.

23 (As read:) Dear Mr. Weinberg,
24 enclosed please find the surrounding

1 community agreement which has been approved
2 by the city of Fitchburg. The city has
3 agreed to enter into this agreement
4 expressly based on the commitments made by
5 PPE Casino Resorts, Mass., LLC, that will
6 be hiring residents of Fitchburg,
7 contracting with local businesses and using
8 local vendors. I look forward to sitting
9 down with you and working out the actual
10 steps that can be taken to achieve these
11 commitments. While the money offered in
12 this agreement is less than we believe
13 necessary to address the impacts of our
14 community, we will seek such funds from the
15 community mitigation fund as are needed to
16 address these concerns. The city of
17 Fitchburg's motivation has always been to
18 seek the most beneficial proposal for the
19 residents of Fitchburg, and to seek a
20 stronger commitment to support local
21 employment as well as the local economy.
22 Sincerely, Lisa A. Wong, Mayor. And it's
23 also signed by Jody Joseph, City Council
24 President.

1 And that's really all I had to say,
2 Judge McHugh. Just to state I guess, that
3 we look forward, if the application is
4 approved, look forward to working with PPE
5 and -- and hopefully to the benefit of the
6 whole area.

7 COMMISSIONER MCHUGH: Thank you, Mr.
8 Barrett. And please offer the same
9 congratulations to the mayor that I offered
10 earlier tonight.

11 MR. BARRETT: Okay. Thank you.

12 COMMISSIONER MCHUGH: All right.
13 Now, the next person I have on the list is
14 Peter Ingemi.

15 MR. INGEMI: Ingemi.

16 COMMISSIONER MCHUGH: Ingemi. All
17 right. Mr. Ingemi.

18 MR. INGEMI: Good evening, my name
19 is Peter Ingemi. I'm a nationally known
20 writer and blogger, and a syndicated talk
21 show host here in Massachusetts. But I'm
22 also a resident of Fitchburg. And that's
23 why I've taken off my hat and scarf because
24 I'm appearing here as a resident of

1 Fitchburg, rather than as a reporter for
2 the next few minutes.

3 As a person who's lived in Fitchburg
4 all their life, I certainly understand the
5 desire to bring any kind of new employment
6 to the area. And it's a very -- it's a
7 very sweet and tempting thing, especially
8 for a person like me who has sons who have
9 not been able to find better work in order
10 to try to keep them there. But I have to
11 say that while it's a temptation, I think
12 it's basically a piece of wax fruit. It
13 looks a very, very nice and it looks very
14 good when you put it on the table. But
15 once you take a bite it's not going to be
16 as tasty as you think it is.

17 I'm sure that the agreement was
18 negotiated in good faith, and I'm sure that
19 the city council and the people involved
20 did their best. But I think that the
21 social costs that will especially hit a
22 place like Fitchburg, and will spill over
23 to Leominster, are not being properly
24 considered or addressed.

1 Right now in Fitchburg for example,
2 you can buy EBT cards on Water Street, not
3 far from where I live, for fifty cents on
4 the dollar. So, that the people selling
5 them can buy cigarettes and alcohol. Once
6 there's a gaming parlor in Leominster,
7 that's going to seem like nothing. The
8 money that is normally spent on lottery
9 tickets, which is in itself a dubious
10 process, a tax on the poor as I call it, is
11 going to be spent at the slot parlor. So,
12 in terms of the -- we may gain money from
13 the agreement, but we will lose money in
14 other gambling that the state has already
15 sanctioned.

16 And I feel that not only is it going
17 to be a tax on the poor in the area, but
18 the social costs from increased crime, from
19 break-ins and the like that will come from
20 this because as gambling, anyone who's had
21 an addiction will tell you, that gambling
22 is as strong an addiction as anything else
23 from alcohol to drugs, from whatever. And
24 in a community that's already depressed,

1 where you already have a large amount of
2 people on assistance who are -- and again
3 taxed by gambling already, in the hopes of
4 getting out of a bad situation I feel that
5 although the agreement again, I assume the
6 good faith of the mayor, I assume the good
7 faith of the people looking to open a
8 business as a free market type, of course
9 there are big advantages. And I understand
10 those advantages. But I feel that the
11 current agreement and the costs, the social
12 costs for Fitchburg and the social costs
13 which will not remain in Fitchburg, which
14 will spill over to the surrounding
15 communities is much higher than anyone
16 wants to acknowledge.

