

1 COMMONWEALTH OF MASSACHUSETTS
2 MASSACHUSETTS GAMING COMMISSION
3 PUBLIC MEETING #82
4
5

6 CHAIRMAN

7 Stephen P. Crosby
8

9 COMMISSIONERS

10 Gayle Cameron

11 Bruce W. Stebbins

12 Enrique Zuniga
13
14
15
16

17 October 21, 2013

18 LANCASTER COMMUNITY CENTER

19 695 Main Street

20 Lancaster, Massachusetts 01523
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P R O C E E D I N G S

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3 CHAIRMAN CROSBY: It's now five
4 minutes -- eight minutes past four. That's
5 not too bad for a crowd this size. We're
6 only eight minutes late.

7 I am calling to order the 82nd
8 public meeting of Massachusetts Gaming
9 Commission. This is an official public
10 meeting of the Massachusetts Gaming
11 Commission.

12 The sole topic of business is to
13 give the commissioners, four of the five
14 commissioners who are here today, an
15 opportunity to hear from anybody and
16 everybody, either from the host community
17 or any one of the potentially-affected
18 surrounding communities, and I said
19 potentially-affected surrounding
20 communities, to tell -- to give -- to say
21 their piece to the commissioners.

22 There will be a transcript taken.
23 That's what our guest here is doing. There
24 will be a verbatim transcript that will be

1 made of everything that's said. That will
2 be available to everybody. We're also
3 having notes taken by our consultant team,
4 Pinck & Company, who will send sort of
5 highlight notes, so that Commissioner
6 Jim McHugh, who's not able to get the
7 highlights, the important points that have
8 been brought forward by all of our speakers
9 without having to read the entire multihour
10 transcript.

11 There are a few, couple of points
12 that I want to make here. First of all,
13 this will be one of two public meetings
14 where there will be an opportunity for
15 people to speak. This is just now with
16 respect to the Cordish proposal -- thank
17 you, the Cordish proposal for Leominster.
18 There will be a meeting held in Leominster.
19 That's a meeting, which is mandated by the
20 legislature, that we will be holding for
21 another opportunity for to make their
22 opinions known. We thought that there was
23 important to have more than one
24 opportunity, so that's why we scheduled the

1 second meeting. And our Web site is always
2 available. Many of you have written in.
3 Every single person who writes in, those
4 comments are copied and distributed to all
5 the Commissioners. We are hear and read
6 everything that you say to us. So this is
7 a -- one in a number of ongoing efforts to
8 try to make sure that everybody has their
9 opportunity to be heard and to give us
10 their prospectives on this proposal.

11 The limit for this -- of the very
12 few limits that there are, we are limiting
13 this to the Cordish proposal for
14 Leominster. We're not here to talk about
15 other communities. We're not even here to
16 talk about whether you hate casino gambling
17 or not, or whether you think the law's a
18 good law or a bad law. The law exists and
19 we're here to talk about whether it is a
20 good idea or a bad idea, or an idea that
21 needs to be modified to have a slots
22 facility, a so-called Category 2 license in
23 Leominster, the proposal that you all
24 heard.

1 You need to live -- when you speak,
2 I'd like to have you give us your name and
3 your home address, just so we know where
4 you come from, what prospective you have.

5 There will be two categories of
6 speakers, or three categories of speakers.
7 First will be public officials, elected
8 public officials, if there are any here.
9 And then, randomly, as -- just as people
10 have signed up, there will be individuals
11 who want to make their opinions known, and
12 there will be also representatives of
13 organizations.

14 We now have something, like, I don't
15 know, probably 40 signed-up speakers, and
16 they, apparently, are still coming in. So
17 I'm going to ask you to try to keep your
18 comments to the real piff of what you want
19 to say to us. If it's simply I'm opposed
20 or in favor, great. If you've got reasons
21 for that, one way or the other, please tell
22 us. But try to keep that to something like
23 three, four minutes, otherwise we'll all be
24 here a long time and the folks out there

1 won't have an opportunity to speak.

2 If you represent an organization, we
3 hope you'll keep it to a few more minutes
4 than that, maybe four or five as opposed to
5 three or four. But I think everybody can
6 appreciate why it's important to try to
7 keep this as to as concise comments as you
8 can. Having said that, as long as it takes
9 we'll be here, because this is important.
10 I think that is all.

11 Commissioner Bruce Stebbins is on my
12 right, from -- comes from Western Mass.,
13 Commissioner Zuniga is the treasurer of the
14 Commission, comes from Boston, as I do, and
15 Commissioner Cameron -- well, Commissioner
16 McHugh is the secretary of the Commission,
17 he's not here, and Commissioner Cameron is
18 here and lives in --

19 COMMISSIONER CAMERON: Quincy now.

20 CHAIRMAN CROSBY: Quincy now.

21 Right. Anything else, Commissioners, did I
22 miss anything? Director Day, did I miss
23 anything, or are we ready to go?

24 MR. DAY: That's it.

1 CHAIRMAN CROSBY: Rick Day is our
2 executive director of the Massachusetts
3 Gaming Commission. Raise your hand, Rick,
4 so people can see you.

5 Rick was recruited from Washington
6 State where he had, for I think 12 years,
7 12, years, 15, been the executive director
8 of the gaming commission in the state of
9 Washington. So we are lucky to get
10 somebody who's got some real experience.

11 With that, I am going to ask --
12 first of all, you will please come to the
13 mic to speak. I think I'm going to read
14 some names in advance. So in the interest
15 of time, you can begin to line up. If you
16 wait while you get to the mic it will take
17 forever. But you won't be heard on the Web
18 -- on the cable feed if you don't come and
19 speak to the mic. So it's important that
20 you do that.

21 I know we have Representative Rosa,
22 is he -- all right, there you go. I think
23 you're going to lead off.

24 MR. ROSA: All right.

1 CHAIRMAN CROSBY: And behind -- are
2 there other elected officials, state reps,
3 senators, selectmen, women, mayors. Okay.
4 Then, I know we have Don Lowe. Why don't
5 you come up, Jane Alessandrini, David
6 McKeown, Patrick Aubuchon, and that will be
7 a start and I'll read on as we go. So
8 Representative Rosa, you get to lead off.

9 MR. ROSA: Okay. Good afternoon
10 Mr. Chairman, Commissioners.

11 COMMISSIONER CAMERON: Good
12 afternoon.

13 CHAIRMAN CROSBY: Good afternoon.

14 COMMISSIONER ZUNIGA: Good
15 afternoon.

16 COMMISSIONER STEBBINS: Good
17 afternoon.

18 MR. ROSA: Thank you very much for
19 inviting me here this afternoon and
20 allowing me to speak. I know we heard a
21 lot about the reasons that Leominster wants
22 the slots license, so I'm going to be brief
23 and I'm going to try to put a different
24 spin on this.

1 I worked with The Cordish Company --
2 Companies and around the Cordish people for
3 about six weeks before I came to my
4 conclusion. One of the things I saw was
5 honesty. That they would hire local
6 people. Not just from Leominster, but give
7 preference to hiring local people in
8 Leominster. We have an unemployment rate
9 around 9.5 percent. We are a gateway city,
10 as you know. We have less bachelor's
11 degrees or higher than the average in the
12 state, and our income level is lower than
13 the average in the state.

14 So the first thing I saw when they
15 hired people, they hired local people,
16 Leominster people, and they also made a
17 commitment to hire veterans. And that's
18 very important to me because I'm a Vietnam
19 veteran and I know what veterans go
20 through. I'm on the Veterans' and Federal
21 Affairs Committee in Boston. I see how
22 many veterans are unemployed. And this
23 company has made a promise to the city of
24 Leominster, to the state, and to myself

1 personally, to hire veterans and people
2 with disabilities. That's important too.
3 So that was my first criteria.

4 The second criteria is education. I
5 know this sounds out of -- not normal, but
6 you wouldn't think that a slots parlor is
7 going to have to educate people, but they
8 are. This is a whole new workforce. We
9 don't have anybody trained in our area to
10 work in a gambling atmosphere or a casino.

11 So I arranged meetings with the
12 powers to be at Fitchburg State, and I
13 actually sat in on some of those meetings
14 with the managing partner, Joe Weinberg.
15 And he made a commitment to Fitchburg State
16 University that they would help set up a
17 program where they could bring people in to
18 train them.

19 He also met with President Asquino
20 of Mount Wachusett Community College.
21 That's a place I graduated from 40 years
22 ago and got me my start in life. And
23 that's important to the people that aren't
24 going to earn four-year degrees. And even

1 if you don't have a degree, they're going
2 to set up educational programs. So that
3 was my second criteria, hiring of people,
4 local people, surrounding community people
5 and education.

6 Now, the third thing that I looked
7 at, obviously, that, if this program was
8 good, if I was going to endorse it, it
9 would have to be great for Leominster. It
10 has to be, not good, it has to be great.
11 And I think this program's going to be
12 great. But because I'm a business owner,
13 small business owner, I'm worried about all
14 the rest of the communities around me.

15 This is my own personal thoughts,
16 these are my personal thoughts and
17 opinions, that this may be something that
18 you don't know. In one of the communities
19 around us, Fitchburg, for example, is
20 another gateway city, has the same
21 conditions as Leominster. That's two major
22 cities that could be affected by this
23 proposal. They also have a unemployment
24 rate of, I think, 10-plus, or at least in

1 the high nines. They have a huge workforce
2 looking for work. They have an abnormally
3 high amount of veterans like the city of
4 Leominster, and they have a disabled
5 population.

6 So you can affect a hundred --
7 almost 100,000 people in two communities,
8 two of the gateway cities out of 26 in
9 Massachusetts. This would -- this has
10 never been done before, where we could
11 affect two gateway cities.

12 Now, I did business in Fitchburg for
13 28 years. I was successful in Fitchburg.
14 I recently sold my property, but I hold the
15 mortgage, and I want Fitchburg to be
16 successful. This is going to bring
17 business, not only to Leominster, but a
18 huge amount of business, I think, to
19 Fitchburg that have their own regional
20 airport. They're also having a major
21 development with the Wolf Company,
22 Wolf Lodges.

23 So I think this could be a mini
24 vacation destination for two or three days

1 where you can even bring your kids, have
2 fund all day and then have some adult
3 entertainment at night. And together,
4 collectively, we have -- with Worcester we
5 have almost three, 400,000 people in the
6 central Massachusetts location. That's not
7 going to cannibalize --

8 CHAIRMAN CROSBY: You're setting --

9 MR. ROSA: -- anybody --

10 CHAIRMAN CROSBY: Excuse me. You're
11 setting the standards for all these folks
12 who are going to follow, so we're going to
13 need to --

14 THE FLOOR: Not going to cannibalize
15 anybody else. Thank you so much for your
16 time, and I do endorse this project.

17 CHAIRMAN CROSBY: Thank you. I
18 appreciate that.

19 COMMISSIONER CAMERON: Thank you
20 very much.

21 COMMISSIONER ZUNIGA: Thank you.

22 COMMISSIONER STEBBINS: Thank you.

23 CHAIRMAN CROSBY: Representatives --
24 elected representatives get a little bit of

1 special time.

2 MR. ROSA: I'm going to leave so
3 somebody can have my seat.

4 CHAIRMAN CROSBY: Fair enough.
5 Thank you very much. Nice to meet you.

6 MR. ROSA: Hope that makes up for
7 it.

8 CHAIRMAN CROSBY: Don Lowe. State
9 your name and address.

10 MR. LOWE: Donald Lowe, 17 Hughes
11 Street, Clinton. I'm the town
12 administrator for Bolton. I thank you for
13 not allowing the previous speaker to
14 cannibalize me.

15 Before I get started, I'd just like
16 to say I think the Commission should be
17 commended for -- both for having these
18 types of hearings, and for the quality of
19 your Web site. The information that you've
20 been getting up on the Web site is really
21 very timely, very helpful, and the work of
22 your ombudsman, who I've spoken with
23 several times has also been very, very
24 useful, so I --

1 CHAIRMAN CROSBY: Great.

2 MR. LOWE: -- I thank you for that.

3 CHAIRMAN CROSBY: Thank you.

4 MR. LOWE: I'm not here to speak in
5 opposition or in favor of this proposal.
6 I'm here to state that, while Bolton it is
7 not a touch town to Leominster, we are --
8 clearly, should be considered a surrounding
9 community.

10 I've been watching the papers and
11 I've been drawing some -- some comments.
12 And one of the comments from Cordish, from
13 Mr. Weinberg was, we know how to draw
14 traffic to our projects, and I believe him.
15 In another article, I read where
16 Mr. Weinberg dismissed local traffic impact
17 concerns. He said there'll be no
18 detectable increase in traffic on local,
19 secondary and tertiary roads, and that
20 Interstate 190 would handle almost all of
21 the traffic.

22 I don't believe that part. I've
23 lived -- I'm 54 years old. I've lived here
24 all my life and I know this area. This

1 project from a traffic standpoint will have
2 a significant impact on Route 117 in Bolton
3 and Lancaster. To try to bear that out --
4 I don't accept the argument that most of
5 the customers that will go to this
6 establishment are coming from the western
7 part of the state, or 90 percent of the
8 traffic is going to come off 190.

9 Just for the purpose of an
10 illustration, I went to Google Maps and I
11 plugged in the address of the town halls of
12 Milford, Natick and Framingham, assuming my
13 colleagues may like to play some slot games
14 as well. Every one of the Google Map
15 searches sends traffic through -- up 495
16 north over 117 west. They do not send you
17 to 290 to 190. Anybody that lives in this
18 area knows that you'd be backtracking if
19 you would do that. And people that also
20 know this area know you'll avoid Route 2 at
21 all cost, if you've experienced it a few
22 times.

23 So that is anecdotal evidence, but,
24 yet, I think it makes a point. I'd also

1 like to point out to the Commission that
2 the vote on Leominster, the successful vote
3 was September 24th. On September 26th I
4 sent a letter to Mr. Weinberg
5 congratulating Mr. Weinberg and Cordish on
6 their success. It was received at -- at
7 their headquarters in Baltimore on
8 October 1st. I was somewhat surprised to
9 see that we weren't listed in their
10 application as a community that had been
11 requested -- had requested to be considered
12 to be a surrounding community, since we had
13 that letter in three days before that
14 deadline.

15 It's now October 21st, and I'll be
16 having my first substantive discussion with
17 representatives from Cordish after this
18 meeting today. Three weeks seems to be a
19 bit long for that type of process when we
20 know that October 31st is the deadline.
21 I'm hopeful that I'll be able to work
22 something out amicably with Cordish. If
23 not, I will be availing -- the Town of
24 Bolton will be availing itself of the

1 process that you've established to petition
2 the Commission to designate us a
3 surrounding community.

4 And in closing, I'd just like to
5 say, the traffic studies that have been
6 shown state a 10-percent increase in
7 traffic, or 10 percent of the traffic going
8 to this facility, which isn't just slot
9 machines. I remind everyone, it's also --
10 it's also entertainment, it's also dining.
11 So there's more than 1250 slot machines
12 there. 10 percent of that traffic is not a
13 reasonable expectation. Probably, 30
14 percent is more like it.

15 I invite any of the Commissioners
16 when you go home today, if you're going to
17 be going to 495 to go over 117 east to get
18 back to 495, and tell me about the existing
19 conditions, nevermind whatever exacerbation
20 may be there. Because I guarantee you, if
21 it were 10 percent, and I don't agree it
22 is, that's an impact. 30 percent, which is
23 probably more like it, I think, is an
24 enormous impact. And I don't think it

1 should prevent the project, necessarily,
2 but I do think we deserve the status of a
3 surrounding community. Thank you.

4 CHAIRMAN CROSBY: Thank you. And
5 David McKeehan, Mr. Aubuchon, just line up
6 here so we can --

7 MS. ALESSANDRINI: Do you want me
8 to -- do you still want me to go, I'm an
9 individual?

10 CHAIRMAN CROSBY: Yeah, sure.
11 Absolutely. Are you Alessan -- Jane
12 Alessandrini?

13 MS. ALESSANDRINI: I'm Jane
14 Alessandrini.

15 CHAIRMAN CROSBY: Okay. By all
16 means.

17 MS. ALESSANDRINI: A country girl --

18 CHAIRMAN CROSBY: Individuals are
19 fine.

20 MS. ALESSANDRINI: Sterling. You
21 know, I have to be honest and tell you that
22 I'm really kind of looking forward to
23 having a venue like this nearby. There's
24 nothing like it out this way. Everything

1 seems to go on the other side of 495. The
2 money seems to go to Boston, never hits
3 this way.

4 And, truthfully, I mean I -- I
5 studied the Cordish's, and I'll be honest
6 and tell you I work in the office, I'm the
7 receptionist. But what I really like about
8 this whole thing is that the Cordish
9 company is thinking outside the box.
10 They're not just looking to slap a slot
11 parlor down in Leominster and walk away.
12 They're trying to build really strong ties
13 to the community.

14 By bringing in the UMass piece,
15 they're giving entrepreneurs an opportunity
16 to build smaller businesses to make more
17 jobs for people that we don't have here. I
18 was in the unemployment office two years
19 ago, and let me tell you, if you didn't get
20 a number by 8:30 you'd have to come back
21 the next day, because the unemployment rate
22 is so high in this area, and people need
23 options. That's all I have to say.

24 COMMISSIONER CAMERON: Thank you.

1 CHAIRMAN CROSBY: Thank you very
2 much.

3 COMMISSIONER STEBBINS: Thank you.

4 COMMISSIONER ZUNIGA: Thank you.

5 CHAIRMAN CROSBY: David McKeehan,
6 and also Rich Bro (phonetically) Brow, Bob
7 Healey, Adam Richard. If you're -- if
8 you're in line around here, please call
9 him. Go ahead, sir.

10 MR. MCKEEHAN: Mr. Chairman and
11 members of the Commission, welcome to
12 Lancaster and north central Massachusetts.
13 We're very pleased that you're out here.

14 I'm David McKeehan, the president of
15 the North Central Mass. Chamber of Commerce
16 representing. We're an organization with a
17 1,000-member firms representing about
18 30,000 employees in the Fitchburg,
19 Leominster and surrounding communities.
20 It's -- and I'm here today because the
21 Chamber enthusiastically endorses this
22 proposal by the Cordish company. We polled
23 our members and there's strong support.

24 This is -- this is clearly an

1 important economic development project in
2 this area that it has two gateway cities.
3 And as you've already heard, I'm the third
4 speaker and you've heard it three times
5 already, but the -- one of the highest
6 unemployment rates in the Commonwealth.
7 Certainly, this project is -- is an
8 important one to us. It's going to have a
9 tremendous spinoff effect on regional
10 businesses during both the construction and
11 the operation. And the preferences that
12 Cordish has committed themselves to that
13 you've heard from Representative Rosa is
14 really important in terms of hiring, and
15 also their preferences for local businesses
16 and cooperating regional tourism marketing
17 and cross-marketing with regional
18 retailers, restaurants, hotels and
19 attractions.

20 Given the projected location of the
21 three Category 1 casinos that we're reading
22 about, Cordish's Massachusetts Live!
23 location is a strategic choice, we think,
24 for the Commonwealth. This location really

1 maximizes revenue because of its central
2 location, proximity to New Hampshire, and
3 it will certainly eliminate, if not
4 eliminate, mitigate the cannibalization
5 that has already been mentioned from having
6 casinos overlapping marketplaces that -- of
7 those resort casinos that are going to be
8 built.

9 The Cordish Companies have acted
10 responsibly with their -- in their dealings
11 with the community so far, and we look
12 forward to them being an excellent
13 corporate citizen going forward.

14 The important example is the venture
15 that their application talks about in
16 funding one-and-a-half million dollars a
17 year to move new -- to move new medical
18 device companies from patent to production
19 and create thousands of additional
20 high-tech jobs in this marketplace. This
21 is -- this is really important because this
22 region actually has one out of every three
23 private sector payroll dollars comes from
24 manufacturing here. We have the highest

1 concentration in the state.

2 So what -- what this casino
3 represents for us, with this added
4 enhancement that they have added for
5 economic development, is a diversification
6 of our employment base, but also a
7 reinforcement of the existing base that is
8 so important to our communities. Thank you
9 very much, and we hope that you'll come
10 back and -- with a positive message.

11 CHAIRMAN CROSBY: Thank you.
12 Patrick Aubuchon.

13 MR. AUBUCHON: Good afternoon. I'm
14 Patrick Aubuchon. I'm a resident of
15 Leominster. I'm also a 26-year veteran of
16 the police department and their community
17 resource officer.

18 Leominster's always been targeted
19 for the future by Massachusetts. As early
20 as 1958 the Mass. Department of Public
21 Works began preliminary planning for what
22 was then referred to as at north-south
23 expressway. Seventeen years later
24 construction began on what would be known

1 as I-190. And in 1983 and \$77 million
2 later it opened. Today it provides over 27
3 miles of major highway connecting the
4 communities in southern Worcester County to
5 Leominster. To date it's a lightly used
6 highway.