17 Now, I would be thrilled to be wrong
18 about this if the -- if you choose to put
19 the slots parlor in Leominster and what I
20 believe is going to happen doesn't happen,
21 and my sons end up getting good job there,
22 no one will be happier than me. But given
23 the realities of the situation, I think
24 that this is a porch that with all due

1 respect to the people of Leominster who
2 voted overwhelmingly for this by, you know,
3 sixty percent, I think that this will be a
4 bad agreement for Fitchburg. I think it'll
5 be a bad agreement for Leominster. And I
6 would urge both the people and the
7 Commission to think long and hard before
8 they approve the parlor in this particular
9 area.

10 Thank you very much.

11 COMMISSIONER MCHUGH: All right.
12 All right, sir. Thank you, Mr. Ingemi.
13 The next person on the list is Linda
14 Racine. Good evening, ma'am.

15 MS. RACINE: Good evening. My name
16 is Linda Racine. And I'm a Fitchburg
17 resident, and executive vice president of
18 Old Stone Bank and Trust, a 168 year-old
19 Fitchburg-based company, a local community
20 bank. We urge the MGC to license the PPE
21 Casino Resort Mass. application.

22 The Cordish Company extended a
23 surrounding community agreement to
24 Fitchburg. After the MGC determined that

1 there is no adverse impact qualifying the
2 city for one, is yet another example of the
3 regional understanding and approach. The
4 agreement is fair and includes Fitchburg
5 among those communities eligible for future
6 mitigation if needed.

7 The local economy needs the
8 construction, and permanent jobs,
9 commercial activity of the operating casino
10 and the visitor traffic to be generated to
11 the attractions. We support the
12 establishment of the slots parlor in
13 Leominster because we believe it will be an
14 ongoing benefit to Fitchburg residents and
15 businesses, as well as the entire region.
16 Thank you.

17 COMMISSIONER MCHUGH: Thank you very
18 much, Ms. Racine. Next on the list is
19 Anthony Mercadante. Good evening, sir.

20 MR. MERCADANTE: Good evening,
21 members of the Commission. My name is Tony
22 Mercadante. I'm fifty-four years old and
23 I'm a lifelong resident of Fitchburg.
24 Having lived in three separate areas of the

1 city over my lifetime, I'm quite familiar
2 with the traffic conditions throughout the
3 entire city.

4 My business, Mercadante and
5 Mercadante, P.C., a certified public
6 accounting firm, and it's located in
7 downtown Fitchburg, 29 Mechanic Street,
8 just beyond the upper common section of
9 Main Street. The business was founded in
10 1960 by my father, and I have worked there
11 full-time since 1981.

12 Casino gambling and gaming is not a
13 passion for me. I can state that I have
14 never been to any of the operations in
15 Rhode Island or Connecticut. From a
16 personal perspective, it is likely that my
17 wife and I would visit the new facility on
18 occasion, but I can safely state that we
19 would not be frequent patrons. That being
20 said, I have no issue with other residents
21 of the area, of surrounding communities
22 enjoying the facility.

23 I understand that some citizens will
24 have a problem with gambling addiction.

1 However given the fact that weekly bus
2 tours mainly for our retired citizens are
3 run from this area to casinos in
4 Connecticut and Rhode Island, I would be in
5 favor of keeping this business in the north
6 central county.

7 Most importantly, my understanding
8 is that the slots casino would create 600
9 new permanent jobs in the area. I am
10 strongly in favor of this business locating
11 to Leominster to create local jobs.
12 Further, there will likely be additional
13 benefit to the area based upon increased
14 economic activity for businesses located
15 near the casino.

16 As a resident and business owner in
17 Fitchburg, I see a direct benefit to the
18 city. And that some of these new jobs
19 undoubtedly will be provided to Fitchburg
20 residents.

21 Finally, as I mentioned above, I am
22 quite familiar with the traffic conditions
23 all over the city of Fitchburg and the
24 problems that exist at peak hours. It is

1 my opinion that the location of the slots
2 casino in southeast Leominster located near
3 Route 190 and Route 117 will have little or
4 no effect on traffic conditions in
5 Fitchburg.

6 Further, having reviewed the
7 surrounding community -- surrounding towns
8 community agreement, it's my understanding
9 that Fitchburg would be able to petition
10 the Commission for relief in the event that
11 some unforeseen condition may be caused by
12 the location of the slots casino.

13 Again, as a resident and business
14 owner in Fitchburg, I am in strong favor of
15 the proposed slots casino in Leominster.

16 I thank you for the time to speak.

17 COMMISSIONER MCHUGH: Thank you,
18 sir. Next is Steven Cote. Steven Cote?
19 Yeah.

20 MR. COTE: My name's Steven Cote. I
21 live here in Leominster. I hope you guys
22 are enjoying the cold here. But --

23 COMMISSIONER MCHUGH: Well, we're --
24 we're all enjoying the cold I suppose.

1 Yeah, it's nice to be in a warm place
2 though.

3 MR. COTE: I'm pretty sure Mr.
4 Snyder is enjoying it, too, so -- but yeah,
5 I -- I agree with Fitchburg being part of
6 it, but if you make it on record that
7 Fitchburg's one of the highest crime rates
8 in the state of Massachusetts. And when it
9 happens, when you bring -- when you bring
10 that here, when there's a lot of activity
11 here, that crime transfers over. And when
12 you have a casino here, there's a lot of
13 crime because I've been out to the one in
14 Iowa upon visiting family a couple of years
15 ago. And I -- I saw things go down there.
16 And I've seen drunken visitors that the
17 workers just stood there and didn't bother
18 to help.

19 And I also noticed when I've been to
20 that casino and Foxwoods a couple of years
21 ago, that I've seen mostly big change, and
22 that strikes you as kind of odd because
23 they're going to do business with the big
24 chains. In order to bring business back to

1 the city and back to Fitchburg and back to
2 Bolton is to invest in small businesses.
3 Because when you invest in small businesses
4 you help them expand, you help them employ
5 more locals in the area.

6 What it also does is that it breaks
7 up family values because a lot of divorces
8 happen -- occur across the state,
9 especially this area because of lack of
10 money. And families should not go through
11 that. Alcohol is a big issue about
12 families breaking up. And we -- Leominster
13 does not need that at all. And Leominster
14 is a strong family city. I have a family
15 here for decades. And when you bring in
16 big change and big businesses, that are
17 going to provoke people to do really
18 unnecessary things and really stupid things
19 that are going to break them up, it's going
20 to happen. It's going to create abuse.
21 It's going to create violence it's -- with
22 women and children.

23 So, and that is included. And it's
24 shameful. And like I said, it's not going

1 to work out for small businesses. It's not
2 going to work out for senior citizens, and
3 what -- what we need to do is we need to
4 stick here to small businesses, reinvest in
5 small business here, and not big change.
6 And this is just coming from a future
7 senator from Massachusetts.

8 Thank you.

9 COMMISSIONER MCHUGH: All right,
10 sir. Thank you very much. Next is Charlie
11 Valena (sic.)

12 MR. VALERA: Valera.

13 COMMISSIONER MCHUGH: Valera.

14 MR. VALERA: That's all right.

15 COMMISSIONER MCHUGH: Sorry.

16 MR. VALERA: It's close. Well, I
17 guess you know the glass is either half
18 empty or half-full. I happen to be in
19 favor of the proposal from the Cordish
20 Group.

21 I own a flight center, a flight
22 school down at the Fitchburg Airport. And
23 I also help run Skyline Flight, which is an
24 air charter and air taxi service in

1 Fitchburg. The airport is a pretty big
2 deal down there. We have an awful lot of
3 traffic coming in and out of there. And I
4 think that's an opening for the city of
5 Fitchburg to prosper.

6 I actually think that's there's
7 great opportunity here to ride the success
8 from a successful company, the Cordish
9 Group.

10 And bringing in some commercial
11 activities closer to not only the airport
12 but the entryway to the city can actually
13 be a reality by everybody if it's planned
14 out properly. It would be up to the city
15 leaders to make it all work. But I do
16 believe a very successful partnership has
17 now begun.