7 We've certainly had many
8 opportunities in Leominster. Specifically,
9 at Route 117 and 190, that junction. In
10 '90 we voted overwhelming for a mega mall,
11 that company backed out. We strived to get
12 technology parks in the city, in 1996 our
13 Fort Devens closed, to our surprise. The
14 Mass -- the MassDevelopment took over that
15 complex for residential and business, what
16 would be a town. They've succeeded, but
17 they've also taken away from our
18 communities such as ours.

19 In 2009 Leominster was deemed a
20 gateway city by the Commonwealth.
21 Communities were chosen as gateway cities
22 to target economic development and
23 revitalization. In doing so, the state
24 chose Leominster to not only prosper but

1 provide a distinct competitive advantage
2 for the Commonwealth as a whole. Raynham
3 or -- neither Raynham or Plainville are
4 gateway cities. However, Taunton is, and
5 they're looking at a major Indian casino,
6 possibly.

7 Live casino Massachusetts is another
8 opportunity for our community. For over 50
9 years our area has been targeted with a
10 major highway and a gateway city status.
11 Even though for years we have felt
12 neglected as a major contributor to
13 Massachusetts, other people have looked at
14 us otherwise. For us, the opportunities
15 have never become realities.

16 I credit Cordish company for working
17 closely with our community. I credit them
18 for reaching out to organizations such as
19 Arc of Opportunity, the Beacon of Hope, our
20 Spanish-American Center opportunity for
21 all. I applaud them for going above and
22 beyond with the proposal of M3D3, donating
23 1.5 million, or up to that, to start up new
24 medical technology companies along that

1 gateway, that corridor between Lowell and
2 Worcester. We are all in that corridor.

3 The decision is up to you.
4 Leominster has spoken, and we deserve this
5 opportunity. Thank you.

6 COMMISSIONER CAMERON: Thank you.

7 CHAIRMAN CROSBY: Thank you. Rich
8 Brow, Bob Healey. Are you one of these
9 folks?

10 MR. BROW: Yes.

11 CHAIRMAN CROSBY: Oh, Mr. Brow.

12 MR. BROW: Yes.

13 CHAIRMAN CROSBY: Mr. Healey,
14 Adam Richard, Curtis Cook. If any of you
15 is here, if you could make your way up.
16 Please --

17 MR. BROW: Good afternoon, my name
18 is Richard Brow, Brow, however you choose
19 to say it, I respond to both.

20 CHAIRMAN CROSBY: Lead the way.

21 MR. BROW: I am a Leominster
22 resident, lifelong, 91 Dillon Street.
23 Following up on what Representative. Rosa
24 said, I didn't plan on including this in my

1 comments, but I am a veteran, I'm also
2 looking for a job.

3 But what I really came to say is
4 that Leominster has the infrastructure,
5 they have a progressive community, they're
6 well managed, they have the city finances
7 in order, and the residents of Leominster
8 took the time to come out with a very good
9 turn out on a referendum question, which
10 I'm proud as a citizen that we had such a
11 good participation to voice what we think
12 is the right thing for our city.

13 I am in support of locating in
14 Leominster, and I hope you will provide us
15 with that opportunity. We could really use
16 it. Thank you.

17 COMMISSIONER CAMERON: Thank you.

18 CHAIRMAN CROSBY: Thank you very
19 much.

20 COMMISSIONER ZUNIGA: Thank you.

21 COMMISSIONER STEBBINS: Thank you.

22 CHAIRMAN CROSBY: Mr. Healey.

23 MR. HEALEY: Good afternoon. My
24 name is Bob Healey and I am the chief of

1 police for the city of Leominster. I'm a
2 35-year veteran and a 50-year resident of
3 the north Worcester County area. I list my
4 address at 29 Church Street in Leominster,
5 but I do reside in another community that
6 claims it's an affected community,
7 Fitchburg.

8 The number one call for service
9 locations for police officers in Leominster
10 respond to is the Whitney Field Mall. It's
11 the largest, oldest mall in the area, and
12 we respond there, roughly, three to five
13 times per day for crimes of juvenile crime,
14 larcenies, shoplifting so on and so forth.
15 We are also, you would have to say, the
16 mecca for shopping in the area because we
17 are surrounded mostly by smaller
18 communities, and I say tongue in cheek, we
19 are the affected community because they
20 come to us. They come through Lancaster,
21 Bolton, Fitchburg and they come a lot from
22 Fitchburg, Lunenburg, Lancaster, Sterling
23 so on and so forth.

24 In the early 1980s former Mayor

1 Richard Girouard had proposed the
2 Jungle Road area for industrial development
3 going so far as to wanting to change the
4 name, Jungle Road, which we all in
5 Leominster hold so dear, we all hung around
6 over there, to Corporation Drive. But as
7 you can see, Corporation Drive certainly
8 wasn't hold there. No industry is coming,
9 and I doubt much would even come, if this
10 proposal did not go forward.

11 In the late 1980s, as Detective
12 Aubuchon alluded to, the Pyramid Mall
13 Company proposed a \$75 million mall there
14 and that did not, of course, happen. So
15 again I say, tongue in cheek, I'm not in
16 favor of any mall, and I wouldn't suspect
17 anybody else in this room would want
18 another mall that would bring, certainly,
19 more crime to that area. That's just what
20 retail establishments do do.

21 Now, I did travel to Maryland. I
22 did. I was a guest of the Cordish company.
23 They did show me around. I was able to
24 meet the mayor of Anne Arundel County.

1 Visited Baltimore, the casino. Met with
2 the police chief there, fire chief, Chamber
3 of Commerce, vendors. And coming away from
4 that and doing my own reflection and study,
5 and not wanting to, you know, beat a dead
6 horse, but the Leominster Police Department
7 often sits at the bottom of the totem pole
8 for infrastructure funding. The Cordish
9 company has graciously offered us 1,000
10 square feet. I would certainly offer that
11 to my colleague from Lancaster, if he needs
12 to have an extra desk.

13 I think that the revenue stream that
14 is offered and promised towards Leominster,
15 and as a police chief, what's important for
16 me is to make my residents and officers
17 know that we can respond there effectively,
18 that the crime would be addressed, if any.
19 And I'm not convinced, at all, for one iota
20 that it would go up or down. I think it
21 depends on the demographic and, certainly,
22 the planning, and the relationship that you
23 would have with the company operating the
24 casino.

1 I actually have -- I have a good
2 relationship with them, a professional one
3 with them. And having to see how they
4 operate in Maryland, I am very, very
5 confident that this project would be
6 nothing but a benefit nor the community and
7 plus for the officers of the Leominster
8 Police Department. Again, thank you so
9 much for your time.

10 COMMISSIONER CAMERON: Thank you,
11 Chief.

12 CHAIRMAN CROSBY: Thank you. Adam
13 Richard, Curtis Cook, I think is here. Ray
14 Bissonnette. Ray Bissonnette, move over,
15 line up. Lynn Percuoco, cuaco,
16 (phonetically) David Nault. If you're
17 here, we're waiting for you. Sir.

18 MR. COOK: Good afternoon, ladies
19 and gentlemen. My name's Curtis Cook. I'm
20 from Leominster. Representative Rosa
21 mentioned earlier that one of his
22 expectations was to hire veterans and to
23 hire locally with the Cordish company. I'm
24 proof that they hold their word to both of

1 that.

2 I am a disabled veteran, just
3 recently got back from active duty and I'm
4 from -- born and raised in Leominster my
5 whole life. I walked into that office and
6 they hired me on the spot.

7 I've had an opportunity to meet with
8 the Cordish company. I've been to
9 Maryland. I've been to their casino.
10 Their casino's 10 times what ours is going
11 to be and there was no traffic. I was
12 there prime time. There's no traffic
13 there. In a very similar road to what --
14 to Leominster. Main road with a small
15 turn-off and a big opened area where the
16 casino's going to go. I was shocked to
17 hear about everybody so worried about the
18 traffic to get up there and see -- like I
19 said, I was there on a Friday night, like
20 9:00 p.m., there was normal traffic, but no
21 congestion, no backups, no long lines, no
22 parking lots like people think it's going
23 to be.

24 I have a lot of friends that are

1 also getting out of the military. My
2 friends are graduating from college with
3 degrees who can't get jobs. I've lived
4 here my whole life. This is the first
5 opportunity that I've seen since I've been
6 alive that new jobs, something new for
7 people to look forward to. Something for
8 people to not hang their heads about like,
9 oh, what I'm going to do? Like I -- you
10 know, stuck in the same low-paying,
11 minimum-wage job. All these jobs that are
12 coming in are full-time jobs with benefits.
13 How can you beat that? Over 600 jobs
14 building it and over 600 permanent jobs
15 when it's built.

16 As a resident of the city and being
17 young and having a lot of friends needing
18 jobs, this is the only opportunity I see to
19 the city to turn it around. I support this
20 project.

21 COMMISSIONER CAMERON: Thank you.

22 CHAIRMAN CROSBY: Thank you very
23 much. Ray Bissonnette, Lynn Percuoco.

24 MR. BISSONNETTE: Bissonnette.

1 CHAIRMAN CROSBY: Bissonnette.

2 Welcome. David Nault, David Smith,
3 Susan Ash. If any of you are here, please
4 come up.

5 MR. BISSONNETTE: Thank you for
6 giving me the time to speak to you today.
7 My name is Ray Bissonnette. I'm a lifelong
8 member -- resident of Leominster, and I
9 happen to be a member of the carpenter's
10 union as well. My dog ate my speech
11 yesterday so -- so like in high school, I
12 wish my principal was here to give me an
13 excuse.

14 Anyway, I'm going to have to wing
15 this. We had an election on September
16 24th. It was the largest election in
17 Leominster for any type of referendum in
18 the history of the city. We had an
19 enormous turnout, and, overwhelmingly, the
20 residents of Leominster supported this with
21 open arms. This is something that the
22 community welcomes and needs.

23 People have stood up before you and
24 told you a lot of facts about why this is a

1 great thing for Leominster and the
2 surrounding communities, so I'm not going
3 to repeat it. But the thing is what I want
4 you to know, and I'm sure you already do,
5 is the one thing that we have that the
6 other two places don't have, location,
7 location, location.

8 We need to maximize with the
9 potential of a slot parlor in this state
10 for the various reasons. Leominster is the
11 heart of central Massachusetts. We believe
12 by putting the slot parlor in the city of
13 Leominster it will maximize income, not
14 only for the state, but it will bring in
15 people from neighboring New Hampshire,
16 which is only a 15-minute drive from the
17 border of New Hampshire to Massachusetts.

18 When I was a kid we always used to
19 drive to New Hampshire to get our
20 cigarettes and to get our liquor because
21 everything was cheaper in New Hampshire.
22 So now we have a chance to pay them back.
23 Now they have to come to us. And I believe
24 they will. If we build it in Leominster

1 they will come. That's all I have to say.

2 COMMISSIONER CAMERON: Thank you
3 very much.

4 CHAIRMAN CROSBY: Thank you very
5 much. Lynn Percuoco, David Nault,
6 David Smith, Susan Ash, John Quist,
7 Andrew David.

8 MS. PERCUOCO: Hi, I'm Lynn
9 Percuoco, I'm 19 years old --

10 CHAIRMAN CROSBY: Percuoco. Sorry.

11 MS. PERCUOCO: That's okay. I'm 19
12 years old. I've lived in Leominster all my
13 life, and I just graduated from high
14 school. I'm actually an LPN. Still
15 looking for a job, but I did graduate LPN
16 school in June.

17 THE FLOOR: Could you speak up?
18 Speak up. We can't hear.

19 MS. PERCUOCO: Okay. And I'm
20 looking for a job. Realistically, a lot of
21 kids my age are looking for jobs, I have
22 people I went to school with that haven't
23 had jobs at all in, like, once in their
24 life they haven't had a job. And I want to

1 live here all my life. I want to raise my
2 family here and everything, but without
3 these job opportunities, I don't think that
4 there will ever be a chance for that, so
5 I'm looking to grow as a community. Thank
6 you.

7 COMMISSIONER CAMERON: Thank you.

8 CHAIRMAN CROSBY: Thank you. Got
9 someone lined up? Come on over here, if
10 there's other people waiting to speak so we
11 can make the time as efficient as possible.
12 Sir.

13 MR. NAULT: Hello. My name is
14 David Nault, I live at 46 Crawford Street
15 in Leominster. I'm a former city
16 counselor. I'm here to speak in favor of
17 the casino coming to Leominster. I have a
18 couple of reasons for that.

19 My first being as a former city
20 counselor, I know what the close to
21 \$4 million in revenue a year means to the
22 city. It's been -- I'm sorry, I lost my
23 place for a minute. The \$4 million a year
24 that it's going to bring to the city -- I

1 own two properties in the city of
2 Leominster. Our taxes have steadily been
3 increasing. And I know the casino coming
4 to Leominster isn't going to lower my
5 taxes, but I'm hoping it will help
6 stabilize our taxes in Leominster.

7 The second reason is jobs. It's all
8 about jobs as you're hearing so far. I had
9 a business in Leominster for over 30 years.
10 I'm retired now, but the last good year I
11 had was 2004. That was nine years ago, and
12 I did 90 percent of my business in
13 Leominster. That was nine years ago that
14 things were great in the city of
15 Leominster.

16 Let me tell you, there are no
17 companies knocking on our door offering us
18 600 jobs. So I think the fact that we're
19 going to have 600 jobs with benefits, not
20 including the jobs it's going to create
21 using local vendors from the surrounding
22 communities.

23 One of the most important things I
24 want to point out to you is, now in

1 Leominster we all know families that cannot
2 feed their children and who cannot keep
3 them warm at night. Can you imagine if one
4 of those parents in the family had a job at
5 the casino with full benefits? What a
6 difference that would make in their life.

7 So I'm asking you, please consider
8 the city of Leominster. And thank you for
9 your time.

10 COMMISSIONER CAMERON: Thank you.

11 CHAIRMAN CROSBY: Thank you very
12 much. I really appreciate how everybody
13 keeping their comments brief and they're
14 interesting and different points, but
15 brief, and I appreciate that. Mr. Smith,
16 Susan Ash. John Quist. Oh, Mr. Quist.

17 MR. QUIST: Thank you. My name is
18 John Quist and I work for the Arc of
19 Opportunity in north central Massachusetts.
20 I reside in the area. I live in the town
21 of Winchendon. I want to thank for
22 providing us this opportunity to speak to
23 the Mass Gaming Commission.

24 I'm speaking in favor of the

1 Commission granting the slots parlor
2 license for the city of Leominster and the
3 Cordish group. By granting this license in
4 the city of Leominster, you're increasing
5 the opportunities for meaningful employment
6 to the people in this area. Our
7 organization, The Arc of Opportunity is an
8 organization whose mission is to provide
9 lifetime opportunities for individuals with
10 disabilities. We provide training and
11 supports to people to allow them to obtain
12 and retain employment in their local
13 community. The Arc of Opportunity has been
14 assisting people in obtaining competitive
15 jobs since the early 1970s.

16 The Cordish group has reached out to
17 us, offering to work in conjunction with us
18 to provide new employment options for the
19 people we serve. This is a wonderful
20 opportunity. More jobs available in the
21 area for all of the people living here. An
22 opportunity to make a living wage and to
23 contribute back to the local community by
24 paying taxes, purchasing food, clothing,

1 recreation and other items from local
2 merchants.

3 This is an opportunity to help level
4 the playing field for the people we serve.
5 It will provide them the opportunity to
6 work side by side with their, quote,
7 unquote, nondisabled peers. It will
8 provide opportunities for people to learn
9 more about each other, and perhaps then
10 realize that we are much more alike than
11 different.

12 Grant this slots license to the city
13 of Leominster and to the Cordish group,
14 allow us the opportunity to develop
15 partnerships between employers, such as the
16 Cordish and the Arc to create more and
17 varied jobs in our community. Our people
18 want to work. Let's provide them with this
19 opportunity. Thank you.

20 COMMISSIONER CAMERON: Thank you.

21 CHAIRMAN CROSBY: Thank you very
22 much. We do have an elected official.
23 Mr. Stan Starr is a selectman from
24 Lancaster. Mr. Starr, are you within

1 reach?

2 Meanwhile, David Smith, Susan Ash,
3 Andrew David, Karen Greenwood, Christopher
4 Kenney. There are a couple of seats up
5 here, any of you who are lined up to speak
6 can take. Sir.

7 MR. STARR: Thank you, Mr. Chair.
8 My name is Stan Starr. I live in
9 Lancaster, just to break the long streak of
10 Leominster speakers here. I don't
11 represent a position of the board of select
12 person. I'm speaking as a individual here.
13 I appreciate the opportunity to do so.

14 It was touched upon a little bit
15 earlier, the second speaker who said, and
16 in my estimation it was laughable about a
17 lack of impact that this particular casino
18 would do on our town. Particular, to
19 traffic. And I'll first say it too, I'm
20 very neutral on this entire story. I'm not
21 pro, con. I'm in the middle.

22 That said, having been on this earth
23 for 64 years, and having been in this area
24 for 64 years, it's extremely busy, Route

1 117, and there's no denying it'll have an
2 impact. And to think otherwise is
3 whistling in the wind. I just don't
4 believe that to be anywhere near to be
5 accurate.

6 And I believe one of the -- our
7 Chair, Mr. Crosby, had actually responded,
8 at least per the newspapers to say there is
9 an impact, or there will be impact, or
10 doesn't believe there won't be an impact on
11 the same. However you want to phrase it.

12 I was curious about if there'll be a
13 formal way of monitoring hiring. There's
14 an agreement in plaque that Lancaster has
15 done as a surrounding community. And it's
16 needless to say, we've been on this --
17 incorporated in this town from 1653. If
18 this was 360 years ago, it wouldn't be
19 Leominster, it would be Lancaster, but
20 we're a little bit late on that situation.

21 But I'd be interested in seeing what
22 the hiring process has. Will that be
23 monitored by anyone as to who gets
24 preferential treatment in the surrounding

1 communities, as well as obviously
2 Leominster, who's received a very good
3 benefit. And good for them. I applaud
4 them. That's one of my concerns.

5 Concerns shared by other residents
6 with me was the traffic. I'm not going to
7 is dwell on the traffic. As I said, it's
8 already been dwelled upon.

9 I think the last point I want to
10 make is, if, in fact, there is a
11 disagreement and there can't be a
12 collaborative effort to resolve that
13 disagreement with The Cordish Companies, is
14 the Gaming Commission in a situation to
15 assist, mediate, alleviate any of those
16 differences that might come up between the
17 town of Lancaster and The Cordish
18 Companies. And I'm not sure I know the
19 answer to that one.

20 CHAIRMAN CROSBY: Yeah. Is that the
21 end of your -- I will -- is that the end of
22 your comments?

23 MR. STARR: Other than welcoming you
24 and thanking you, that's it. Thank you,

1 Mr. Chairman.

2 CHAIRMAN CROSBY: Okay. Thank you.
3 This is not an opportunity to go back and
4 forth because we just will never do what
5 needs to be done. This is a chance for us
6 to listen. Short answer is, yes, there is,
7 by all means, an opportunity to arbitrate
8 between the bidder and others, and there
9 will be mechanisms for tracking
10 commitments, that they're kept. But if
11 you've got questions that you need answers
12 for, send those in through our Web site and
13 we will be back to you, but that's it not
14 really what this is for. Thank you very
15 much.

16 MR. STARR: Thank you,
17 Commissioners.

18 COMMISSIONER CAMERON: Thank you.

19 COMMISSIONER ZUNIGA: Thank you.

20 CHAIRMAN CROSBY: Anybody else?
21 David Smith, Susan Ash, Andrew David, Karen
22 Greenwood, Christopher Kenney, David
23 Aronson.

24 THE FLOOR: Go, Andrew.

1 CHAIRMAN CROSBY: Oh, I'm sorry.

2 MR. DAVID: My name is Andrew David.

3 CHAIRMAN CROSBY: Okay.

4 MR. DAVID: I currently live in
5 Gardner, Massachusetts, and I am an
6 employee of The Arc of Opportunity in
7 Fitchburg, Mass. I've grown up the
8 majority of my life in Fitchburg. I
9 graduated from Fitchburg High. And I'm
10 just -- throughout time I've realized the
11 opportunities that would be available if
12 such a company were to establish here in
13 Leominster.

14 Every day I'm assigned with --
15 assigned with the assessment and
16 professional training of people I serve
17 through the Department of Developmental
18 Services and Mass. Rehabilitation
19 Commission. The men and women we place in
20 employment range from janitors at community
21 centers (phonetically) -- centers to
22 packaging specialist at manufacturing
23 facilities, to baggers at your local
24 supermarket, to dish cleaners at local

1 restaurants.