18 I also believe central Mass. needs a
19 really big boost. And a slots parlor is
20 far from a full casino. It's big enough to
21 create jobs and stimulate growth, but small
22 enough for central Mass. I'd really like
23 to see this happen. I think it's good for
24 the area, for the economy as a whole.

1 Thank you for coming.

2 COMMISSIONER MCHUGH: Thank you very
3 much, sir. Next, I have Stephen Mullaney.

4 MR. MULLANEY: Good evening,
5 Chairman and fellow Commissioners. I'm
6 Stephen Mullaney. I live in Leominster.
7 I've spoken before you previously.

8 My firm has done some consulting
9 work for Cordish Company. I'm also a
10 director of the North Central Chamber of
11 Commerce. I'm here to speak to you about
12 Bolton, and I'm echoing some of the
13 comments that you heard from town
14 administrator Don Lowe.

15 In an article published in the
16 Clinton Item newspaper, a weekly newspaper
17 that covers Bolton, last Friday it quotes
18 Mr. Lowe as saying "I believe the Board of
19 Selectmen has positioned the town as well
20 as it could in the event that Cordish wins
21 the award." Mr. Lowe's comment then and
22 his comment tonight speaks well of the
23 cooperative way in which the Bolton
24 agreement came together.

1 I also want to call your attention
2 to the fact that Bolton is the only
3 community that you, as a commission,
4 designated as a surrounding community.
5 Yes, there were several that Cordish had
6 designated on their own. And then
7 graciously they offered Fitchburg
8 afterward. But Bolton was the one that you
9 saw had a real need. And both parties,
10 both Cordish and the Bolton Board of
11 Selectmen stepped up to the plate and
12 worked very cooperatively on their
13 agreement.

14 In Bolton there is the Bolton Center
15 of Historic Neighborhood Blog, an on-line
16 blog that tracks events in the community.
17 And there's a post dated January 19th that
18 says "in our opinion, the selectmen and
19 town administrator did a very commendable
20 job on the town's behalf in negotiating
21 favorable terms for the impact agreement."
22 I submit to you that both Bolton and
23 Cordish should be congratulated, as you
24 have congratulated them already, for

1 working diligently. They worked very
2 quickly when the clock started running on
3 their thirty-day period, and accomplished
4 that agreement by December 19th, well ahead
5 of the deadline, and without even
6 considering initiating arbitration
7 processes.

8 This speaks of the professionalism,
9 integrity and credibility of both Bolton
10 and PPE. And I also want to add that even
11 though Town Administrator Lowe is the only
12 one from Bolton who has spoken here
13 tonight, that does not reflect ambivalence
14 by the town of Bolton. You saw Selectmen
15 Delaney come before your commission a
16 couple of months ago, very much in tune and
17 working hard on the issue. And if one were
18 to go on the town of Bolton website and
19 look at the video of some of the meetings
20 when Bolton discussed this issue, they
21 would see that on December 19th Selectman
22 Delaney stated that on balance, the
23 agreement makes sense. And Chairman Stan
24 Wysocki stated that the agreement is

1 balanced and fair. And a member of the
2 audience spoke up and thanked the board for
3 going the extra mile.

4 Thank you for considering these
5 comments.

6 COMMISSIONER MCHUGH: Thank you, Mr.
7 Mullaney. Next on my list is Betty Agin,
8 A-G-I-N. Do I have that correctly? Betty
9 Crenshaw? Leroy Crenshaw? All these are
10 people say they're from Springfield, so --
11 Minister Glenn Turpin? Rhonda Latney?
12 Now, this one I'm having trouble reading.
13 Katelyn Nault?

14 COMMISSIONER ZUNIGA: Nault.

15 COMMISSIONER MCHUGH: Nault. N-O --
16 I'm sorry.

17 MS. NAULT: Hi, my name's Kayla
18 Nault. I'm a local realtor in Fitchburg.
19 I live in Fitchburg. I've lived there for
20 three years. And I think that this casino
21 is a good opportunity to create a lot of
22 jobs that in turn is going to turn into
23 more people that can afford to rent
24 apartments; more people that can afford to

1 buy houses. And that's going to be a
2 really good boost that the Fitchburg
3 economy needs.