2 When I hear about the potential for
3 a new business to start up within the
4 community, immediately I think of the
5 possibilities. Possibilities for the
6 people we work for, the possibility of
7 jobs. A job brings someone a sense
8 purpose. It can provide variations of
9 prosperity, ranging from feelings of
10 self-worth to monetary stability, and even
11 new friendships within the community.

12 A variety of opportunities would
13 arise if such an establishment were to be
14 developed in the central location within
15 Massachusetts. Grant it -- it would grant
16 people the opportunity for such
17 prosperities. These prosperities are not
18 just limited to the individual, but can
19 stretch into the quadrant regarding other
20 small, local businesses. A new form of
21 entertainment can bring increased revenue
22 into the regional community, new supply
23 chains.

24 Such an economic expansion would

1 implement greater opportunities for local
2 business, developing further avenues for
3 employment for all individuals within the
4 surrounding towns. Thank you for your
5 time, and just remember the possibilities
6 for this region. Thank you.

7 COMMISSIONER CAMERON: Thank you.

8 CHAIRMAN CROSBY: Thank you very
9 much. David Smith, Susan Ash, Karen
10 Greenwood, Christopher Kenney.

11 THE FLOOR: Hi.

12 CHAIRMAN CROSBY: I see somebody
13 standing up.

14 MS. GREENWOOD: I'm Karen Greenwood.
15 I had a long speech, but I work for
16 The Arc of Opportunity, I'm a job
17 developer, and I work strictly with
18 businesses to put my individuals that I
19 support either through DDS, department of
20 -- or Mass Rehab.

21 So, basically, I'd rather take the
22 time to hear one of my success stories,
23 Mr. Christopher Kenney.

24 CHAIRMAN CROSBY: Okay.

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MS. GREENWOOD: Come on.

CHAIRMAN CROSBY: Thank you.

MR. KENNEY: Thank you, Commissioners and Commissioner. My name is Chris Kenney, 19 South Road. I'm an employee of the Arch of Opportunity. I want you to be aware of the benefits I have experienced in the Arc of Opportunity and have been employed by a company within our community. I was also the RSO for a school -- the school program when I was attending Leominster High School. I then had the opportunities to try different types of jobs, such as production, janitorial, retail, and I really like being -- doing janitorial, and had the chance -- had a chance to work with enclave -- enclaves, within the community businesses doing just that. I have expanded my skills in the custodial and janitorial duties and increased by independence only needing minimum support. I had the drive to -- drive to the best employee -- sorry. Everybody gets

1 tongue-twisted -- every one gets
2 tongue-twisted nowadays.

3 MS. GREENWOOD: Where'd you leave
4 off? I have expanded my skills in the
5 custodial and janitorial duties --

6 MR. KENNEY: Which I just said.

7 MS. GREENWOOD: -- and increased my
8 independence only needing minimal support.
9 I had the drive to be the best employee I
10 could be regardless of my disability.

11 Somebody noticed my accomplishments
12 and found me a job three days a week doing
13 janitorial maintenance for a local
14 business. At first I needed to be trained
15 to build a routine for my three-hour shift.
16 Once I got that accomplishment, my support
17 started to the fade. I had been employed
18 for nine months now, and I'm totally
19 independent at work.

20 I am supported by my coworkers --

21 MR. KENNEY: Yeah, I will -- I'll
22 take care of the others.

23 MS. GREENWOOD: I was supported by
24 my coworkers, the maintenance team of Arc

1 Enterprises and the Arc. Working
2 independently get transportation to and
3 from work site now. I'm able to earn a
4 weekly check. With my paycheck I pay
5 taxes, and feel as I am a responsible
6 member of society, and I'm proud of my
7 accomplishments. I just want to say if the
8 slot -- if the slot day comes to
9 Leominster, this will open all the doors to
10 other disability individuals in becoming
11 gratefully employed and to learn new
12 skills, which is what I intend to do now.
13 Thank you.

14 COMMISSIONER CAMERON: Thank you.

15 CHAIRMAN CROSBY: Thank you very
16 much. Dave Aronson, Mary T. Jean, William
17 Devereaux, Jennifer Peck, David Leger,
18 Leger. Okay. I'm just going to read a few
19 more names to get people started. Thomas
20 Hazard, Ryan McNutt.

21 MS. JEAN: My name is Mary T. Jean,
22 and I'm a homeowner in the city of
23 Leominster. And I live off of the old
24 Mechanics Street, which feeds into the end

1 of Lancaster where the soccer field is.
2 And I have seen an increase in traffic from
3 the prospering of the this soccer field in
4 Lancaster. It has definitely driven the
5 traffic on 70 and Old Lancaster Road, when
6 it connects.

7 I do agree there is a traffic issue
8 in Lancaster, but I don't believe that
9 proposal of the casino has any impact on
10 that. I believe it's preexisting, and it's
11 something that the Town of Lancaster is
12 well aware of.

13 Now, is it a possibility that a
14 increase in traffic will occur from this,
15 but I believe it's going to occur because
16 that the community is prospering. And a
17 prospering community is always a good
18 thing.

19 I have heard the other speakers, and
20 I agree 100 percent, that we have an issue
21 with unemployment in our community. We see
22 it every day. In the central Massachusetts
23 area, both Fitchburg and Leominster being
24 gateway committees -- communities, excuse

1 me, is very typical of what we face every
2 day living here.

3 I agree, also, that all the money
4 goes on the other side of 495. It's a
5 feeling that we all have out here,
6 unfortunately. No disrespect to anybody
7 from Boston, but it is true. It's time
8 that the money comes here. It's time that
9 Leominster has the opportunity that it's
10 been given.

11 I have had the opportunity to meet
12 the people from Cordish. They are very
13 committed to this project, which is
14 something that I felt very strongly about.
15 And it helped to convince me to vote for
16 the project. Having that great commitment,
17 I think, is good for the community, and I
18 think they also see the whole local area.

19 So I'm hoping that you can look at
20 the entire area and not just a central
21 issue of traffic, or that some people
22 perhaps think that this is a opportunity
23 for their community to, for a better word,
24 poke the golden pig and get some extra

1 money. I think that the ability for the
2 whole community is what should be looked
3 at, and I would just want to champion you
4 to choose Leominster, please.

5 COMMISSIONER CAMERON: Thank you.

6 CHAIRMAN CROSBY: Thank you very
7 much.

8 COMMISSIONER ZUNIGA: Thank you.

9 COMMISSIONER STEBBINS: Thank you.

10 MR. LEGER: Dave Leger, Leominster
11 resident. I -- business manager, Laborer's
12 Union, Local 39. I represent the
13 Leominster DPW and 400 construction workers
14 in the Fitchburg area.

15 Our area, we cover from Orange to
16 Lancaster. We don't have any major cities
17 in our area. We don't a Worcester, we
18 don't have a Boston, we don't have a
19 Lowell. So any construction jobs we get,
20 they're hard to come by. The only think we
21 have really down is Fort Devens, in which a
22 lot of those jobs all went north to New
23 Hampshire, at Fort Devens. They really
24 didn't treat us good over there.

1 I know Leominster, the Cordish group
2 will do the right thing when it comes to
3 building a place, and for the Leominster
4 DPW, they definitely, definitely, can use
5 some new equipment. And with the revenue,
6 hopefully, they can buy some of those
7 sanders and plowers that are getting very
8 old. Thank you.

9 COMMISSIONER CAMERON: Thank you.

10 CHAIRMAN CROSBY: Thank you very
11 much.

12 MR. HAZARD: Good afternoon. My
13 name is Thomas Hazard. Everybody calls me
14 Tucker. In my life, I've worn a few hats.
15 I was born in Leominster and I've lived
16 here my entire life, except when I was in
17 the Marine Corps. I'm a retired police
18 officer, city counselor, I worked for two
19 state representatives as legislative aids,
20 president of the historical society,
21 president of the Beacon of Hope, which
22 you've already heard about, and I'm also
23 the chairman of the water and sewer
24 commission for Leominster.

1 I would just like to make a few
2 comments about this project. One, it would
3 enhance our water safety of our well field
4 in Leominster. Two, it would help the
5 Beacon of Hope, which also has disabled
6 people. And, three, I think a lot of
7 people are missing one fact. Leominster
8 has been growing, but it's been growing by
9 having people relocate here from Boston,
10 because our standard of living and our
11 housing prices are low. But with that
12 comes children and growth.

13 So we've been struggling to get by
14 as a community because of our own growth.
15 We've been growing as a population, but not
16 as our industry, hasn't kept up. At one
17 time in Leominster there was 600 shops
18 related to plastic industry. They're all
19 gone now. Big ones like Foster Grant,
20 Borden Chemical and DuPont's, they're gone.
21 What has replaced them in Leominster?
22 Really nothing. When Devens closed we
23 ended up losing the soldiers that were
24 renting our apartments, so our apartments

1 were vacant for awhile and now they're
2 full. But what are they full with? Now we
3 have lower income-type people in our
4 community and they're looking for work.
5 And when they don't have work they make
6 problems. And when the problems -- it's
7 not all their fault, it's just one of the
8 facts of life. This project would be
9 beneficial to give our workers something to
10 do.

11 Also, when I was younger I worked
12 for a trucking company. And like one of
13 the previous speakers said, if you look at
14 a map the city of Leominster -- I was also
15 the traffic officer for the police
16 department. Leominster's centrally
17 located. And I asked my boss about it.
18 And he said, "Look we have all these
19 businesses here. We're hauling product out
20 and we're bringing new resources in."
21 That's not happening anymore, but the town
22 is still centrally located.

23 And if we're given a fair
24 opportunity, and I mean a fair one, I think

1 that anybody that looks at the locations
2 involved should take Leominster and give us
3 a second look. I have family and relatives
4 that live in all of the neighboring
5 communities, so I have a interest in them
6 too.

7 Town of Lancaster, loss of college,
8 I don't know how it affects this town, but
9 if Fitchburg State were to leave Fitchburg
10 I know it would be devastating. So I hope
11 the people of Lancaster -- good luck with
12 that.

13 We know there's a traffic problem.
14 I believe this project could be a Godsend
15 to them. They would get the needed capital
16 to improve their terrible road structure.
17 And the traffic that goes to a casino does
18 not come in one bunch like when Fenway Park
19 gets out. It's a car here, a car there.
20 Yes, they add up on 117, but they add up
21 very slow, and 117 is there, the traffic is
22 going to continue. This project might be a
23 way for us to get our traffic problems in
24 our surrounding communities resolved.

1 I think it's beneficial for all our
2 neighboring communities to pull together,
3 not fight one another. Like you said,
4 whether you like gaming or not, it's the
5 law. Let's make the best of it. Our area
6 could really use it. Thank you very much
7 for your time.

8 COMMISSIONER CAMERON: Thank you.

9 CHAIRMAN CROSBY: Thank you,
10 Mr. Hazard.

11 MR. HAZARD: Thank you,
12 Mr. Chairman.

13 CHAIRMAN CROSBY: Lined up, go
14 ahead. If you're here, you go.

15 MR. DEVEREAUX: Good evening,
16 Mr Chairman, members of the Commission. My
17 name is William Devereaux. I'm here
18 representing the city of Fitchburg. I sort
19 of come at this from a unique perspective,
20 I guess, because I represented entities on
21 both sides of this issue. I represented
22 the Narragansett Indians and the Harrah's
23 Casino, when they sold a casino.
24 Represented the city of -- city of Fall

1 River when it was looking at a potential
2 casino.

3 One thing that, on behalf of
4 Fitchburg I want to thank the Commission
5 for, is the focus on mitigation to
6 surrounding communities. And as was
7 already stated by a number of witnesses,
8 Fitchburg is also a gateway community, and
9 Fitchburg is definitely going to be
10 affected, hopefully in positive ways, but I
11 think we also have to be realistic that
12 there are going to be some negative aspects
13 to a gambling venue, and those have to be
14 addressed.

15 And Fitchburg has a concern about
16 that because, presently, the dialogue with
17 Cordish, and we've heard very good things
18 about Cordish, and frankly it seems that
19 they are a good company. But their
20 dialogue with the city of Fitchburg has not
21 exactly been overwhelming. We would ask
22 the Commission to monitor how Cordish deals
23 with the surrounding communities, because
24 so far -- and we hope that there's some

1 progress, but there really hasn't been much
2 progress to report to you in terms of
3 Fitchburg's discussions with the Cordish
4 company. And that makes me focus on just a
5 couple of points.

6 The Act -- the Massachusetts Gaming
7 Act is different than many other states.
8 In that, within the law there has to be a
9 concern in agreements, mitigation
10 agreements with surrounding communities.
11 Massachusetts, like many New England
12 states, has a very strong, local community
13 government. There's 351 cities and towns.

14 So yes -- and there's probably
15 people in Leominster that are related, have
16 family members in Fitchburg and vice-versa,
17 and it's good to have economic development.
18 But how to you address some of the negative
19 concerns? That is a significant issue for
20 the city of Fitchburg.

21 One thing I would like to mention
22 too is, what you're talking about here is a
23 convenience gaming facility. That's a
24 totally different animal from a resort

1 casino. So you have to be realistic about
2 what -- what the pluses are going to be and
3 what some of the negatives are going to be.

4 The plus is the economic
5 development. But the negatives are,
6 whether there's 10 cars going at one hour
7 or a hundred cars, there's going to be wear
8 on the roadways, because convenience
9 casinos are the types of facilities where
10 people go only for several hours, and they
11 either eat, drink, gamble and they leave.
12 So there's a lot of in and out traffic that
13 happens at a facility like that, and you
14 have to be concerned about that.

15 The other thing that Fitchburg is
16 concerned with, and we've looked at some
17 studies, problem gambling, while's it's not
18 an epidemic, it is significant enough that
19 you have to be concerned about that. And
20 in the surrounding communities there's
21 studies that show within a 10-mile radius,
22 the people that are in the lower
23 socioeconomic strata are the ones that are
24 adversely affected to a greater degree.

1 And if you look at Fitchburg, Fitchburg has
2 a 19-percent poverty rate, and it has an
3 unemployment rate that's a bit greater than
4 Leominster. So those are significant
5 concerns for the city of Fitchburg.

6 I know that Cordish says there's
7 going to be a lot of economic energy and
8 redistribution. But, frankly, most of that
9 in the public sector goes either to the
10 state or Leominster. There has to be some
11 significant address that's made to the
12 surrounding communities to make this
13 project really work. Everyone talks about
14 team work. Well, Cordish has got to get on
15 the bus, too, and recognize that there's
16 other communities that are involved here.

17 In terms of Fitchburg being a
18 surrounding community, which is the last
19 thing I'm going to address, I would ask you
20 to consider -- I think it's not only
21 legally correct, but I think it's common
22 sense that Fitchburg is, under the
23 definition of the statute, a surrounding
24 community. It's contiguous. It's border

1 runs along the same common border with
2 Leominster. The population is almost
3 identical, the demographics are very
4 similar. In fact, as I mentioned, the
5 poverty rate is higher in Fitchburg than it
6 is in Leominster, and there's going to be
7 an increase in traffic.

8 Now one thing that I did, to do a
9 little due diligence, the only facility of
10 this type that you can look at that would
11 be similar is in Lincoln, Rhode Island, and
12 that's Twin River, which has been, what
13 they call the racino for over 20 years.

14 So I called the CEO and asked him
15 about the positives and the negatives.
16 And, certainly, his town gets a significant
17 amount of money from that casino. But he
18 did tell me, it's not so much police.
19 There will be extra police calls. But it's
20 your fire and your rescue. In one year he
21 said he had 800 calls, rescue calls to the
22 facility. And that could be from slip and
23 falls to suspected heart attacks, you name
24 it, and they have to respond.

1 Now, some people will say, well,
2 that's Leominster's issue. Well, no, it
3 isn't, because you have mutual aid
4 agreements with all the surrounding towns.
5 So if there is a rescue, for instance, in
6 Leominster that's making another call,
7 somebody from Fitchburg or Lancaster's
8 going to have to respond to that. So
9 there's going to be a ripple effect based
10 on mutual aid agreements.

11 Lastly, there's got to be some
12 positive way to address, whether it's with
13 the Fitchburg State or other entities that
14 are already straying, I mean, the public
15 health aspect is significant. What are you
16 going to do about the problem gambling,
17 because that is going to happen? Because
18 people from -- I submit, you're not going
19 to get people flying in on planes to go to
20 this casino. You'll get people from around
21 here, but the people flying in aren't
22 coming here. They're going to go to either
23 Mohegan Sun or wherever they build in
24 Boston. They're going to go to the resort

1 casinos where they can stay overnight and
2 they can spend a few days. You're going to
3 get convenience gamblers here, and there is
4 an affect. You're not going to get the
5 heavy tourist dollar. You will get some
6 dollars, but you are going to get that
7 negative effect.

8 The city of Fitchburg is very
9 concerned about that and is asking this
10 Commission to consider that and watch how,
11 if any, dialogue develops with The Cordish
12 Companies. Thank you.

13 CHAIRMAN CROSBY: Thank you. We
14 definitely will do that. Names that I've
15 read in the past, Adam Richard, David
16 Smith, Susan Ash, Jennifer Peck, Dave
17 Aronson, Ryan McNutt, Rachel Holmes --
18 Holmesmark?

19 MS. HOLMESMAKI LAHTI: Holmesmaki
20 Lahti.

21 CHAIRMAN CROSBY: Is that you?

22 MS. HOLMESMAKI LAHTI: Yeah.

23 CHAIRMAN CROSBY: Please come right
24 up. Tim Norton, Ellen Cutler, Travis

1 Vallez. You folks can come forward and sit
2 up -- be up close. Great. Welcome. You
3 can't read all that, ma'am.

4 MS. HOLMESMAKI LAHTI: I tried to go
5 through it.

6 CHAIRMAN CROSBY: Okay. Great.

7 MS. HOLMESMAKI LAHTI: And I'll go
8 quickly.

9 CHAIRMAN CROSBY: Thank you.

10 MS. HOLMESMAKI LAHTI: It's
11 prepared. I don't have to think. Just
12 repeat what I've thought about previously.

13 My name is Rachel Holmesmaki Lahti,
14 and I thank you for allowing me to speak.
15 I have a home, a year-round home at
16 Spectacle Pond, 123 Fire Road 12 in
17 Lancaster, Massachusetts, and I co-own a
18 house at 40 Crown Street in Leominster. So
19 I am here as a taxpayer for both the city
20 of Leominster and the town of Lancaster.

21 First of all, I would like to say
22 that it was a deceitful deal to not let
23 Leominster residents know about this
24 proposal to build a \$200 million gambling

1 and alcohol-drinking casino until about two
2 or three months before residents had to
3 build for or against it. In addition, it
4 was in summertime when residents are on
5 vacation and not always reading the
6 newspaper or keeping abreast of current
7 events.

8 People opposed to it had very little
9 time to get organized and learn who else
10 was opposed so that they could get together
11 with greater strength to fight for their
12 rights to protect their city from what I
13 and many others look at as an evil element.

14 I don't want my property taxes
15 lowered on a house I co-own on Crown Street
16 in Leominster, or that I own outright at
17 Spectacle Pond in Lancaster through
18 proceeds from a slots casino, for the same
19 reason I object to tax dollars funding
20 Planned Parenthood abortionists. These two
21 groups promote evil, which brings misery
22 and alienation from God. Just because some
23 politicians turn their backs on God and the
24 Bible, on which America's laws were

1 established and made gambling and abortion
2 legal, doesn't -- doesn't not mean we
3 should approve of those things or be a
4 party to them in any way.

5 I am opposed to this project, this
6 casino gambling and drinking project,
7 because of spiritual, moral, ethical,
8 health, safety and crime reasons.

9 Plans are to have 1,250 slot
10 machines and -- and electronic games in the
11 casino, and live entertainment in the
12 theater. I believe lots of mind-altering
13 alcohol will be consumed in both areas. My
14 primary home in Lancaster on Spectacle Pond
15 is adjacent to -- is adjacent to and
16 accessed from Route 70, also known as
17 Lunenburg Road. And this home in Lancaster
18 is also boarded by Route 2 two. Spectacle
19 Pond is at the intersection of those two
20 routes, two and 70.

21 I believe many drivers coming from
22 the proposed casino or entertainment
23 theater would be drunk or mentally impaired
24 and using these two highways to get home.

1 Be aware sober drivers.

2 The gambling promoters are trying
3 very hard to entice prospective host
4 communities with promises of sharing the
5 ill-gotten wealth. I don't want money from
6 gambling and boozing used to lower my taxes
7 in Leominster or Lancaster.

8 I look upon The Cordish Companies'
9 proposal to pay money to neighboring
10 communities for mitigation purposes for
11 deterioration of highways and ensuing
12 traffic as a bribe to overlook the sins and
13 moral degradation that a gambling and
14 boozing business brings.

15 The Bible requires people to work
16 and be good stewards of their money. Using
17 their assets to support their families and
18 help the needy. The money God allows each
19 person to have should not be squandered
20 sitting hour after hour and week after week
21 in a gambling casino while getting tipsy.
22 Our money should be used to love God back
23 by giving it to us in the first place. And
24 we can love God by spending money wisely

1 that would have been wasted on gambling and
2 drinking.

3 The Cordish Companies' proposal says
4 that Leominster residents are to be give
5 preference in hiring for an expected 500 to
6 700 full-time jobs, and 600 construction
7 jobs. No doubt, some people in neighboring
8 communities think there might be a job for
9 them too, since so many jobs are expected
10 to be created. How is the issuance of jobs
11 going to be monitored?

12 The Cordish Companies has met with
13 business people in Leominster to talk about
14 using them and their products to build this
15 \$200 million complex. The Cordish
16 Companies wants everyone to be greedy and
17 ignore God and his commandments in the
18 Bible, that you are not to even have the
19 appearance of evil. Why hasn't The Cordish
20 Companies and the mayor of Leominster, and
21 Leominster city officials, who are
22 promoting this gambling and drinking
23 casino, been upfront and made public - I'm
24 dry - and made public the salaries of each

1 job category? If they haven't even asked
2 -- if they haven't even asked, why not?
3 That is a very important piece of
4 information.

5 I saw a brochure by those opposing
6 this casino that listed annual salaries in
7 two categories at \$11,000 and \$14,000 a
8 year, which is a pittance. A person
9 serious about his or her faith would not
10 work in a gambling parlor and encourage
11 patrons to drink alcohol, which destroys a
12 person's liver and brain cells. A
13 committed christian would not help build a
14 complex that exalts and promotes
15 unwholesome behavior that brings people to
16 ruin no matter what the salary is. The
17 Bible says you are to be a representative
18 of Jesus in all that you do or say.

19 \$50,000 will be donated annually
20 through this casino -- through this
21 proposed casino, to something called the
22 Leominster Community Foundation to support
23 charities and youth sports. That donation
24 will also support a micro loan program for

1 small businesses. It is unbelieve that
2 money from a gambling, alcohol-consuming,
3 adult-entertainment casino that promotes --
4 that promotes addictions, is supposed to be
5 accepted by residents to help their
6 children in traditional businesses. Do you
7 want your children or grandchildren
8 marrying a gambler or drinker?

9 The Cordish Companies would have a
10 police substation built on the premises.
11 Isn't that a conflict of interest? Who
12 would want to bring charges against the
13 city's perceived cash cow, should a dispute
14 arise, or of someone alleged there were
15 suspicious financial transactions. I would
16 like to know what cities with a casino are
17 wealthy, their property owners virtually
18 free of taxes, and the community a place
19 where God-honoring families want to live.
20 The known history and results of gambling
21 and excessive drinking is horrendous.

22 I ask that no degrading gambling and
23 drinking casino be given a license to
24 situate in Leominster, and that no monies

1 from gambling and boozing in Leominster
2 ever be used to pay for road repairs or
3 other tax-reducing projects in Lancaster.

4 God promises in the Holy Bible that
5 if we seek to love and -- and obey him
6 above all else, that he will provide for
7 our needs, and I have found that to be
8 true. Thank you for your time.

9 CHAIRMAN CROSBY: Thank you very
10 much.

11 COMMISSIONER ZUNIGA: Thank you.

12 COMMISSIONER STEBBINS: Thank you.

13 COMMISSIONER CAMERON: Thank you.

14 CHAIRMAN CROSBY: Somebody might
15 tell the folks in the other room -- there's
16 now five, 10 or 15 --

17 THE FLOOR: You can actually hear
18 better in there.

19 CHAIRMAN CROSBY: You can hear
20 better in there? Okay. Yes.

21 MR. VALLEE: Travis Vallee,
22 79 Priest Street in Leominster, Mass. I'm
23 here talking -- first, I'm going to talk
24 for the Leominster Fire Union, Local 1841.

1 We did meet with the Cordish company. Our
2 union overwhelmingly support the project.
3 As far as safety, people coming in and out,
4 the rescues, we don't see an issue with it.
5 We have other areas in the city that we
6 take care of. There's no issues. There
7 are private ambulance company also, if we
8 have issues. Before we call mutual aid, we
9 call a private ambulance company, so that
10 shouldn't be much of an issue.

11 The part about traffic and stuff, I
12 do agree with the Lancaster and Bolton will
13 be affected. As far as Fitchburg, my
14 shop -- I'm also a business owner, and my
15 shop is located on the main road from
16 Leominster to Fitchburg, and traffic's
17 always going towards Fitchburg backed up.
18 People go through Leominster to get to
19 Fitchburg, so that's where I want to stand
20 with that issue. Leominster, people do
21 come through Bolton and Lancaster, they
22 will be affected traffic-wise. Fitchburg,
23 I don't see an issue at all. People not
24 from the area, if you check it out, I think

1 you'll see the same thing. I was on the
2 police department in Leominster seven
3 years. I'm also a veteran. I've been on
4 the fire department for 11 years.

5 So the fire department, as far as
6 the casino issue, we don't see any issue
7 with our fire department. We're the
8 largest fire defendant in this area, and we
9 don't have an issue with the safety of the
10 people coming to the casino. Thank you.

11 COMMISSIONER CAMERON: Thank you.

12 CHAIRMAN CROSBY: Thank you very
13 much.

14 COMMISSIONER STEBBINS: Thank you.

15 COMMISSIONER ZUNIGA: Thank you.

16 CHAIRMAN CROSBY: Yes.

17 MR. MCNUTT: I'm Ryan McNutt. I
18 actually stepped out.

19 CHAIRMAN CROSBY: Okay. I'm sorry.

20 MR. MCNUTT: Thank you,
21 Commissioners, for this opportunity. My
22 name is Ryan McNutt. I'm the director of
23 housing for the city of Fitchburg. I also
24 lived in the city of Fitchburg. I'd like

1 to reiterate and echo some of the comments
2 that were made by Mr. Devereaux, who was
3 representing the city of the Fitchburg.

4 This -- obviously, having six to 800
5 jobs come into our region is going to be a
6 benefit for Leominster, Fitchburg, all of
7 the surrounding communities. I mean, it's
8 something that every economic professional
9 has fought for, is to get jobs into your
10 community. So I mean, we're definitely
11 very eager to see the impacts in the
12 positive sense of having this many jobs
13 come into our community.

14 But I've seen the comments from The
15 Cordish Companies and their executives in
16 the newspapers, and they are pretty loudly
17 stating that they don't believe that
18 there's going to be any negative impacts in
19 any of the surrounding communities. And as
20 the economic development and housing
21 professional for the city of Fitchburg,
22 that really gives me a lot of pause for
23 concern, because a large part of my job
24 deals with a lot of social services aspects

1 of Fitchburg in terms of affordable housing
2 and lower wage -- you know, individuals
3 that are making, you know, 60 percent of
4 varying median income, or 40 percent of
5 varying median income. Some people make 30
6 percent of varying median income.

7 What I suspect is many of these 600
8 jobs are going to be folks that are going
9 to make 40 to 60 percent of varying median
10 income. And Fitchburg is a very affordable
11 and attractive community, because the rents
12 are very low and it is so affordable.

13 So, I mean, we're a similar size
14 community from Leominster. They have about
15 40,000 people, we have 40,000 thousand
16 people. We share a lots of resources being
17 both gateway cities, contiguous gateway
18 cities. We also share federal entitlement
19 grants. I manage the CDBG and the home
20 programs for the city of Fitchburg, which
21 is a participating jurisdiction with the
22 city of Leominster. So I see in my job
23 every day, the bleed-off effects, both
24 positive and negative, that go back and

1 forth between the cities of Fitchburg and
2 Leominster. That's why they're known as
3 little twin cities.

4 So, again, I just want to, you know,
5 share my enthusiasm for the positive
6 impacts this -- this project may have for
7 our region, but I also urge the
8 Massachusetts Gaming Commission to pay very
9 close attention to the executives of
10 Cordish Companies and what there saying,
11 and how they don't believe there's going to
12 be any adverse effects on the neighboring
13 communities. I mean, that, to me, just
14 seems a little too yellow brick road, and
15 not enough of the actual conditions of our
16 roads, you know.

17 I mean, there is some common sense
18 about what happens when you build one of
19 these convenience gaming resorts in a
20 community. And the impacts can be very
21 positive, but over the life of this project
22 there's going to be adverse societal
23 effects as well, and Fitchburg will
24 definitely experience those. Thank you

1 very much, Mr. McNutt.

2 CHAIRMAN CROSBY: Thank you very
3 much.

4 COMMISSIONER CAMERON: Thank you.

5 CHAIRMAN CROSBY: Yes, ma'am.

6 MS. CUTLER: Hi, I'm Ellen Cutler.

7 CHAIRMAN CROSBY: I'm sorry, your
8 last name?

9 MS. CUTLER: Cutler, C-U-T-L-E-R.

10 CHAIRMAN CROSBY: Cutler.

11 MS. CUTLER: I live on 1887 Main
12 Street, Lancaster, right on Route 117. We
13 purchased our house 41 years ago before
14 I-190 was in there and 495 was a relatively
15 new highway.

16 Traffic has increased over the years
17 due to the Walmart store, now there's a new
18 McDonald's, a new truck stop going in down
19 the other side of the hill. And because of
20 the increased traffic, we no longer can
21 open our front windows in our house. We
22 had to put an addition on the back of our
23 house in order to be able to even hear the
24 TV. And the traffic runs, basically from

1 six in the morning to approximately eight
2 o'clock at night constantly. And We've
3 counted as many as 50 cars before we can
4 even get out of our driveway. I feel with
5 the casino it will be later traffic at
6 night. So not only will we have traffic
7 all day long, we'll be up all night with
8 traffic coming and going on Route 117.
9 Sometimes -- there's a traffic light in
10 Bolton, down 110 and 117. At the traffic
11 light there's right -- we're able to get
12 out of our driveway, but it's been very,
13 very difficult.

14 On October 7th -- well, 1st of
15 October the Cordish company had proposed to
16 buy 16 acres off Jungle Road for a slot
17 parlor. And now on October 7th I see in
18 the paper that they plan to buy an
19 additional 10 acres for a casino and
20 possibly a hotel, and parking for 900 plus
21 cars, which is an additional cars on the
22 road to their casino. I just want to know,
23 how are they going to monitor the traffic
24 when they say there won't be a traffic

1 impact, when it already is an impact today
2 and just going to compound it.

3 Lancaster has the mall at Whitney
4 Field, the mall where Kohl's is, the
5 Walmart mall, but Lancaster does not
6 receive any benefits for any of these
7 business. But, yet, Lancaster has to
8 maintain these roads, provide police and
9 emergency services when there are accident
10 issues on these roads. So I feel that it's
11 really not beneficial to Lancaster or the
12 people that live on 117 to have this
13 proposal for a casino put in our area.
14 Thank you very much.

15 CHAIRMAN CROSBY: Thank you very
16 much. All right. Leila Lawler, John
17 Quist, Matthew Ferrer. There's another
18 Aubuchon.

19 COMMISSIONER ZUNIGA: Oh, no. These
20 are on --

21 CHAIRMAN CROSBY: Oh, they're on --
22 they signed up again. Okay. Oh, this is
23 different. Okay. Arline Stith, Robert
24 Fitzpatrick, Patrick McCarty.

1 THE FLOOR: What was the first name
2 that you --

3 CHAIRMAN CROSBY: Well you can --
4 whoever you are it doesn't matter. We're
5 not going to be all that much sticklers.
6 Welcome.

7 MS. LAWLER: My name is Leila
8 Laureen Lawler, I live in Lancaster.
9 Normally, I would not feel the need to
10 reiterate the points that have been made,
11 but since we've been listening for an
12 hour-and-a-half to a lot of Leominster
13 assurance that things will be going
14 perfectly well, I do feel the need to
15 reiterate a couple of things.

16 One thing is that all the positives
17 seem to be based on what seems to be a
18 conflation between the idea of the slot
19 machines and the idea of the regular
20 casino, a regular resort-type casino. And
21 I'm all for prosperity. I'm all for
22 hiring. I'm all for jobs for people. I
23 think that veterans, especially, need to
24 have jobs. I would not be opposed to

1 economic growth. I think it's a wonderful
2 thing. But I question what we've been
3 hearing, because it seems to be that
4 there's two things going on.

5 And if it is true that this is going
6 to be a more resort type of a thing, then
7 it is not going to be true that 190 will be
8 the road that will service this particular
9 facility. Because if people are traveling
10 from far away, if they're coming from the
11 south or the north, either way, please look
12 at a map. They will be coming down or up
13 495 and they will go across Route 117.
14 There is just no other way to get to this
15 spot. So that is something that has been
16 glossed over by -- by the many people who
17 have been speaking to you from Leominster.
18 And from the Cordish company it seems to me
19 that they have prepared these people very
20 well to give you the impression that it is
21 some sort of wonderful, fantastical
22 resort-type facility that will be drawing
23 people from very far away, including flying
24 in, which I find absurd. And the issue is,

1 really, what road will they be using? And
2 if all of that is true, they will be using
3 117.

4 And it is -- we also heard
5 assurances that from the fire department
6 point of view and from the police
7 department point of view, there will be no
8 issue. But that cannot possibly be true
9 because, as you know, people when they're
10 traveling those distances don't always
11 commit the crimes or have the accidents in
12 the place where the facility is. Many
13 times they have it on the road. And the
14 road would be in Lancaster. And the
15 question that I have is, how will the
16 people in Lancaster who -- as another
17 speaker mentioned, you know, we are a
18 little depressed. We had a big -- our
19 college move out, and I don't know how we
20 are supposed to pay for this, especially
21 considering that all the data shows that
22 casinos, particularly slot machine casinos,
23 which is what we're talking about, depress
24 property values. Over the long term they

1 depress them.

2 Now, we've heard a lot about
3 prosperity and how everyone's going to be
4 benefiting from this, but nobody has
5 addressed the issue of property values
6 going down. And most of us in Lancaster
7 are stressed on our taxes. And if we also,
8 in addition, have to pay for more emergency
9 services, then my question is, how is that
10 being addressed?

11 Now, if all of that is not true and
12 it's not a resort, and a lot of people are
13 not going to be coming through, and it's
14 not going to have an impact on the traffic,
15 because it's actually just going to be
16 serving the people who are already in
17 Leominster and not doing very well, as we
18 heard, or possibly the Worcester area and
19 they'll be using Route 190, well, then in
20 that case, I don't see where the prosperity
21 comes in.

22 So -- so I think that either way I
23 would ask the people in our surrounding
24 towns to really look at this and to tell --

1 to give you what I consider has not been
2 really addressed in all the speakers, with
3 a few exceptions that I've heard this
4 evening, which is that it seems like
5 there's a lot that is being presented as a
6 result of this, but not in a very factual
7 or concrete way. Whereas the concrete
8 things that I see are tremendous impact on
9 our town of Lancaster. It's not in our
10 interest for this casino to be right over
11 the line in Lancaster, which is very close
12 to us. It is -- in fact, part of the road
13 that it will be on, formerly known as
14 Jungle Road is, in fact, in Lancaster.

15 And, by the way, I don't know if
16 everybody remembers but that part of Jungle
17 Road is zoned in Lancaster for adult
18 entertainment because, as you know, every
19 community is mandated to have that zoning.
20 So we purposely put it in a place that we
21 considered to be inaccessible and not
22 necessarily able to be developed.

23 And it concerns me very much,
24 looking five years down the road, if we're

1 talking about a great casino and there's
2 going to be -- the first speaker said --
3 let's not forget what the first speaker
4 said, which was adult entertainment. Well,
5 I think in Lancaster we do not actually
6 want adult entertainment in our community.

7 And so, I would really encourage any
8 Lancaster residents who are thinking about
9 this to consider what the consequences will
10 be. Thank you for listening to me.

11 CHAIRMAN CROSBY: Thank you.

12 Welcome.

13 MS. ACKERMAN: Good afternoon. I'm
14 Terri Ackerman, I'm the town administrator
15 from Sterling. And I want to thank the
16 Gaming Commission for holding this hearing.
17 And I also want to thank you for
18 considering surrounding communities in your
19 process, and your ombudsman, John Ziemba
20 has been very helpful to several of us
21 communities.

22 I do feel the need to echo, very
23 briefly, the comments for some previous
24 speakers. I wasn't planning on speaking

1 today. But Route 190 does go through
2 Sterling. We are one quarter of a mile
3 from the proposed project. And we believe
4 Sterling will be very impacted, in
5 particular on Route 190. On the one hand
6 the Cordish company says 60 to 80 percent
7 of this 8,000 cars per day will be coming
8 on the interstate highways, including, of
9 course 190, all the traffic coming from
10 Worcester and the south, but then they say
11 there's not going to be any impact to
12 Sterling. So I personally think that our
13 fire and EMS services will be a first
14 responder, as usual on these interstates,
15 such as 190, and we will be having a
16 definite cost to Sterling taxpayers. So I
17 ask you to consider that, and thank you
18 again.

19 CHAIRMAN CROSBY: Thank you. How is
20 our transcriber doing? Do you need a
21 break?

22 THE COURT REPORTER: No, I'm okay.

23 CHAIRMAN CROSBY: All right. So we
24 pretty soon, but we'll go ahead.

1 MS. STITH: I'm Arline Stith. I
2 live in Leominster. I am about a
3 mile-and-a-half from the proposed casino
4 route. I'm also opposed to the slots
5 parlor. 39 percent of Leominster residents
6 voted no. We had nine days to prepare any
7 kind of negative impacts to our community.
8 We were subject to a massive PR campaign
9 from a very deep-pocketed provider there.
10 We are looking at the -- they talked to us
11 about jobs. We're looking at 1200 jobs,
12 600 are temporary jobs. They're
13 construction jobs. They'll be gone within
14 a year, or whenever the casino is built.
15 The remaining 600 jobs are low-paying
16 service jobs. These are not going to
17 provide a great deal of comfort and income
18 to the people working these -- these
19 positions.

20 As an industry, the gaming industry
21 has lower-paying jobs than any other
22 industry. It also has the highest turnover
23 rate, more than any other industry in this
24 area. We say manufacturing is depressed.

1 Well, the fact is that manufacturing for
2 biotech is actually doing pretty well in
3 the Worcester area and Fort Devens -- in
4 the Devens area. We are given promises of
5 revenue. A slots casino and gaming is not
6 considered economic development. We have
7 promises. The region is actually
8 saturated. Mohegan Sun has been in and out
9 of Chapter 11. Foxwoods is close behind.
10 The profit for the casino and the taxes for
11 the state depends on the loss of the people
12 who are playing. Like Delaware, you know,
13 who got an \$8 million bailout for their
14 casinos because they weren't bringing in
15 the revenue. What do the people who lose
16 all their money, lose their houses, lose
17 their jobs as a result of the addictions
18 that result of this, what bailout do they
19 get? They get broken families, a higher
20 suicide rate. We get crime in our areas.
21 We know that a lot of the crime come in
22 from people who are visiting us, visitor
23 crime.

24 While it might be great for the

1 Cordish parking lot and the parking lot
2 around the casino, it is not going to be so
3 great for the residents who may find their
4 cars broken into, who may find their homes
5 broken into. Nobody's going to guarantee
6 that our -- our communities are going to be
7 any safer. When there's higher traffic,
8 higher crime, our property values are going
9 to decrease. Nobody's going to want to
10 live in an area where the traffic and the
11 crime is perceived as higher. We are a
12 family-oriented city, and we want to remain
13 a family-oriented city. From what we know,
14 from what happened to other places that
15 have slots casinos in them, and larger
16 casinos, that goes away. You can take a
17 look at what happened in southern
18 Connecticut.

19 Small businesses depend on the
20 discretionary money that people come in.
21 And if they're spending them at the
22 casinos, at the slots parlor, they're not
23 going to have anything to spend in the
24 local businesses and the local restaurants.

1 From a public health aspect, the
2 casino always wins. These modern slot
3 machines are engineered. They're
4 engineered to keep people playing as long
5 as possible. The addiction is much higher
6 in communities closest to the casino.
7 That's us and the people in this area here.
8 The Lancasters, the Sterlings. That is --
9 and it brings with it that increase in
10 violent crime, embezzlement, and, again,
11 suicide. And when entertainment becomes
12 addiction, is it still entertainment.