4 I think that the negative impacts
5 are going to be minimal. The traffic in
6 Fitchburg is -- it's far enough out of the
7 way that it's not going to have a huge
8 effect. I think that the positives about
9 house prices going up is going to far
10 outweigh the -- the negatives.

11 Thank you.

12 COMMISSIONER MCHUGH: Thank you very
13 much. Now, that concludes the list -- oh,
14 it doesn't conclude the list.

15 COMMISSIONER ZUNIGA: One more.

16 COMMISSIONER MCHUGH: It almost
17 concludes the list. And are these --

18 COMMISSIONER ZUNIGA: Three --

19 COMMISSIONER MCHUGH: Three more.
20 Okay.

21 COMMISSIONER MCHUGH: David M. Roth.

22 MR. ROTH: Good evening,
23 Commissioners. My name is David Roth.
24 I've been a resident of Fitchburg for most

1 of my fifty-two years. My wife and I
2 brought up two children in Fitchburg. We
3 now host international students that go to
4 school in Fitchburg. I own a local
5 business in Fitchburg, a marketing company
6 that specializes in partnering businesses
7 and nonprofits to benefit both the
8 community and the economy, called For the
9 Cause Marketing. And I'm also a volunteer
10 in Fitchburg. I'm the Human Rights
11 Commission chair, on six other boards, and
12 I have I think, a pretty good pulse on
13 Fitchburg and our needs.

14 Fitchburg is a wonderful city. It's
15 gone through some tough times. It's on its
16 way back. Businesses coming in,
17 restaurants are opening. And I think that
18 Massachusetts Live will add to that
19 improvement in Fitchburg.

20 Jobs, to me, are the key. One of
21 the hearings that was held here last fall,
22 there was a young lady who stood up, was a
23 student in Fitchburg. I believe she was
24 nineteen. And that hearing was held just a

1 few days after Hudson, a company in Hudson
2 decided to eliminate 700 jobs. And as she
3 said and I agree, adding 600 jobs to this
4 region, supporting Fitchburg and its
5 comeback is important, is very important.

6 I don't want young people to say I'd
7 love to stay here, I'd love to support the
8 growth of Fitchburg and the surrounding
9 area, but I can't afford to, because there
10 are no jobs. So, to me that's the most
11 important thing we can do.

12 Added to that, my sister's family
13 lives in Maryland, right near Maryland
14 Live. And they have been great community
15 neighbors, the Cordish Companies, to the
16 community around that casino. They support
17 local nonprofits. As Cordish has said,
18 they'll support the ARC and other
19 nonprofits in the area, helping people with
20 disabilities as well as other people that
21 need jobs.

22 So, as an area, Fitchburg has Mount
23 Wachusett Community College nearby,
24 Fitchburg State University, the local

1 technical School, Monty Tech. There are a
2 lot of people looking for jobs, permanent
3 good jobs to grow with. And I think to me
4 that's the most important thing that we
5 have going for us here.

6 Am I a gambler myself? No. But to
7 me it's an entertainment venue. They've
8 also promised to use their theater to
9 support other nonprofits, to make it a
10 community organization, and I take them at
11 their word. I am proud of our Mayor, Lisa
12 Wong, for making sure the agreement also
13 has safeties involved, so that if any
14 detrimental things happen to Fitchburg, we
15 have cause, we can work through those.

16 So, my feeling is let's give it a
17 chance; let's build the growth of
18 Fitchburg, Leominster and the area. And
19 support our young people who need jobs.
20 And not be here and year later saying we
21 turned it down and why are people
22 unemployed in our area. We need the
23 income, we need the jobs. My small company
24 is on the vendor list. Hopefully I'll do

1 some business with Cordish Companies. I
2 need that as other local businesses do.
3 And I do know from friends of mine in
4 Maryland, where my sister lives, a lot of
5 small businesses there are benefitting from
6 Maryland Live.

7 And to me, I've looked at the other
8 owners that are looking at building casinos
9 elsewhere, the MGMs; the Foxwoods,
10 etcetera, and none of them have the record
11 that the Cordish family has on supporting
12 the communities that they are in and being
13 a positive influence in the areas where
14 they run their entertainment organizations.
15 So, for me, that's -- it's a good company,
16 it's a good cause, and it will help our
17 region continue to grow and hopefully
18 Fitchburg will be an All-America city again
19 in my lifetime. And this will help build
20 the jobs that will do that, and I won't
21 have to tell my kids there are no jobs to
22 stay in the area.

23 Thank you for listening.

24 COMMISSIONER MCHUGH: Thank you,

1 sir. Now, Mr. Michael Walsh.

2 MR. WALSH: Thank you, Mr. Chairman
3 for --

4 COMMISSIONER MCHUGH: Good evening,
5 sir.

6 MR. WALSH: -- for letting me speak.
7 I'm actually from Clinton, Massachusetts.

8 And I commute every day to
9 Framingham. I work right outside
10 Framingham State. We've heard a lot about
11 jobs and -- and other things. I'm going to
12 talk about revenue and road improvements,
13 specifically Route 117, which is the
14 subject of the Bolton agreement.

15 An eight-mile commute for me takes
16 forty to forty-five minutes on occasion.
17 The state, for revenue reasons, other
18 reasons has done nothing. There's not even
19 a study. I believe this casino will help
20 address a lot of the infrastructure needs
21 to one of the poorer part of Massachusetts.
22 Other communities in Massachusetts have
23 other revenue services. This one, I think,
24 will help it.

1 So, I'm not a gambler, but I think
2 that this has already been decided in
3 several mechanisms. If there are issues
4 that are adverse, this is what this
5 commission is for. The casino money will
6 improve things, jobs, roads, schools,
7 infrastructure. And I think that's --
8 that's really the reason why I'm in support
9 of it, specifically roads and schools.
10 Because we really are way behind in that.
11 And I would hate to see the money go to
12 Connecticut and other places.

13 So, I'm in favor of it. I think you
14 also should focus on a place that really
15 needs it and a place where the
16 infrastructure really also really needs it.

17 Thank you for letting me speak. I
18 appreciate it.

19 COMMISSIONER MCHUGH: Thank you.
20 All right. Now, that does complete the
21 list that I have in front of me. If
22 anybody thinks that they signed up and I
23 didn't call their name, I'll hear from you
24 now. Did you sign up, sir?

1 MR. GAGNE: I was told that I was on
2 the list. I'm sorry.

3 COMMISSIONER MCHUGH: All right.
4 I'm sorry then.

5 MR. GAGNE: Just real quick. My
6 name's David Gagne. I spoke to the board
7 last time as a third generation Leominster
8 family business. I'm also a Fitchburg
9 resident of almost twenty years.

10 I would just like to say that
11 tonight this shows the Cordish Group's good
12 faith by negotiating surrounding community
13 status with Fitchburg, also with Bolton and
14 other towns. And it just once again shows
15 that they mean what they say and they say
16 what they mean. And they're willing to
17 work with neighboring communities. And I
18 support this.

19 Thank you.

20 COMMISSIONER MCHUGH: All right,
21 sir. Thank you very much. This is a
22 movable feast. Anne Hougham. I hope I
23 pronounced that correctly.

24 MS. HOUGHAM: No.

1 COMMISSIONER MCHUGH: I didn't.

2 MS. HOUGHAM: Everybody
3 mispronounces that. And it's Hougham, Anne
4 Hougham.

5 COMMISSIONER MCHUGH: Hougham.

6 MS. HOUGHAM: I'm actually from
7 Sterling. And Sterling, for some reason,
8 was not on the list to be one of the towns
9 involved with this, which is really
10 surprising to me as Sterling is literally
11 miles away. Much closer than Bolton or
12 Fitchburg, especially the proposed area of
13 where you're thinking about putting this
14 in.

15 Now, families, like the other
16 gentleman that was speaking, are very much
17 going to be impacted by this. And, you
18 know, there's -- there's lots of church
19 communities that are totally against this.
20 And we feel that the traffic is going to be
21 really bad, you know, we are off of Route
22 12 and, you know, 190.