13 Our process was also very, very
14 dark. The people in Leominster really were
15 not aware of what was going down. We
16 voted, our referendum vote on our ballot,
17 as well as on the host agreement, talked
18 about 16 acres with a slots casino on it.
19 After the fact, after the referendum vote,
20 we found out by accident, because the
21 Cordish were presenting in Boston at
22 your -- at your meeting there. We found
23 out there was an additional 10 acres that
24 was added, and a 15-story hotel that was

1 being added to it. This was a surprise to
2 us.

3 Your own process, your own process,
4 your values, your -- your mission statement
5 talks about this process being transparent,
6 and it talks about it being open
7 discussion. I don't think the people of
8 Leominster had that opportunity.

9 THE FLOOR: That's right.

10 CHAIRMAN CROSBY: You're running --
11 be quick here.

12 MS. STITH: Okay. My time is up.

13 CHAIRMAN CROSBY: I wasn't telling
14 you -- I wasn't cutting you off. I was
15 just saying be quick.

16 MS. STITH: That's okay.

17 CHAIRMAN CROSBY: All right.

18 MS. STITH: Just as an aside, just
19 one -- the revenues that are promised, you
20 know, I don't believe are going to be
21 there. They may be there in the first
22 year, maybe even the second year. But on
23 the long term, this region is saturated.
24 And just like all the others where you have

1 Niagara Falls bond rating as a city has
2 decreased because the casinos there are not
3 bringing in the revenue. You have, like I
4 say, Delaware with an \$8 million taxpayer
5 bailout to save their casinos. I don't
6 think the revenues are going to be
7 sustainable. This is not economic growth.

8 CHAIRMAN CROSBY: Thank you very
9 much. Other folks whose names I have
10 called?

11 MR. FITZPATRICK: Mr. Chairman,
12 Commissioners, my name is Robert
13 Fitzpatrick. I live in Leominster. I want
14 to state right away, I'm not against jobs
15 or unions. I was paid union dues for 34
16 years, and I was glad to do it as an
17 educator.

18 In Leominster on the 24th of
19 September the voters passed a referendum on
20 about 16 acres of land for a slots parlor.
21 On October 17th in the Worcester Telegram,
22 an article by John J. Monahan interviewed
23 Mr. Joseph Weinberg, president of the
24 Cordish company. They discussed, in the

1 article, the mitigation process. The
2 mitigation process, of course, as you know,
3 is a negotiated compensation from the
4 effects of the slots parlor as customers
5 pass through communities on their way to
6 the slots parlor. The Cordish company has
7 designated eight municipalities as
8 surrounding communities, and has sent each
9 of them a similar model agreement.

10 However, it features the alternate
11 plan, which was first disclosed to the
12 public on the October 7th meeting of the
13 MGC. It has 26 acres of land, 10 acres
14 acquired on the 24th of September as the
15 referendum was being passed on the 16-acre
16 parcel, and it has a plan in it for a
17 260-room hotel.

18 The featuring of the alternate plan
19 by the Cordish company, unfortunately, is
20 based upon a site that was never approved
21 by the voters of Leominster. It was cited
22 as an alternate plan. And this leaves the
23 eight designated communities basing their
24 mitigation analysis on a site that was

1 never voted upon.

2 The project also has no impact
3 study. And as you know, an impact study is
4 required, and it was done on the 16-acre
5 site. Required by Commonwealth, paid for
6 by the Cordish company. And it came out
7 the executive branch of the Leominster city
8 government and was done by -- produced by
9 B & S Consulting.

10 In the article, Mr. Weinberg stated
11 that as far as negative effects on the
12 surrounding communities, there would be
13 quote, unquote hardly any. And according
14 to Mr. Weinberg, in the article he stated
15 that traffic would be so disbursed, quote,
16 unquote over so many roadways as to be
17 undetectable.

18 The impact study on the 16 acres
19 released by B & S Consultants predicted
20 5,620 customers' cars per day additionally
21 in Leominster. 39,340 per week. It did
22 not take into account vendors, vans and
23 trucks. So the total would be greater
24 than -- much greater than that. We have to

1 speculate about what the total of
2 additional vehicles would be, because there
3 was no impact study. But I think we could
4 say that it would have to rise
5 significantly.

6 As we know, from our historical
7 viewpoint, water and jobs, jobs and water.
8 They go together. Especially, here in --
9 waterways, mills run by water. The impact
10 study on the 16-acre infrastructure
11 states -- or stated that, according to the
12 Leominster water and sewer department, the
13 water capacity is 28,000 gallons per day
14 with the slots parlor budgeted at 25,000
15 per day. However, if a 264-room hotel is
16 added to the water use, it would
17 necessarily show a major increase.

18 That area is zoned for manufacturing
19 and individual -- industrial development.
20 But if the usage is constricted by The
21 Cordish Companies' alternate plan,
22 industrial development would be stifled,
23 along with jobs that are better than casino
24 jobs, family-sustaining jobs. We're

1 talking mortgages and houses here. Not the
2 casino jobs or, unfortunately, the retail
3 jobs that have been the hallmark of
4 Leominster's economic development.

5 In concluding, I would simply ask
6 that the Commission consider these facts
7 when they evaluate the Leominster
8 application for a slots parlor. I thank
9 you for your time.

10 CHAIRMAN CROSBY: Thank you very
11 much.

12
13 MR. FITZPATRICK: Thank you.

14 CHAIRMAN CROSBY: We have a
15 representative from the North Central Mass
16 Chamber of Commerce, Yasmin, Loa?

17 MS. LOFT: Loft.

18 CHAIRMAN CROSBY: Did I pronounce it
19 wrong?

20 MS. LOFT: Thanks for letting me in.

21 CHAIRMAN CROSBY: Okay.

22 MS. LOFT: I appreciate it, because
23 I have to run and go pick up my daughter by
24 six o'clock.

1 I'm actually here representing
2 myself as an individual. My name is Yasmin
3 Loft. I have also worked for the North
4 Central Mass Chamber of Commerce, but I'm
5 also a realtor for Paula K. Aberman &
6 Associates out of Lancaster, and I reside
7 in Leominster so I kind of cover quite the
8 area here.

9 I am in the -- I am in favor of this
10 opportunity, and I've heard a lot here over
11 the past hour-and-a-half, and I think a lot
12 of it has been, you know, covered very
13 well. And I know that there's obviously
14 going to be an impact on traffic. Anytime
15 anything new comes to the area there always
16 is. But going to Fenway, going to the
17 Garden, going to hear bands play at music
18 venues, it doesn't stop the traffic.
19 People will tolerate the traffic. They
20 will still go to enjoy those events.

21 What the casino brings is, yes,
22 it'll bring some traffic, but the way I
23 look at it, and I don't personally know, I
24 can only guess, is that once the novelty

1 wears off that traffic will, first of all,
2 die down to a certain degree. And I would
3 imagine that most of it will be during the
4 evening hours when it's not during the
5 high-traffic times of eight in the morning
6 or five in the afternoon, or during school
7 time. But, regardless, people want to get
8 somewhere they're going to go. And if
9 they're not going to go down 117, guess
10 what, they're going to go around. Just as
11 we would travel to Boston, if we need to go
12 through Cambridge to get to Boston, or
13 through the north shore, we will get there
14 to where we want to go.

15 With respect to housing, from a
16 realtor's perspective, I am fortunate that
17 I have more than one job, and that I have
18 income coming in, and as a single mom and
19 able to care for my two girls. But think
20 of, you know, just the jobs that it brings.
21 These are people that are employed. I
22 think of when I go out to eat at a
23 restaurant. Look at all the waiters there.
24 They're making -- earning money. Yes, it's

1 whatever the hourly rate is, but look at
2 the tips that they bring in. These are
3 people that are still working and are still
4 earning money. And that's what's the
5 restaurants will do, whether it's a bar.
6 It's still income that's coming into the
7 area, it's still keeping people employed,
8 and that's still enabling -- enabling
9 people stay in their homes.

10 We've seen so many foreclosures and
11 short sales that are out there. And, you
12 know, luckily those things are dwindling
13 down a little bit as things are turning
14 around economy-wise, and the housing market
15 is getting better. I mean, I've had a much
16 more productive year this year than I have
17 in the last two years.

18 So if you think of a community that
19 it's going to enhance along with hotels, a
20 mountain for skiing. Think of the small
21 business owner. When I go out and do
22 ribbon-cuttings for these, I hope that they
23 still have their doors open in six months.
24 And if we have a casino that is going to

1 help cross-market to these independent
2 businesses within our communities, whether
3 it's Leominster or Lancaster, or Sterling,
4 this is going to keep their doors open as
5 well, because they've got money coming in.
6 They've got new patrons.

7 So I probably talked too fast there,
8 but I wanted to at least share for a minute
9 or two. Thank you for your time, and thank
10 you to whoever I cut in front of.

11 CHAIRMAN CROSBY: Thank you very
12 much. Thank you.

13 MS. LOFT: Thanks.

14 MR. MCCARTY: Good evening, my name
15 is Patrick McCarty, I'm a lifelong
16 Leominster resident. A couple disclosures.
17 My father is one of landowners where the
18 project is proposed, and I also had the
19 privilege of working as chairman of the
20 jobs and revenue campaign for the casino.

21 Setting that aside, as just a
22 Leominster resident, my wife works in the
23 Leominster school system, I have two girls
24 in the Leominster system. And I -- we, as

1 a family, are 100 percent in support of
2 this for numerous reasons.

3 It's going to generate 1200 jobs, as
4 been said, and I'm going to try not to
5 duplicate here. 1200 jobs, 600 during
6 construction, 600 full-time, and the
7 biggest part of those jobs is they're full
8 time and Cordish is committed to provide
9 full benefits.

10 We've been a family business here in
11 town for 32 years. We have 11 employees.
12 And I can honesty say that we cannot afford
13 as a corporation today, full benefits for
14 our employees. We have to ask them to
15 contribute to that. And it's a strain.
16 It's \$1,500, roughly, for a family plan and
17 about \$567 a month for an individual plan.
18 So for Cordish to be able to offer these
19 jobs and to be able to provide benefits to
20 the -- to all of their employees is a huge
21 benefit to the city.

22 Second, Leominster's marketing is
23 Leominster ready for you. And they truly
24 are ready for this development. A few

1 years back New England Development built
2 the Walmart and Lowe's project that you see
3 around the site now as part of that. They
4 brought in new water infrastructure, new
5 sewer infrastructure, installed new traffic
6 lights that now are operating about
7 40 percent capacity, so there's plenty of
8 traffic light capacity available to serve
9 the project, as well as plenty of water and
10 waste water capacity available.

11 Last thing is, I have the privilege
12 of serving on the board of directors for
13 Habitat for Humanity of North Central
14 Massachusetts. Our goal as an organization
15 is to provide clean, decent affordable
16 housing to families in need. And we
17 survive greatly on grants from -- from
18 churches, political organizations, you
19 know, government funding, grants, home
20 funds, all that. And so, by Cordish
21 agreeing to have this Leominster community
22 fund at \$50,000 a year, we look forward to
23 the opportunity to apply for that funding
24 and help our affiliate grow and sustain.

1 So we hope, sincerely, that you
2 consider Leominster. The vote was
3 overwhelming in support, and the community
4 is truly ready for it. Thank you.

5 COMMISSIONER CAMERON: Thank you.

6 COMMISSIONER ZUNIGA: Thank you.

7 COMMISSIONER STEBBINS: Thank you.

8 CHAIRMAN CROSBY: Thank you very
9 much. Okay. on the sign-up sheet from
10 today, Frank Streeter, Andrew Zykel
11 (phonetically), maybe.

12 MR. ZAIKIS: Zaikis.

13 CHAIRMAN CROSBY: Okay. Is that
14 you?

15 MR. ZAIKIS: Yes.

16 CHAIRMAN CROSBY: Please come up.

17 MR. STREETER: I'm Frank Streeter.

18 CHAIRMAN CROSBY: Okay, please come
19 up. Come on, why don't you both come up so
20 you're here. Tom Castner, Dave Leger, I
21 think we heard from, Jim Turner, Cheryl
22 Brow, Nick Facendola. All of you folks
23 please come up.

24 MR. STREETER: Mr. Chair --

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CHAIRMAN CROSBY: Sir.

MR. STREETER: -- Commissioners, welcome to Lancaster. Thank you for coming out here. My name is Frank Streeter. I'm a long-term Lancaster resident. I'd like to briefly address traffic issues. You've heard about this a fair amount already.

If you look at the map -- well, you've already heard how bad 117 is. If you look at the map, if you're coming here from Boston, which I do regularly, it's the Pike, 495 to 117. Anybody coming north on 495 is doing to take 117 and not 290, 190 to get to this casino. 117 is backed up.

Now, at their testimony at the hearing on October the 7th, Cordish testified that they anticipated annual revenues of over 200 million a year. Now, if you allow \$200 per car, per trip, that's a million cars. Allow 400, that's only half-a-million cars. But that's an awful lot of cars coming through, given that, at least a third and potentially a half of them, will be coming through Lancaster.

1 Now, you've heard a lot today from
2 people that have either a directed or
3 expected financial interest in this
4 project, certainly Cordish company does.
5 Now, I spent a couple minutes this
6 afternoon running a couple numbers about
7 what this is likely to cost Lancaster.

8 Now, Lancaster has, roughly, 8,000
9 residents. Let's assume 4,000 of them
10 commute. Now, if you assume 250 days a
11 year out of 360 days a year this casino
12 will be running, the numbers of impact add
13 up. Now, I'll give you guys each a copy of
14 this, it's very simple. But, basically, if
15 you assume that each of those drivers is
16 delayed only three minutes on average, only
17 three minutes each day, and the average
18 commuter earns, say, \$20 an hour, which
19 average isn't unreasonable, over 4,000
20 drivers, that's a cost of a million dollars
21 per year to the residents of the town of
22 Lancaster. This is something we will all
23 directly pay. Cordish has not offered
24 remediation funds anywhere near this order

1 of magnitude.

2 If they're looking at 200 million in
3 revenues, they're looking at tens of
4 millions in profits. Those of us who are
5 Lancaster residents are being asked to
6 directly subsidize those profits without
7 receiving any benefits. We are not being
8 given a choice about this. We are told, if
9 they go there this will happen. I
10 respectfully submit that the amount of
11 mitigation money being offered to
12 compensate Lancaster and the adjacent towns
13 is ludicrously low.

14 Additionally, these numbers, I
15 believe, as does our town manager are
16 relatively conservative in terms of number
17 of drivers. So without getting into the
18 social impacts and rest, it will have a
19 very material impact on each of us that
20 drive in Lancaster every day. And it will
21 cost us all, each individually, money. I
22 would ask you all to please take that into
23 strong consideration in your deliberations.
24 Thank you.

1 COMMISSIONER CAMERON: Thank you.

2 CHAIRMAN CROSBY: Thank you.

3 COMMISSIONER ZUNIGA: Thank you.

4 COMMISSIONER STEBBINS: Thank you.

5 CHAIRMAN CROSBY: There's also --
6 there's a name I can't quite read, somebody
7 from Leominster, the last name is Wait --
8 W-A-I-T -- okay, come on up. I'm sorry.
9 Sir, go ahead.

10 MR. ZAIKIS: Good evening. My name
11 is Andrew Zaikis and I live right on
12 Main Street in Lancaster. I will be
13 directly affected by this traffic created
14 by this project.

15 I've been hearing these things about
16 how it will be helping the retail markets
17 and all of this. And, yet, Cordish says
18 that there will be no traffic impact just
19 because they'll be on the highways --
20 because people coming in will be on the
21 highways. If they're going to be on the
22 highways, why would people go to these
23 retail places?

24 The location is right off the

1 highway. They're going to come off the
2 highway, they're going to go right to the
3 Dunkin' Donuts that just went in there, and
4 the Mobil station. They're going to get
5 all their stuff right there and they're
6 going to get right back on the highway and
7 leave again. So there's going to be no
8 reason for them to go into these
9 communities to spend money in these
10 communities, unless they're traveling
11 through the communities and creating more
12 traffic for us. I think this project is
13 a -- it's been presented abysmally. I
14 strongly oppose it.

15 CHAIRMAN CROSBY: Thank you.

16 MS. WAITKUS: Hi. Thank you very
17 much for this opportunity. I'm also a
18 single mom.

19 CHAIRMAN CROSBY: Your name?

20 MS. WAITKUS: Oh, I'm sorry. My
21 name's Charlotte Waitkus, 33 Summer Street
22 in Leominster.

23 And, honestly, at first I was for
24 the casino. And, actually, with everything

1 everybody is saying is kind of made be
2 wondering. But for me personally, I think
3 it'd be an opportunity, because I am a
4 single mom, and I am coming from low-income
5 families, and I think it would give me an
6 opportunity to get off assistance and have
7 a good-paying job that I can support my
8 family in.

9 But in the mix of everything, I also
10 see all these people's point of view about
11 how things could happen. But one of the
12 things that I want to strongly for is that
13 we all deserve a second chance. No matter
14 what -- how you guys vote and everything
15 else, I just want to say thank you very
16 much for listening to everybody, because I
17 know that it's a long day, and that you
18 guys would rather be home probably watching
19 TV, or whatever everybody does. And my
20 personal thing is, I think that we all
21 should be given a second chance.

22 Leominster did vote for the casino
23 and what are the two things. Now, it
24 doesn't matter what everybody thinks. It's

1 reality that Leominster voted in. Yeah,
2 there's is some bad points. There is also
3 some good points. I think surrounding
4 communities need to come together and form
5 an agreement if we're going to go -- if you
6 decide for this to come to our town.

7 One of the things I can tell you
8 about Leominster is that we are a very
9 loving, giving community, and we have a
10 heart of gold and we try to help people.
11 I'm one of those people.

12 The other thing is, Lancaster -- I
13 worked -- I used to work in McDonald's in
14 Clinton, and so I know what it's like to
15 get a low-paying job. I'm now a student at
16 the Mount Wachusett Community College, and
17 I plan on graduating soon, in 2015. I also
18 think that all these people in here thinks
19 that -- it's nice to know that everybody
20 matters.

21 And the last thing I want to say is,
22 I think that no matter what happens, I
23 think you guys will make the right choice,
24 and I want to say thank you for your time.

1 CHAIRMAN CROSBY: Thank you very
2 much.

3 COMMISSIONER CAMERON: Thank you.

4 COMMISSIONER STEBBINS: Thank you.

5 COMMISSIONER ZUNIGA: Thank you.

6 CHAIRMAN CROSBY: I hope your right
7 about that. It is six o'clock. It's been
8 two hours. At least on behalf of the
9 Commissioners, or at least this
10 Commissioner, we're going to take a very,
11 very short quick break, give you a quick
12 break, and we'll be back maybe as soon as
13 five past six or shortly thereafter.

14
15 (A recess was taken)

16
17 CHAIRMAN CROSBY: I think we have a
18 substitute for Mr. Turner.

19 THE FLOOR: Yeah.

20 CHAIRMAN CROSBY: Okay. Why do want
21 you begin.

22 MR. DONAHUE: Okay. My name is Jack
23 Donahue, 11 Butler Street, Worcester, Mass.
24 I've the business manager for Carpenter's

1 Local 107 in Worcester, representing all of
2 central Massachusetts. And so, I'm
3 speaking here in support of the casino.

4 When the legislature passed the
5 gaming -- the initial legislation, the idea
6 was for economic development. I think in
7 Leominster you have a unique opportunity to
8 address what the intent of the legislature
9 was, was to produce economic development.

10 North Central Worcester County has
11 been hard hit. Historically, has had the
12 highest unemployment rates in
13 Massachusetts. As many speakers have
14 spoken, the plastics industry has primarily
15 left Leominster, and it is one of the
16 gateway cities, which is, again, trying to
17 inject economic development into the
18 community.

19 The Cordish company, at this point
20 has, on their own in the host agreement,
21 designated that they intend to build the
22 project 100 percent union. We're in the --
23 in the discussion phases with them to come
24 to some type of an agreement. Very

1 positive discussions at this point.

2 And I think, again, the -- it can't
3 be stressed enough, grant it, I heard we
4 live and die on construction projects and
5 they're short-term. But a lot of those
6 construction projects put together, is a
7 career for a carpenter that's trying to pay
8 his mortgage, trying to put his kids
9 through school. And this is one of those
10 job that bridges from one job to the other.
11 It's only a year long, but if it's a year
12 project, that's 600 jobs. 600 jobs for
13 health insurance, pension, wages.

14 And then, on the inside, you know,
15 the company is committed to -- you've heard
16 full-time jobs with wages and benefits.
17 And whether you consider them service jobs
18 or not, or however other people look upon
19 those jobs, they're jobs. That's what this
20 legislation was designed to do, to create
21 jobs. Please don't lose the focus on that.

22 And one of the things, again, is the
23 application or the applicant, or I should,
24 maybe, is just the location. At some

1 point, whether it's in the near term or the
2 far term, the third license is going to
3 come on the line. And somebody's going to
4 monetize that license. And when that
5 happens, if the south shore slot location
6 is used, it's going to get cannibalized.
7 There's just no two ways about it.

8 The location in Leominster, you have
9 infrastructure, you have Route 2, you have
10 Route 190. So you have very good location.
11 At any given point, I guess no matter how
12 you measure it, with a casino in eastern
13 Mass. one in western Mass., you got a nice
14 one-hour ride from everywhere. I think
15 cannibalization is less likely to happen.
16 Long-term viability grows. Again, jobs,
17 jobs, jobs. It's 600 jobs. Whether it's
18 to address -- I've heard some people
19 mention the lower socioeconomic strata,
20 well, everybody needs a job. Everybody.

21 And that's -- again, six --
22 that's -- you know, I'm from Worcester. We
23 used to have Wyman Gordons. That was 800
24 jobs. Those jobs are gone. And this is

1 600 jobs, whether it's, short-term, 10 to
2 20 years, or long-term, if it lasts longer,
3 I would just hope, again, the focus is on
4 jobs. Thank you very much.

5 CHAIRMAN CROSBY: Thank you very
6 much.

7 COMMISSIONER CAMERON: Thank you.

8 CHAIRMAN CROSBY: Just to reiterate
9 some other -- other names who's names I've
10 read, David Joyce, Tom Castner, Cheryl
11 Brow, Nick Ferrandola. Then Lillian
12 Burkhart, Andrew Seward, Suzanne Torris?
13 Laurius?

14 MS. FARIAS: Farius.

15 CHAIRMAN CROSBY: Farius. There you
16 go. All right. So we got some lined up.

17 MR. JOYCE: Hello, I'm David Joyce.

18 CHAIRMAN CROSBY: Hi, David.

19 MR. JOYCE: I was born in this town.
20 I planned on dying in this town. Eleven
21 years ago I bought my house on
22 87 Brockelman Road, in case you guys want
23 to find me from the Cordish company, that's
24 where I am. Come get me.

1 So on 87 Brockelman Road I look out
2 my tree line, I can see this property. I
3 live in Lancaster, it's a quarter mile away
4 from me. I can see it. I'm directly
5 affected because I can't pull out of
6 Brockelman Road without -- like, to go on
7 117 to go anywhere without traffic all
8 times of day. And it's ridiculously
9 dangerous intersection that has a blind
10 side one way, and people fly on this road.
11 It's a 40 mile an hour speed limit,
12 everybody's going 50, 55. All right. So
13 it's already in trouble.

14 One, I used to be able to see the
15 stars at my house, now I see half of the
16 stars at my house. When I can see a
17 15-story building and I can see, you know,
18 the top eight stories of that building,
19 I'll see no stars at my house.

20 When I bought my house 11 years ago
21 it have surrounded by conservation land.
22 Now I'm going to be bordered by a casino.
23 It's kind of odd how I found this little
24 niche in Lancaster, in this town founded by

1 puritans who fought Indians to get here, I
2 think it's right that we let the Indians
3 have casinos here. Absolutely. Let's have
4 them get something back, right, we took
5 their country from them.

6 Now to my points. One, traffic,
7 it's definitely going to get worse. There
8 should be a percentage of -- okay, one
9 thing Leominster voted on this, there was
10 no time for the people who did not want
11 this to get organized. There was no budget
12 for us to get organize -- organized with,
13 other than our own. So people pulled money
14 out of their pocket and they made signs,
15 like the ones you saw out here. They're
16 little handmade signs, right?

17 But the Cordish company spent
18 \$400,000, as reported in the Sentinel and
19 Enterprise, and they're advertising blitz
20 campaign to brainwash Leominster to
21 thinking that 600 jobs is going to change
22 things. I'm a general contractor. I
23 employed 30 people for the last four years.
24 I didn't change much by employing those 30

1 people. When we did the math, we really
2 employed 50 people on a daily basis with
3 the subs and everything we had. That's
4 5 percent of what this casino's going to
5 do. I don't think that's much of anything
6 at all. It's small. It's miniscule.

7 All right. 600 jobs is going to go
8 and come. All right. A mall, that
9 supports 600 jobs, and it doesn't bring
10 crime, drinking gambling, the dredge of
11 society coming down my street to get to
12 this casino that could be anywhere in the
13 state. Like, Devens, where no one lived
14 for a long time. Worcester, in the heart
15 of the city. How about putting the heart
16 of Leominster not on the Leominster, town
17 line which borders my property and I don't
18 get a vote. But if somebody lives seven
19 miles on the other side of Leominster, they
20 get a vote.

21 This is wrong. This is not
22 democracy. This is sort of like socialism.
23 Like, we're going to put it here and you
24 guys get to vote, but you don't. That's

1 not right.

2 Okay. Not in my back yard. That's
3 the big saying, right. The Gaming
4 Commission should take a vote from a
5 two-mile radius, or maybe a 10-mile radius.
6 Maybe it's only a 20-yard radius. Whatever
7 it is, it should be a radius from the place
8 where the work is happening, and that's
9 where it should happen. You know, like,
10 I'm right there and I don't get a vote.
11 But someone seven miles away on the other
12 side of Leominster thinks, I might get a
13 job, or maybe we'll get our street plowed
14 sooner. You know, whatever it is that
15 they're thinking they might get revenue
16 from, or to help them with, that's never
17 going to come because revenue never comes.
18 It was a bad ballot from the start. The
19 ballot was written up -- this is, if you
20 look into it, I'm just a layperson, but
21 this has corruption written all over it.
22 The ballot had all been positives for why a
23 casino could be there, but not a single
24 negative.

1 The people didn't get a chance to
2 fight against this. We got involved two
3 weeks from this vote that was -- like, this
4 is really a war against us. All right.
5 We're right here. That's my backyard. Get
6 out. Thanks. Go find another route.

7 CHAIRMAN CROSBY: Tom Castner,
8 Cheryl Brow, Nick Ferrandola -- I knew some
9 of these said one of you was here. Lillian
10 Burkhart, Andrea -- go ahead. If you're
11 ready go ahead. Don't be bashful. I have
12 a feeling you're not going to be bashful.

13 MS. FARIAS: Hi. Thank you for
14 joining us today and hearing all sides of
15 the argument for the casino, or the slots
16 parlor coming into Leominster.

17 My name is Suzanne Farias. I am
18 current chair of the Johnny Appleseed Trail
19 Association, our RTC in the area. And I am
20 also general manager at The Double Tree by
21 Hilton in Leominster, so I'm wearing two
22 different hats today.

23 I am a 24-year veteran of the
24 hospitality industry in this area. And

1 during that tenure, I have actually seen
2 companies come and go. Okay. We've had
3 General Electric in Fitchburg, we've had
4 Nova Corporation, we've had the Army base
5 close in Devens, only to have
6 MassDevelopment put in all of the
7 development into the Devens area touting
8 that they were going to find new businesses
9 to come into our region. And really what
10 they did is, they stole our businesses from
11 Leominster and Fitchburg, which has
12 exacerbated our the unemployment problem in
13 the area. That's unfortunate, because it
14 would be nice if we were good stewards and
15 we could work together to make this area
16 great.

17 On the flip side, the slots does
18 propose to bring in jobs, but it also
19 brings in revenue that is desperately
20 needed in this area. The social services,
21 that income in this area that can then
22 reach out to the people, who are in need in
23 our area, will have a grave impact from
24 this development.

1 The residual effect alone on
2 tourism, okay, our goal as far as in RTC is
3 to get people to get off the highway, stop,
4 see what we have in our area. And we've
5 accomplished that through the Johnny
6 Appleseed Trail Association in the tourism
7 center on Route 2. People go through once,
8 but when they stop, okay, to go to the
9 bathroom or stretch their legs, at least
10 we're making a statement that there's more
11 to our area than they're -- they're just
12 driving through. So we've given them an
13 opportunity to come and stop at another
14 time.

15 With the development of Great Wolf
16 Resorts in Fitchburg, and now the potential
17 slots, okay, we're giving them more reason
18 to stop and get off the highway. And
19 believe it or not, that is going to have a
20 residual effect. People are going to be
21 using the other services in this area.

22 Being in the hospitality industry, I
23 have seen people who have those, quote,
24 minimum wage jobs. Some of minimum wage

1 workers make more than our managers in the
2 tipped environment, first of all. Second
3 of all, they don't spend it where they
4 work. So if you think all these people are
5 going to go and get jobs working in the
6 slots and then go back and spend it trying
7 to make their fortune, that's not the case.
8 What it is going to do is, it's going to
9 take unemployed people, give them a sense
10 of accomplishment, and it's going to have
11 them have expendable cash to then use
12 within our area.

13 You know, I don't relish the fact
14 that all of you have to make this decision.
15 That you're seeing diverse sides from both
16 sides of the argument. But, quite frankly,
17 I think this project has a huge benefit to
18 our area. More so than if it were placed
19 in another area throughout the state.
20 That's it.

21 CHAIRMAN CROSBY: Thank you very
22 much.

23 COMMISSIONER CAMERON: Thank you.

24 CHAIRMAN CROSBY: Others whose names

1 I've called already. Steven Mullaney,
2 Matthew Veniez.

3 MR. VENIER: Venier.

4 CHAIRMAN CROSBY: Venier. Okay.
5 Christina Sargent, Sargette (phonetically),
6 Rick somebody or other, John Barrett, Laura
7 Kryger. If there are others, please come
8 forward.

9 MR. VENIER: Hello. I'm
10 Matthew Venier. I'm long-time Lancaster
11 resident. I live right on 117 so I
12 understand the traffic, what every one's
13 talking about, and I'm going to harp on
14 that a little bit.

15 When the Walmart area was being
16 proposed they said the same kind of words,
17 that the impact would be minimal, there
18 would be minimal traffic. I've seen the
19 traffic. I live with the traffic every
20 day. It's -- the amount of times now that
21 people do not stop for school buses has
22 been -- has gone up exponentially compared
23 to before that Walmart was there.

24 So I can see this project, while it

1 could be good for Leominster and Fitchburg,
2 I see that Lancaster's going to get, pretty
3 much, all of the negatives and none of the
4 positives. And as the gentleman said
5 earlier, 600 jobs, that really doesn't go
6 far when you consider Leominster has about
7 a population of about 40,000, Fitchburg has
8 a population of 40,000, 8,000 in Lancaster.
9 I don't know what Clinton is and all that.
10 That's not really going to affect the
11 amount of unemployment in this area.
12 That's really all I have to say. Thank
13 you.

14 CHAIRMAN CROSBY: Thank you.

15 Welcome.

16 MR. MULLANEY: Good evening. Thank
17 you Mr. Chairman and Commissioners. My
18 name is Stephen Mullaney. I live at
19 66 Helena Street in Leominster. I also own
20 a small civil engineering consulting firm
21 based in Leominster. We do work in the
22 region. Actually, more of our work has
23 been in Lancaster. I see the chairman of
24 our Lancaster planning board here, I've

1 been in Leominster. But I'd like to let
2 you know, I'm also a director of the North
3 Central Mass Chamber of Commerce.

4 My firm was engaged by the city
5 administration in Leominster almost two
6 years ago to assist the city in rewriting
7 the city zoning ordinance. I'd like to
8 make a clarification on some of the things
9 that previous speakers made.

10 First of all, the Jungle Road area
11 is not zoned industrial. It's zoned
12 multiuse one. There area had been zoned
13 industrial but languishing under that
14 zoning, and under this multiuse one zoning
15 it added elements of commercial to
16 industrial to give a greater opportunity to
17 property owners to prosper with their
18 properties.

19 Several months after the completion
20 of the new zoning ordinance in Leominster,
21 my firm was engaged to assist in the
22 application of the Leominster zoning to
23 this particular slot proposal. We
24 identified, for Cordish, the process that

1 they would have to go through. The
2 property in that zoning district for their
3 proposed use, which classified -- is
4 classified as indoor recreation, would
5 require a special permit from the
6 Leominster Zoning Board of Appeals.
7 Cordish did make that application in late
8 July, early August, and the Leominster
9 zoning board voted unanimously towards the
10 end of August to grant that special permit,
11 Special Use Permit.

12 I'd like to clarify for you that,
13 that particular submittal made at the
14 beginning of August identified five parcels
15 of land that would be subject to or
16 beneficiaries of the special permit. Those
17 are the same five parcels of land that are
18 identified in the application that Cordish
19 submitted to you on October 4th. And if
20 you were to go and look at the assessor's
21 map and add up the acreage of all those
22 parcels, they actually add up to 55 acres.
23 Cordish isn't proposing a 55-acre project,
24 they're proposing a 16-acre project.

1 They're still proposing 1,250 slot
2 machines. They're still proposing a
3 facility of just 125,000 square feet for
4 their slot facility and three restaurants,
5 and they're proposing outdoor parking.

6 By including additional parcels
7 along the way over the course of their
8 development of their project, it's simply
9 enabling them to position the 16-acre
10 facility in a more environmentally
11 sensitive way on these properties that
12 they're aggregating together. It does not
13 increase the size of the facility.

14 And regarding the proposal for a
15 hotel, that's nothing new. That's
16 something that Cordish mentioned when they
17 first came to Leominster back in July.
18 They made it very clear that they analyzed
19 the area, they looked at the Double Tree by
20 Hilton, they looked at the other hotels in
21 the area, and they decided there is a big
22 vacancy rate already in the existing hotels
23 so they have no immediate plans to build a
24 hotel. But in long-term master planning,

1 which any developer does on any property,
2 they realize that at some future point
3 there may be a desire for a hotel so
4 they're disclosing that to everybody now.
5 That's not part of the immediate plan. And
6 if they were to pursue that at some future
7 point, it would require a special permit
8 from the Leominster Planning Board. Thank
9 you for your time.

10 CHAIRMAN CROSBY: Thank you very
11 much.

12 COMMISSIONER CAMERON: Thank you.

13 COMMISSIONER STEBBINS: Thank you.

14 COMMISSIONER ZUNIGA: Thank you.

15 CHAIRMAN CROSBY: Others who's names
16 I've read, Christina Sargent, Sargette,
17 Rick Herlihy, Hurley, John Barrett, Laura
18 Kryger, Lisa Nugent, Robert Young. Yes.

19 MS. NUGENT: Hi. I'm Lisa Nugent.
20 Thank you for taking the time to be here.
21 I live in Leominster, but I'm a commuter.
22 I do drive to Westborough every day. I
23 drive -- well, actually, I don't drive down
24 117 because the traffic is already so bad,

1 but I drive eight miles out of my way every
2 day to go a different route because the
3 traffic is deplorable.

4 Why I'm here -- and, actually, I
5 feel bad because what I'm going to speak on
6 what everybody else is spoke on, is
7 suppositions. We really don't have the
8 facts. The facts really were not presented
9 to us. We had one study in Leominster that
10 was given to us that really had
11 insufficient data for anybody to really
12 make a decision for or against. So people
13 are going on -- just based on suppositions,
14 which I think is really too bad.

15 I think that the process that
16 happened in Leominster -- and I understand
17 you guys are limited, because it's
18 basically up to the local -- local
19 municipality to try to offer them some
20 flexibility. But I think this process is
21 new for the Gaming Commission, as well as
22 it is for the cities, but there needs to be
23 checks and balances. I really don't feel
24 that a mayor should have unilateral

1 decision to draft a host agreement. This
2 is a man that really has involvement with
3 casinos prior to this, nor does our city
4 solicitor, that maybe they should have
5 gotten some input from the city council,
6 from the residents before actually signing
7 off on the host agreement and making it a
8 done deal with what we were voting on.

9 We got one study that, like I said,
10 I felt was a little bit inadequate. And it
11 was presented to us three business days
12 before the referendum vote. That's really
13 not enough time. Again, we were up
14 against -- the people who are opposed to it
15 had no resources. I'm kind of broke,
16 everybody's kinds of broke, and then we're
17 up against a marketing campaign. If
18 they're claiming, you know, 400,000, it's
19 probably a little bit more.

20 As far as the jobs go, they're going
21 to put in three restaurants, Leominster is
22 littered with restaurants. I don't know if
23 you've taken a drive through there, but
24 there's one, like, on every corner. So

1 that's going to definitely detract some
2 business from those.

3 So some of these jobs that people
4 are going to get, they're going to go to
5 people who are going to lose jobs because
6 places are not going to have the same
7 volume of customers, or they're not going
8 to have the discretionary spending.

9 You have other places where they
10 don't -- the surroundings don't have the
11 same type of population that we have. We
12 have a very large elderly population. We
13 have a very large, somewhat, indigent
14 population. You're putting -- the proposed
15 location is right down the street from
16 several huge housing complexes of
17 low-income housing. And these people are
18 the people that are most susceptible to
19 gambling addiction. This is just tried and
20 true. I mean, this is something that's
21 proven. It's not like you're putting it in
22 the middle of someplace where it's not
23 accessible. People can hop right on the
24 bus line from Fitchburg and get there for

1 50 cents, or whatever the bus costs now.
2 I'm sorry. And I'm in the ring of fire. I
3 am close to it so, yes, I can -- until the
4 building goes up I can probably see Jack's
5 back yard, so I'm -- you know, there's
6 definitely that as well.

7 So I'm concerned with the ratio of
8 the jobs. Again, people have mentioned
9 that, you know, they're going to offer 600
10 jobs that are going to stay besides the
11 construction jobs. I understand why the
12 people want the construction jobs. If I
13 was building something I'd be interested
14 too, but those are very short term.

15 The other 600 jobs, while they are
16 jobs, looking at the casinos that are
17 currently existing, if you go to outside
18 sources and reference the turnover rate
19 there, it's 200 to 300 percent on most of
20 these things that I've been able to find
21 research on. And I've had to do my own
22 research because it hasn't been presented
23 to me. So that does not indicate to me
24 that it's going to stabilize our local

1 problems with -- with people having
2 full-time job on a regular basis. It's not
3 going to help me if someone right down the
4 street from me gets a full-time job and it
5 lasts two months. Then it's they're now
6 unemployed again.

7 So I'm a little concerned about the
8 negative, secondary impacts as, you know,
9 being overwhelming to the proposal that
10 we're getting in return. So, thank you.

11 CHAIRMAN CROSBY: Any name I've
12 already read?

13 MR. BARRETT: Yeah. I'm John
14 Barrett.

15 CHAIRMAN CROSBY: Okay.

16 MR. BARRETT: City solicitor for the
17 city of Fitchburg. First, I'd like to
18 thank you, Mr. Chairman, and Commissioners
19 for coming out to our area. The city of
20 Fitchburg, you know, feels that if this
21 will be a good thing for the area, it's to
22 be welcomed, but we have reservations. We
23 have concerns, because we feel that the
24 secondary affects that seem to have been

1 addressed in the Expanded Gaming Act are
2 not being addressed by the proponent.
3 Namely, the surrounding community
4 agreements.

5 We're -- it's now Octobers 21st. We
6 still -- and thankfully you folks did
7 extend the time for negotiating the
8 surrounding community agreements to
9 October 31st, but I sadly have to report we
10 have not made much progress in trying to
11 come to some agreement with Cordish.

12 I'm not going to try to review,
13 because I think you've already had
14 two-and-a-half hours of the debate, the pro
15 and con of the benefits or the negative
16 effects. I think you folks are probably
17 more familiar with many of those than most
18 of us here are.

19 But one of the concerns I have is a
20 -- is sort of organic disconnect that I
21 think The Cordish Companies are having with
22 respect to their experience in Maryland and
23 what their proposal is here in north
24 Worcester County.

1 My understanding that in Maryland
2 their operation is basically countywide.
3 In Maryland it's a county operation. My
4 understanding of Anne Arundel County has a
5 population of about 500,000. I'm sorry I
6 don't know what the size of it is but I --
7 geographically, but I suspect it's at least
8 as large as north central Massachusetts or
9 maybe even as large as Worcester County,
10 since counties here in Massachusetts are
11 much smaller.

12 But their approach there is
13 countywide. Here it's individual city.
14 But the gaming -- Expanded Gaming Act
15 recognized that, I think by recognizing
16 that there should be surrounding community
17 agreements. And to date -- now, to date,
18 it was reported that proposals have been
19 sent out to all of the eight surrounding
20 communities. I'm not sure if the gentleman
21 knew, but to date Fitchburg has not
22 received a proposed agreement.

23 We had some discussions and we made
24 a proposal that was not, you know,

1 well-received by Cordish. We're still
2 willing to meet. They have proposed that
3 we go down to Maryland to see their
4 operations there. It's not an issue with
5 respect to how good a facility that they
6 operate and how nice it is. It's more --
7 our concern is -- has to do with the
8 secondary effects.

9 As been mentioned previously before,
10 Fitchburg has a very high percentage of its
11 population that's low income. We have
12 concerns about our housing situation.
13 Traffic, while it may not be as -- as
14 dramatic as the traffic affect on Lancaster
15 or Sterling, we expect there will be
16 residual traffic issues as well, given the
17 close connection that Fitchburg and
18 Leominster has.