23 Crime is going to increase. You
24 know, this completely reminds me of It's a

1 Wonderful Life, when, you know, they come
2 back to town and everything is just slots
3 and, you know, girls and crime. And we do
4 not want the -- this in our towns. I mean
5 these are family towns and everyone's
6 talking about jobs. What kind of jobs do
7 you really think that these people are
8 going to get. I don't see disability --
9 people with disabilities getting jobs at
10 these places if they can't get jobs in
11 other places now.

12 I feel that it's just going to bring
13 down the morale of all of the towns
14 surrounding this area. And it's just --
15 it's not what -- if you talk to families,
16 they do not want this here.

17 So, please listen to the people. We
18 are praying about this and we do not want
19 to see our towns go down in the dumps and,
20 you know, you think all these jobs --
21 people get addicted, like the other person
22 said. And we just do not want this. There
23 are other ways to get jobs and I believe
24 that small businesses are going to be hurt

1 by this.

2 So, that's what I have to say.

3 Thank you very much.

4 COMMISSIONER MCHUGH: All right.

5 Thank you very much. Thank you.

6 All right. Thank -- thank very much
7 all of you who spoke tonight who expressed
8 your opinions and so succinctly and so
9 thoughtfully.

10 We're going to close this hearing in
11 a minute. And as I said at the beginning
12 of the -- of the hearing that marks an
13 important step. Because under the statute,
14 the Commission must wait thirty days before
15 issuing an opinion, a decision on the award
16 of a license thirty days after the last of
17 these hearings closes. Tonight is the last
18 of these hearings. When we close it, the
19 clock begins to run. The Commission is
20 eager to make this decision.

21 We have three very strong
22 applications, and have spent a great deal
23 of time analyzing them thus far. We'll
24 spend some more time analyzing them,

1 analyzing and taking into account the
2 comments that all of you have made, and
3 that all the citizens who showed up at the
4 other meetings have made, and do the best
5 we can to make the right decision in thirty
6 days.

7 So, thank you for your attendance.
8 Thank you for your patience. Thank you for
9 your thoughtful comments. I'll now
10 entertain a motion to adjourn.

11 COMMISSIONER ZUNIGA: So moved.

12 COMMISSIONER MCHUGH: Second?

13 COMMISSIONER STEBBINS: Second.

14 COMMISSIONER MCHUGH: All in favor?

15 COMMISSIONER ZUNIGA: Aye.

16 COMMISSIONER STEBBINS: Aye.

17 COMMISSIONER MCHUGH: Aye. And the
18 hearing is closed. Thank you all very
19 much.

20
21 (Hearing concluded at 6:20 p.m.)
22
23
24

1 SPEAKERS:

2 Dean Mazzarella, Mayor of Leominster

3 Jeff Snyder, Vice President, Cordish Companies

4 Mary Heafy, CEO, ARC of North Central MA

5 Don Lowe, Town Administrator, Bolton, MA

6 John Barrett, City Solicitor, Fitchburg, MA

7 Peter Ingemi, resident of Fitchburg, MA

8 Linda Racine, resident of Fitchburg, MA

9 Anthony Mercadante, resident of Fitchburg, MA

10 Steven Cote, resident of Leominster, MA

11 Charlie Valera, FCA Flight, Fitchburg, MA

12 Stephen Mullaney, resident of Leominster, MA

13 Kayla Nault, resident of Fitchburg, MA

14 David Roth, resident of Fitchburg, MA

15 Michael Walsh, resident of Clinton, MA

16 David Gagne, resident of Fitchburg, MA

17 Anne Hougham, resident of Sterling, MA

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C E R T I F I C A T E

I, Pauline L. Bailey, an Approved Court Reporter, do hereby certify that the foregoing is a true and accurate transcript from the record of the proceedings.

I, Pauline L. Bailey, further certify that the foregoing is in compliance with the Administrative Office of the Trial Court Directive on Transcript Format.

I, Pauline L. Bailey, further certify that I neither am counsel for, related to, nor employed by any of the parties to the action in which this hearing was taken and further that I am not financially nor otherwise interested in the outcome of this action.

Proceedings recorded by Verbatim means, and transcript produced from computer.

WITNESS MY HAND THIS 29th day of January, 2014.

PAULINE L. BAILEY
Notary Public

My Commission expires:
November 7, 2014