19 If you ever tried to commute from
20 Fitchburg to Leominster on Route 12, South
21 Street, Merriam Street during rush hour,
22 you'll know what it could be like. So the
23 people are not only going to be coming down
24 Route 2 and Route 190, they're going to be

1 coming down Route 31 and Route 12 through
2 Fitchburg to go to this facility.

3 So I know it's been a long afternoon
4 for you. I don't want to prolong it. But
5 that's -- the main point I'd like to leave
6 with is the fact that the Act does
7 recognize the fact that there are going to
8 be consequences to the surrounding
9 communities. And I, quite frankly, would
10 ask Cordish to take another look at what
11 they're doing with respect to dealing with
12 the concerns of the surrounding
13 communities. Thank you.

14 CHAIRMAN CROSBY: Thank you. Barry
15 Hock, Paul DiGeronimo, Kevin Williams.
16 Anybody else here, come up. Yes, sir.

17 MR. YOUNG: Good evening,
18 Mr. Chairman, Commissioners. My name is
19 Robert Young. I've lived in Leominster for
20 22 years. I originally was not going to
21 speak before you this evening, because I
22 thought it was a surrounding community.
23 But I've heard so many people speak in
24 favor of it, I have an obligation for the

1 40 percent, which might be low, but 40
2 percent. It was a not a 60 -- 60/40 is not
3 an overwhelming majority. And that has
4 been reported in the newspapers and in
5 other media. I have an obligation to speak
6 up for those people.

7 We've had people say that they're
8 Vietnam vets, I am too, concerned for the
9 disadvantaged, so am I. I have connections
10 there. And the unemployed, I have stood in
11 unemployment lines as well.

12 Aside from that, I think we have a
13 lot of concerns with the process that is
14 going on with this thing. We have heard
15 traffic studies, there are gambling
16 problems, gambling anonymous, serious
17 problems can come up in the social strata.

18 But I want to focus for a moment on
19 the fact that the ballot and the host
20 agreement started out with 16 acres and now
21 we have gone to 26. The additional
22 10 acres was presented to your folks in
23 your meeting on October 7th. It was not
24 presented to us as the voting public on the

1 24th.

2 One other point with regards to that
3 acreage, it makes up the 26 acres, there
4 are now two industrial buildings on that
5 site -- on those sites, on those lots. No
6 one has said what happens to those people
7 employed there. Where do they go? Do they
8 go to another community? Do they just
9 disappear? But there are people working
10 there, I've looked. The parking lot has
11 plenty of cars down there. People are
12 getting gainful employment. That could go
13 away. We ask you to consider that as well.
14 Thank you for your time.

15 COMMISSIONER CAMERON: Thank you.

16 CHAIRMAN CROSBY: Thank you very
17 much. Barry Hock, Paul DiGeronimo. Yep, I
18 know you. Come on up.

19 THE FLOOR: Pass. I'm going to
20 pass.

21 CHAIRMAN CROSBY: Pass. Okay.
22 Let's see, Mike Nelson, Corey Shields, John
23 Barrett, we got. John Armstrong, Marilyn
24 Chambers and Sara Spencer. Sir. Welcome.

1 MR. NELSON: Thank you for letting
2 me speak. I am a resident of Leominster.
3 My name is Mike Nelson. I live on
4 45 Beth Avenue. I'm not a holy roller. I
5 do like to gamble, and I do like to have a
6 few beers every now and then. So just an
7 average, blue-collar guy, works at a
8 regular full-time job, and I thought that
9 you guys have been kind enough to let
10 everybody come and speak so I wanted to
11 give my take on this.

12 You had some people in here earlier,
13 and all due respect, I do have friends that
14 are policemen, firemen and construction
15 workers. I do, however, consider them
16 special interest people looking out for
17 their own good.

18 The police, of course they want the
19 casino to come in. They're going to hire
20 more police, they're going to get more
21 details. They're going to benefit from
22 this. The firemen are going to get new,
23 shiny red trucks they might even get a new
24 fire station. So I can't blame them for,

1 you know, their positive outlook on this.
2 They were also taken to Maryland, they were
3 wined and dined and that's -- you know, as
4 far as I'm concerned that's an ethical
5 issue. People being taken out of the city,
6 taken out to Maryland, you know, treated to
7 some fine food, fine dining and then asked
8 to come back to the city and report that to
9 the citizens of city.

10 The ballot, as far as I'm concerned,
11 the referendum agreement was completely
12 skewed. I believe that it was not done
13 ethically or morally the way it should have
14 been done. And the reporting of 60/40
15 overwhelming majority, if we have 10 people
16 in this room and I have six on one side and
17 four on the other, and I take one from the
18 group of six and put it over here with the
19 group of four, we have two equal groups.

20 We fought this battle with about 10
21 days' notice on about \$250 against a group
22 that came in here and spent, probably, well
23 over \$500,000. I have spoken to
24 Mr. Cordish directly through e-mail. He

1 told me in an e-mail that this would have
2 zero impact on this community. That would
3 be negative. Zero. I'd be happy to
4 forward that e-mail to any of you people,
5 if you'd like to see it. That is an out
6 and out lie. There is absolutely no way
7 you can put a \$200 million casino into
8 Leominster and have zero negative or
9 positive impact on something.

10 I have two daughters that go to
11 school in Lancaster. I live in Leominster.
12 I'm divorced. They live with my ex. And I
13 do not want them getting out of school and
14 having to worry about some drunk driver
15 coming down Route 117 after having 10 free
16 drinks given to them after a 10-hour binge,
17 hitting one of my kids driving home from
18 school.

19 COMMISSIONER CAMERON: Thank you.

20 CHAIRMAN CROSBY: Thank you. Corey
21 Shields, John Armstrong, Marilyn Chambers,
22 Sara Spencer.

23 MR. SHIELDS: Hello. My name's
24 Corey shields. Can you hear me okay? I

1 just want to apologize to every -- I thank
2 you for coming out here and having to -- I
3 think you had a five-minute break out of
4 two hours. I hope you went to the bathroom
5 in that time. Definitely sorry about that.

6 CHAIRMAN CROSBY: Thank you.

7 MR. SHIELDS: So my name's
8 Corey Shields. I live in Leominster. I'm
9 a Leominster resident from Merriam Ave.
10 I'll try to be brief.

11 So, first of all, you've heard about
12 the commute. Yeah -- I'll be quick. The
13 commute stinks. It will stink if there's a
14 casino coming in. I actually work in
15 Marlborough. I used to work in
16 Westborough. I've worked in Milford. I'm
17 a Web developer and -- actually, I think
18 there's a large amount of population in
19 Leominster that actually goes somewhere
20 else to work. So I think that, that will
21 have a negative impact on the people who
22 live in Leominster, who might already have
23 a decent job, or a job, who commute
24 somewhere else.

1 I think that people who are thinking
2 about buying in this area, in Leominster,
3 if they're going to buy a house, are they
4 going to say, well, I don't want to live in
5 a casino town. You know, people are so
6 self -- they're so conscious about I want
7 my kids to go to a good school, I want my
8 kids to -- you know, I think there's a
9 stigma, whether -- you know, whether the
10 pros and cons are -- you know, we're still
11 debating to what extent.

12 I think that for the population in
13 and around Leominster, I think that things
14 like the commute will have a negative
15 effect. And it actually will -- I think it
16 will drive people away from buying houses
17 here.

18 I know, actually, me and my wife,
19 our family expanded this past summer, and
20 we're looking to buy a house. And things
21 didn't work through this past spring, we
22 made a few offers but -- I was actually
23 happy when I found out the casino was
24 coming that it didn't come through, because

1 I don't know if I want to live in this -- a
2 community where there's -- there's a giant
3 casino. But, you know, you're here, you're
4 making a decision, you're actually making a
5 business decision. You're not here just to
6 hear us complain about stuff.

7 So one thing I might invite you to
8 think about when you're making this
9 decision is population density. I know
10 that Leominster has population of, what,
11 40,000? And, actually, you know, I was --
12 I'm sorry I'm backtracking.

13 I looked up on line the population
14 density for -- for Leominster. And within
15 20 miles, I think it's about 865,000
16 people. For some of the other
17 population -- for the other towns that are
18 being considered, what is it Plainville and
19 Raynham; is that right?

20 COMMISSIONER CAMERON: Yes.

21 MR. SHIELDS: I think there's
22 like -- I think, like, Plainville had
23 double. They had over a million-and-a-half
24 population within 20-miles of its location,

1 and it's out towards -- it's closer to
2 towards Boston. It's getting the Boston
3 metro -- the suburbs.

4 If I was making a business decision
5 on where to put my restaurant or to put my
6 business, it would be somewhere where
7 there's a higher populations where there's
8 people making more money. I think
9 Leominster, to compete population-wise, I
10 think you have to get 50 to 60 miles away.
11 That wouldn't be my first choice to put a
12 slots casino or any business.

13 And my last point honest, is
14 popularity. I know that Leominster did
15 vote it in, as you're aware, but the people
16 who voted no, the people who were against
17 the slots, they organized within two weeks,
18 barely raised any money. Everything that
19 was done was -- was in-kind donations,
20 people doing things themselves. And I
21 think the Cordish company -- I think from
22 what the file they reported they spent over
23 \$300,000. I know the number's going up and
24 down, but the thing they submitted to city

1 hall said 300,000, but they probably spent
2 more.

3 They had three months, spent over
4 \$300,000 and still the no-slots people won
5 40 percent in 10 days, or whatever --
6 almost under two weeks. If we had more
7 time, there could have been a possibility
8 that Leominster wouldn't even be in the
9 running right now.

10 I think that the pop -- so, yeah, my
11 last point is, popularity-wise, I don't
12 think that -- we're definitely on the
13 bottom rung of the ladder, and I don't
14 think that it's as a big turnout that some
15 people might seem to portray that it is
16 popularity-wise. All right. That's it.
17 Thank you very much.

18 CHAIRMAN CROSBY: Thank you.

19 COMMISSIONER CAMERON: Thank you.

20 MR. ARMSTRONG: Hi. My name's
21 John Armstrong, I live in Lancaster. I
22 live about a quarter-mile away from the
23 proposed casino, the aberration. I walk my
24 dogs every day down this road, 117. I go

1 up to the power lines, take them to the
2 power lines, come back down. 200,000 cars
3 go by my house every week now. That's a
4 lot of cars.

5 The amount of unemployment, the
6 amount of unemployed people in the area is
7 8,000 and there's only 600 jobs coming in.
8 That's not going to make a dent. Whenever
9 I put an addition on my house, I have to
10 notify people within 300 -- 300 yards. I
11 didn't get no notification that you guys
12 are going to put in a casino, or whatever
13 their name is, we're just going to put in a
14 casino. I feel gypped.

15 I want -- I want to be safe. I
16 don't want to get hit by a drunk driver. I
17 already get tossed off the road once a
18 week. And thank you for your time.

19 CHAIRMAN CROSBY: Thank you.

20 COMMISSIONER CAMERON: Thank you.

21 MS. CHAMBERS: Hi. I'm
22 Marilyn Chambers, and I live at Creamery
23 Road, so my back yard is 117. So my house
24 isn't that far. There's a bad corner right

1 just before you get to my house from --
2 coming from Bolton. There's been truck
3 accidents there. And people do drive a lot
4 faster on 117 than the signs say. You
5 can't -- and between, I think, 4:30 and
6 six o'clock every day there was a -- during
7 the week there is a lot of traffic because
8 people coming home from work from jobs.

9 Also, I'm not very far from
10 Main Street, and where Main Street goes
11 into 117, I've waited 10 minutes there to
12 get onto 117. We have no traffic lights.
13 I think there's a blinking light, maybe,
14 but there's no traffic lights there so
15 you've got to wait until everybody gets out
16 on 117.

17 And one of the things is, I have
18 disabilities and I have fallen several
19 times, and the Lancaster Fire Department
20 comes out and gets their exercise training
21 by picking me up. And if there was a
22 backup on Main Street, and then they're
23 only right around the corner from my house,
24 the fire department, they wouldn't be able

1 to get up there unless they could, you
2 know, get people to move.

3 So that's what my concern is, the
4 traffic on 117. That it's really bad and
5 -- because I've been there 40 years so the
6 traffic doesn't bother me, I'm used to it
7 but it is very busy. You can sit there in
8 the window and watch, and it's constant
9 cars going both ways.

10 So that was my main -- I have no
11 feeling one way about the casino, but the
12 traffic on 117 is my biggest. They should
13 be -- and all the streets coming into 117,
14 like Brockelman Road and Ponakan Road, and
15 Route 70, Lunenburg Road, all those roads
16 are going to have the same problem as we
17 have on Main Street for traffic getting
18 onto Main Street. And that was all I
19 wanted to say. Thank you.

20 COMMISSIONER CAMERON: Thank you.

21 CHAIRMAN CROSBY: Thank you. Sara
22 Spencer, Kevin Williams, Charles Millhaus,
23 Peter Stanton.

24 MS. SPENCER: Hello. I'm Sara

1 Spencer. I live on Main Street, also known
2 as Route 70. I'm not going to say a word
3 about the traffic. I think that's been,
4 probably beaten to death already. But I
5 have a concern that hasn't come up at all,
6 and only in passing, maybe from Mr. Joyce,
7 is the conservation land and the
8 environmental issues. That's a -- near
9 Jungle Road, and it's near Nashua River,
10 and the Wikipiki watershed is there and a
11 possible town water that we may be needing
12 in the future. And none of this has been
13 addressed, as far as I know. I imagine it
14 will be addressed somewhat in the
15 Leominster Conservation, when they final
16 make their permits, final permits. But,
17 you know, we've heard absolutely nothing
18 about it. And I hope that people will --
19 people will take that in into consideration
20 because we do have our town forest and the
21 the Cook conservation area, the Bartlett
22 Pond, which is part of Wikipiki watershed,
23 which extends on into Sterling. And so,
24 they could be concerned, also, about the

1 water supplies. So that is an important
2 point, which has -- completely nobody has
3 mentioned so I thought I would.

4 CHAIRMAN CROSBY: Go ahead, your
5 closer.

6 MR. WILLIAMS: Thank you. My name
7 is Kevin Williams. I live on Brockelman
8 Road in Lancaster. I had no intention of
9 speaking here tonight. And as I -- you
10 know, when we first heard about this I
11 said, I think here in Lancaster we were
12 notified within the past week. I was
13 actually away on vacation. I saw an e-mail
14 that you folks are going to be here at
15 four o'clock on a Monday and my first
16 reaction is, four o'clock on a Monday, are
17 you serious?

18 That right away seemed -- it seemed
19 to, you know, just take away something from
20 this meeting because, grant it, you all
21 have lives, you all have to go home
22 someplace tonight too, and you're going to
23 get home late. But, you know, many people
24 here are working. They're away at work, or

1 their kids are doing something at school
2 that require them to go places and things
3 like that.

4 When I got here tonight I was -- I
5 was happily surprised by the number of
6 vehicles I saw, you know, parked outside.
7 We have limited parking and we know what
8 it's like to -- when there are big events
9 here. We got to park down the streets
10 and -- and I got here and I pulled in and,
11 you know, that's what I saw, so that was
12 very encouraging.

13 And then as I heard people start to
14 speak, I heard a lot of the -- a lot of
15 people that were pro casino. And, again, I
16 had no intention of standing up here. But
17 as I heard more and more of that it just --
18 I was, you know, I was surprised. And they
19 were a lot of people -- there were a lot of
20 people talking from neighboring
21 communities, but not from Lancaster, you
22 know.

23 Maybe the town selectman from
24 Bolton, or whoever he was, I apologize for

1 not remembering what his title is, I
2 thought he stood up and gave a very
3 detailed set of information and discussion
4 on 117. And you've all heard 117
5 discussion, and I'm going to talk more
6 about 117.

7 Before I get to that, the number of
8 jobs that I've heard discussed here, and
9 while I'm sure -- I don't want to -- I
10 don't want to belittle the number of jobs
11 that are being proposed from this, so I
12 know there are some people that need those
13 jobs. I'm sure there are, you know, both
14 the temporary ones and the ones that are
15 going to be permanent. But it just doesn't
16 seem like a real substantive number of jobs
17 to really make this worthwhile. You know,
18 bringing this into a community in this area
19 could change this community and the impact
20 the casino's going to have on this
21 community. Like I said, I wasn't prepared
22 so I started taking notes on technology,
23 it's wonderful.

24 I've heard talk about the benefit to

1 local business. I've gone to Foxwoods, I
2 haven't done it recently. I haven't done
3 it in the last few years, but I've gone to
4 Foxwoods several times. I don't know how
5 many. Probably, 20-ish, maybe 30. I think
6 I had a Wampum card. I didn't spend money
7 anywhere else. I would drive to Foxwoods
8 because I wanted to go to Foxwoods and I
9 wanted to try to -- try to win a little
10 money. And, you know, maybe
11 occasionally -- I was by no means a high
12 roller. You know, maybe occasionally I'd
13 come out of there with an extra \$100 in my
14 pocket. Most nights I'd come out of there,
15 you know -- I -- there was some
16 entertainment that was -- that was there
17 for me, but the money would be spent and I
18 wouldn't be walking out of there with
19 money.

20 And if I was purchasing something
21 else I wasn't stopping along the way.
22 Maybe if I needed gas. Maybe the local,
23 you know, gas station there was benefiting,
24 but I wasn't stopping in stores. It just

1 didn't happen. I would spend money there
2 and they had -- they had all the facilities
3 there that you needed to spend money there.
4 So when I hear this, that there's going to
5 be all this benefit to local business, I --
6 from my personal experience and, you know,
7 just common sense, I don't see that. I
8 just don't see that happening.

9 So I live on Brockelman Road, which
10 is, as this gentleman here had said, that's
11 going to be in my back yard. I can walk
12 through the woods. I like walking in the
13 woods. I don't want to walk through the
14 woods now and hear, you know, more cars and
15 more traffic, and what else is going to be
16 happening.

17 117 is a problem. You've heard a
18 lot of that, and maybe you've had some
19 studies showing it as well. I cannot
20 imagine 117 getting worse than it is, but
21 it surely will. There's just no way that
22 it will. And to think that all the
23 traffic's going to come down Route 2 or up
24 190, that's not going to happen.

1 If people are coming down the Mass
2 Pike at all and then getting on 495,
3 they're next getting right on 117. I've
4 heard somebody say, well, if you're going
5 to see the Red Sox, you expect you're going
6 to deal with traffic and you're going to
7 find alternate routes. Well, if I'm going
8 into the city to see the Red Sox, sure I'd
9 expect that.

10 This is a very rural community. I
11 don't want people seeking alternate routes
12 that are coming down Brockelman Road. And
13 that's going to happen because it's
14 convenient. I don't want to flag this out
15 to everybody, but Brockelman Road is
16 convenient. And, you know, the traffic on
17 117, it's bad now. People don't the
18 respect speed limits.

19 There are a lot of homes, a lot of
20 homes their front doors are from here to
21 there. You know, maybe here to the
22 chalkboard outside the door. And, you
23 know, so that's 117. Brockelman Road,
24 people that come down Brockelman Road, that

1 are using it as a cutoff now. They don't
2 respect the posted speed limits. There are
3 a lot of twists and turns, and it's insane
4 how people drive on Brockelman Road.

5 Alcohol. You know, I will have my
6 beer. You know, I'll watch the Red Sox on
7 Wednesday and I'll be sitting in front of
8 my TV drinking a beer or two, probably.
9 But I'm not going to then go hop in my
10 vehicle and drive away. I'm going to watch
11 in my home, and I'm going to drink a beer
12 or two and then probably go to bed. If
13 they win, I might stay up a little later, I
14 don't know. But I'm concerned of people,
15 of gamblers that are going to the casino,
16 that are consuming alcohol, that are --
17 then what do they do? Will some of them go
18 into this new hotel that's going to be put
19 up? Sure, some of them might be able to.
20 But the vast majority, they're going to hop
21 back in their vehicle and they're going to
22 drive on all of our roads.

23 117, and Route 12, and Route 12
24 going up through Leominster, Route 12 going

1 down through Sterling. Route 2, sure,
2 maybe there will be more people driving on
3 Route 2. But I think it's just insane to
4 think that people are not going to be
5 driving away from there and not be under
6 the influence. And I'm really concerned
7 about the increase in DUI-related offenses.
8 It just -- it scares me. And, especially,
9 because I live on Brockelman Road. But for
10 those that aren't as fortunate as me that,
11 you know, by living on Brockelman I have a
12 little bit of a buffer because the majority
13 of the traffic's going to be on 117. And
14 it's just -- it's going to be horrendous.

15 I haven't heard this discussed. I
16 heard a little bit with the environmental
17 impact, I'm concerned about littering.
18 People are going to come out of that casino
19 and, you know, maybe, maybe they spent the
20 money in there, purchased some food. But
21 there's a brand-new McDonald's right up
22 Route 117 that's going to be right there.
23 There's also a Walmart right there.
24 There's going to be some very easy access

1 to the munchies, you know. And I am
2 concerned they're going to hop in their
3 vehicles, they're going to see the
4 McDonald's, see the Dunkin' Donuts, they're
5 going to grab their favorite fast food,
6 whatever it is, they're going to drive a
7 mile town the road, two miles down the
8 road. They're going to be done with their
9 hamburger, and then they're going to give
10 another contribution to Lancaster. There
11 it is. They're not going to care. It's --
12 I see it now on Brockelman Road. We get
13 out there every Earth Day and we clean the
14 road. And it's appalling to me how many
15 people drive down the road after we've
16 cleaned it all up. Sorry about that.
17 Actually, can I have that back?

18 CHAIRMAN CROSBY: Just another
19 minute. You're pushing --

20 MR. WILLIAMS: Okay. Sorry, sorry.

21 CHAIRMAN CROSBY: -- your time limit
22 here.

23 MR. WILLIAMS: Okay, I'll move on.
24 Crime. This is what I've been throwing

1 around. This was handed out here to me
2 tonight as I came in. I don't know how
3 valid this is. There's a concerned group
4 of citizens in Leominster that have been
5 trying really hard on a very limited budget
6 to hand out some information to people.

7 This states, from a study that was
8 done, that within five years of the casino
9 opening, this was a study done by the
10 casino's crime and community cost back in
11 2006, that robberies are up by 136 percent,
12 auto theft up 78 percent, burglaries up 50
13 percent, larceny up 38 percent, rape up
14 21 percent. I don't know where this was.
15 Maybe this was in some other larger city
16 area. But if these percentages go up at
17 all in this area, I think it's horrendous.

18 To two mores point and I'm done.
19 Why do The Cordish Companies want to build
20 the casino here? To me, there's only one
21 reason. They don't want to develop a
22 Leominster corridor. They might say that
23 they do, but, you know, really do they want
24 to do that? Well, then put the money in

1 here and don't build a casino, if you
2 really want to develop the -- you know --

3 They wanted to build a casino here
4 because they want to take money from this
5 area. They want to profit from this area.
6 They want to -- they want money to go into
7 the casino and stay in the casino.

8 My last point, I'm a father of
9 three. I have two boys that are almost
10 teenagers, I have a teenager, I'm concerned
11 about the increase in crime, and the
12 increase in potential DUIs, the increase in
13 people driving down my road at just -- you
14 know, we live in a very, very rural
15 community. And we don't have blinders on,
16 though. And, you know I really want my
17 children to grow up in a community where
18 they can be safe. And having that casino
19 in my back door, I'm not going to feel
20 safe. I felt safe when I purchased that
21 home here 17 years ago. But when that
22 casino going up there, my degree of safety
23 is going to go down tremendously. Thank
24 you for your time.

1 CHAIRMAN CROSBY: Okay. Thank you.
2 Speakers who are remaining, who would like
3 to speak, raise your hands. One, two --
4 five or six. Okay.

5 MR. MILLHANS: Hi.

6 CHAIRMAN CROSBY: Hi.

7 MR. MILLHANS: My name is Charlie
8 Millhans. I live at 54 Rose Avenue in
9 Leominster. And Mr. Chairman and the
10 Commission, thank you for your time and
11 your patience in coming out to our area of
12 the state to hear us. I know you got a
13 difficult decision to make, and you're
14 implementing these new laws, so we wish you
15 the best of luck on that.

16 I know -- I don't want to repeat a
17 lot things that other people have said, but
18 I'm not an expert on this, but I do travel
19 a lot with my work. One of the places I go
20 out a lot is I work for a company in
21 California. Next to the Hilton Hotel that
22 I stay at is a slot parlor. I have never
23 seen a police car there. I've never seen
24 any drunk driving. I've never seen any

1 prostitutes. I -- you know, I'm pretty
2 certain that this facility will be similar.

3 The other thing I want to talk about
4 is - that I haven't heard tonight - is the
5 Cordish company has promised a number of
6 veteran's preferences. I'm a retired
7 member of U.S. Army, and veterans' issues
8 are my concern, and this would be an
9 opportunity for a lot of unemployed
10 veterans to get a job. Thank you.

11 CHAIRMAN CROSBY: Thank you.

12 MR. STANTON: Good evening. Peter
13 Stanton from Lancaster. I missed part of
14 the meeting so I'm going to be saying with
15 confidence some points that have probably
16 been made by others, but I'll be feeling
17 that I'll be saying them for the first time
18 so I'll deliver them in that manner.

19 So, Mr. Crosby, I saw you -- I think
20 you presented to the Worcester Chamber when
21 you first got the job, within the first
22 couple of months of, I think, being
23 appointed the Commissioner. I think this
24 is very early on. I remember you

1 stating -- you talking about the goals and
2 mission of your efforts and how you wanted
3 this process in Massachusetts to be, you
4 know, superior -- learn from the mistakes
5 that others had made and really put a
6 superior process in place. I've been on
7 the Web site, there's a lot of information.
8 I think, you know, a lot of those goals are
9 being achieved.

10 When I was here earlier and I wasn't
11 going to speak, and then I was going to
12 speak, I came up with 14 separate thoughts,
13 and I'm actually just going to go with one,
14 which is probably best for all of us.

15 CHAIRMAN CROSBY: Thank you.

16 MR. STANTON: Yes. So here's my,
17 sort of, criticism of the process. So I
18 know you're goal is to lay out a best-case
19 scenario, and I know on the Web site there
20 are spreadsheets and there's sort of a
21 fairly obvious, very opaque, you know, when
22 the period is for proposals, we've all been
23 reading about the deadlines related to the
24 slots casino --the slots in this area as

1 and obviously the larger casinos
2 developments elsewhere.

3 The process of casino developers
4 going into towns and coming up with
5 proposal has looked very much like a
6 sausage factory, as we've watched it happen
7 over the last six months or so. I've
8 watched a group -- a group, not The Cordish
9 Companies, go into Worcester, opposition
10 formed, a deal never got struck. Watched
11 them go into Millbury, opposition formed, a
12 deal never got struck. And then, in
13 Boxborough -- and I'm only speaking of
14 nearby communities. In Boxborough I know
15 it was -- the selectman or something voted
16 down the idea that they would have the
17 proposal that we vetted.

18 So all of that leads up to nearly
19 the 11th hour and somewhere -- and I don't
20 have the dates down, but somewhere in June
21 this shot -- the idea of a shotgun wedding
22 with Leominster appears. And in such a
23 short period, and I don't know -- some of
24 this is addressed in the form of a

1 question. I don't know how many resources
2 you've been able to give any municipality,
3 but I know that the smaller the
4 municipalities are going to conduct an
5 investigation -- the more clueless they are
6 would be the way to say it. But they
7 simply don't have the sophistication, the
8 knowledge or the ability to negotiate with
9 a billion-dollar-plus developer with very
10 sophisticated marketing and communications
11 stuff. They don't know how to cut the best
12 deal.

13 And without knowing the specifics,
14 or criticizing it specifically, I just
15 can't imagine that the Leominster deal,
16 while I know it lands a lot of money and
17 there are very many -- several people happy
18 with that, I just can't imagine that's
19 remotely the best deal they could have cut.
20 And I think that's largely because of the
21 time, the short time involved in that. And
22 I think that, that part of the process is
23 -- it just has not really worked well at
24 all.

1 Secondarily, the other group,
2 exceedingly hand strong by that very short
3 time period of those in opposition. And
4 the -- you know, everyone says people --
5 everyone goes on vacation in August, well
6 the timing of that was a -- you know, a
7 deal struck in July of, you know, August to
8 go contact everybody who's on the Cape and
9 elsewhere and then a September vote.

10 So such a quick turnaround for such
11 a large critical issue, I think, is far too
12 short. And so, I think municipality is
13 probably short sold by the lack of time
14 to -- lack of sophistication in order to
15 put together the very best deal. And I
16 think the opposition was also -- had very
17 little time in, clearly, other communities
18 where that's been able to form. And I
19 believe in -- I don't know when the
20 proposals first went out in Raynham and
21 Plainville, but I believe they were on the
22 table longer than when this plan was
23 hatched in Leominster.

24 And so, looking at -- and I know

1 you're sort of a college admissions group,
2 trying to -- well, how much does the SATs
3 count, right, like there's a vote on the
4 town and how much does vetting, you know,
5 the developer's character and other things,
6 and you've got, sort of, you know, a mixed
7 scorecard, sort of, to make a decision in
8 the next couple months as to which one of
9 these three communities you prefer.

10 So I would say, based on the timing
11 and the scenario of that very, very 11th
12 hour deal struck, and with very little time
13 for that community to respond, that the
14 relative vote, I think it was 39 percent
15 against, is extremely high. And I think
16 that based on the other communities with
17 that deal in place for a much longer time,
18 that those are much more positive results.
19 So I would consider this proposal, based on
20 that criteria, by far, the weakest proposal
21 you have. Can I add one second thought?
22 So what I -- so that's my major point.

23 My second point was, I came in a
24 little bit late and went into that other

1 room and sat there a bit like a lemming.
2 It was crowded and people are coming up.
3 And I looked around and I said after --
4 after about 15 minutes to some woman, I
5 said, "Why are we watching television here;
6 isn't someone going to present?" They said
7 "Oh, they're in the room next door." So
8 not everyone kind of knew from the
9 beginning exactly what the scenario was.
10 But certainly appreciate your coming out.

11 I would suggest that -- I know that
12 the casinos, of which they are going to be
13 three, and they're four times, many times
14 the size of the single-slots parlor
15 decision, is a great big issue that you got
16 to pay a lot of attention to. But I would
17 encourage you to possibly have -- I know
18 you have one more meeting coming in the
19 host community of Leominster. I think this
20 facility was not sufficient for maybe
21 enough engagement. And I would consider
22 one more effort to reach out to the
23 community, even though I know you got lots
24 of other stuff on your plate, might be a

1 sound step in this process. But thank you
2 for coming to here to Lancaster tonight.

3 CHAIRMAN CROSBY: Thank you very
4 much. Is there anybody else in -- yes.
5 Lancaster, Leominster. Anybody else in
6 this area that'd like to be heard? Please
7 come forward and have a seat.

8 THE FLOOR: Shall I sit?

9 CHAIRMAN CROSBY: No, no. You go
10 ahead and speak. Oh, and Eugene Christoph.
11 oh, Okay.

12 MS. VENIER: Hi. My name is
13 Faith Venier. I really appreciate you
14 being here, coming here and having an open
15 mic for people to present their points of
16 view. I will try to keep this --

17 CHAIRMAN CROSBY: Where do you live?

18 MS. VENIER: Hmm?

19 CHAIRMAN CROSBY: Where do you live?

20 MS. VENIER: Lancaster. I do live
21 on 117, Main Street. It's busy, yes. It's
22 dangerous, yes. It could take me five to
23 10 minutes to leave my driveway in the
24 morning, yes. I think probably, maybe,

1 four times in the last year I have had no
2 traffic in front of my house and been able
3 to pull out. Usually, I drive very slow
4 and enjoy it immensely. So -- so -- but
5 the point is, there will be traffic on 117.
6 There will be traffic on Route 2. There'll
7 be traffic on 190. There'll be traffic,
8 pretty much around -- around the whole area
9 there'll be more traffic.

10 Someone had said earlier that, you
11 know, people coming out from the Boston
12 area, if they take the Mass Pike, just put
13 it in Google, pretend like you're going out
14 the Mass Pike, it will take you down 117 to
15 get to where this proposed site is. So
16 it's not an unusual thought process.

17 The other point that I wanted to
18 make is, the communities around, more
19 likely don't want something like this. I
20 know Lancaster had really voted out having
21 a Walmart nearby, out of the town, and
22 Leominster pulled in the, oh, we'll do it,
23 we'll do it, and put it in Jungle Road,
24 which was pretty much almost abutting

1 Lancaster property. And this is a
2 reiteration of this -- not that Lancaster
3 didn't want it and has kicked it out, but
4 it's a reiteration of, let's put the
5 undesirables right over here next to
6 Lancaster and let's see what happens.

7 The other thing is, the whole
8 concept, people brought it up and I'm
9 probably going to reiterate yet again. But
10 the fact that people show up to Foxwoods or
11 many others, and they may stay at a hotel
12 nearby, they may not. I've heard about bus
13 trips to these places. So the bus goes to
14 the parlor and leaves, or goes to the
15 casino and leaves. There really isn't any
16 benefit for -- aside from that one
17 business, there isn't really any benefit
18 for the immediate surrounding towns.

19 Any type of benefit given by the
20 company that's going to be building this
21 and running this -- okay, so there's a cash
22 infusion for lights or improvements to
23 roads or however you want to say it,
24 low-income housing, however the communities

1 decides to use it. That's a one-time thing
2 for any community outside of Leominster.

3 So there's more affect than just in
4 Leominster. It is also affecting the
5 surrounding communities, but they do not
6 get anything beyond the immediate, oh,
7 look, we have a set of lights. Or, we have
8 a turn-only lane now that we never had
9 before.

10 And also to bring up, the nature of
11 business is not one -- I have two children,
12 and I have a son that's a young teenager.
13 And I think about, okay, there's a lot of
14 unemployment with young folk and so forth,
15 but I would not want to put my son -- to
16 tell me my son, "Why don't you go get a job
17 at the slot parlor?" Would you want to try
18 to tell your daughter, your son, your
19 nephew, your niece, "Why don't you get a
20 job at the slot parlor, that's a good
21 idea?" I understand people need jobs.

22 I understand that it's a tough --
23 it's tough to find a job right now with the
24 economy the way it is and everything. But

1 I think why this is going through at this
2 point, or at least this is my opinion, how
3 this got through so quickly, and I put
4 quotes around that, I think it did get --
5 kind of go through fast, is purely because
6 the economy is -- is poorer. That they're
7 saying, "Hey, here's something. It's 600
8 jobs, let's go for it." And this is
9 something that we can say, when we were in
10 office or when we were deciding things
11 that, "Hey, this -- look what we did for
12 the town." And you're not looking at the
13 larger picture of, what type of people do
14 you want moving into and coming into
15 Leominster and the surrounding communities?
16 What type of influx of monetary will it
17 actually bring for the people of a
18 community?

19 It's been studied over and over
20 again, universities, colleges, that when
21 these type of facilities come the land
22 value goes down. We've already been
23 dealing with that and we want to deal with
24 that yet again, land values going down and

1 so forth.

2 So I think, thinking in a larger
3 picture of really you want to bring jobs
4 in, I fully understand that, but let's
5 really think about what type of community
6 we want to have in the surrounding towns,
7 not just one town, and what type of jobs
8 and what type of work we want to be
9 offering people to come to our communities.
10 And I leave you with that. Thank you very
11 much.

12 CHAIRMAN CROSBY: Thank you.

13 MR. CRESPO: Hi. My name is Carlos
14 Crespo. I'm an associate pastor of The
15 Chains Will Fall Christian Church in
16 Lancaster. The reason why I'm against the
17 casino is because, not just because of the
18 traffic, but the type of communities, other
19 communities that we're going to attract.
20 Fitchburg, Lawrence, Worcester.

21 I'm originally from the city of New
22 York City. And you will know that New York
23 City is the city that doesn't sleep. Here
24 in Leominster we actually sleep. We're

1 talking about the reason New York is the
2 way that it is, is because of the
3 nightlife. So Leominster is the way that
4 it is because people find it boring, so we
5 go elsewhere to have a good time. And --
6 it's honestly the truth.

7 And so, I know that there's some
8 decent people, that they work hard and they
9 want the casino, not only for more jobs,
10 but they want to be able to go out with
11 their loved one and have a drink. I
12 understand that. But not everybody can
13 handle their alcohol. I'm a product from
14 that.

15 My father had a bad alcohol problem,
16 gambling, and there was domestic violence
17 in my home. Abuse. And I'm a product of
18 that, where I didn't have daddy at home.
19 So you're talking about now broken
20 marriages, divorce, domestic violence,
21 children suffering from that because daddy
22 has a gambling problem, mommy has a
23 gambling problem, daddy ain't coming home.
24 Now you're talking about, also, other

1 communities coming out here and vandalized.

2 You know, it's interesting to see
3 that a doctor, for example, has went to
4 school, worked so hard to get his degrees
5 to become a doctor, and outside of your
6 window you got gangsters standing right in
7 front of your house vandalizing.

8 And that's just the reality, is
9 that, it might bring more money. It might
10 bring more money to the community, but what
11 price are we willing to pay for that more
12 money? Are you willing to bring up the
13 piece that you have? When I got to Whitney
14 Field Mall, I see a lot of young kids going
15 out there and having a good time. Would
16 you be able to do that, once this community
17 is overrun by thugs or people that don't
18 know how to handle their alcohol?

19 And you're also talking about
20 presenting a place of gambling. Right now
21 we have people that have an addiction with
22 keno. You go to certain stores at certain
23 times they there. They're not home.
24 Grandpa's not home, daddy's not home.

1 They're out there playing keno.

2 So if we're in a place where we're
3 struggling with money, but, yet, there's
4 still a gambling problem, bringing the
5 Disney World of gambling problem to
6 Leominster is just going to make things
7 worth, don't you think? Because now you're
8 giving a Disney World of gambling and
9 saying come, and now you can gamble with
10 lights. Now you can gamble with alcohol.

11 Like they said, drinking and
12 driving. I brought my two sons. If you
13 can stand up real quick. that's Louis and
14 Chris, because they aren't going to be a
15 product of that.

16 And one thing is that, us as a
17 community, no matter who we are, no matter
18 what your belief system is, is that we have
19 a set an example for our children. We have
20 to set an example so that they can have
21 something to look up to so as they start
22 growing older they will know what to
23 believe in. Thank you so much. God bless.

24 CHAIRMAN CROSBY: Thank you. We can

1 see why you're a pastor.

2 MR. CRESPO: Amen.

3 CHAIRMAN CROSBY: Is this our last
4 speaker?

5 MR. CHRISTOPH: Sounds like it.

6 CHAIRMAN CROSBY: Sounds like it.

7 MR. CHRISTOPH: Not least. I'm
8 Eugene Christoph, a long time resident of
9 Lancaster. I grew up Eerie, Pennsylvania.
10 It was a gamble there just to get on the
11 interstate to come here. I was once
12 Lancaster's representative to the Devens
13 Base Closure Commission and I dreamed up
14 the last name, so that I could be the last
15 man speaking. Then I represented the
16 Lancaster Aeronautical Study Committee,
17 hence the last man. Tonight it's for a
18 different reason.

19 We managed to convince the governor
20 that we did not need Logan west at Devens
21 where the Tower of the Bullfinch Church
22 would be used to line up the runway. We
23 didn't need it, and fortunately convinced
24 Boston so that we don't have it.

1 Lancaster, as has been noted
2 repeatedly, is a rural town. One of my
3 hobbies is gardening, not farming. The
4 town has farms, but mine is much smaller
5 than that, but I still raise enough to give
6 away, and that's what this is about.

7 I've heard conflicting information
8 at this hearing. I don't know the facts.
9 I came here and I'm learning them.
10 Unfortunately, they're confusing. I hear
11 this and I hear that, and I will continue
12 my study before I finally make up my mind.

13 I do know every time I drive my car
14 out of the driveway onto any street in
15 Lancaster, Leominster, fill in the blank,
16 I'm gambling. I used to tell my eighth
17 graders of Worcester, on New Year's Eve
18 every other car is driving with an
19 intoxicated driver. The math didn't add up
20 when I told them that every car driving
21 down the highway was driving drunk and I
22 was sober, and they bought it, I think.

23 If ample mitigation funds are
24 authorized, and, again, I've heard so much

1 conflicting information today, I don't know
2 what that number would be. It might be a
3 million. Somebody in this audience could
4 probably come up with a 100 million, I
5 don't know. That's probably excessive, but
6 I don't know if a million is enough. I'm
7 still going to continue my study, and I
8 might even get to meet, which I haven't
9 yet, fortunately, and I'm happy to say so,
10 that it isn't yet, I have not been
11 introduced to the members of the Cordish
12 company who are planning the Leominster
13 casino.

14 If the traffic on the Route 117 and
15 the Interstate 190 that has been mentioned
16 too many times for me to go into it, then
17 if the access is provided, then my
18 interests and the interests of my adopted
19 town would be served.

20 Hillary Clinton put a book together
21 about 10 years ago, Takes a Village. Some
22 of you have read it or been exposed to it.
23 If she runs for president, you'll hear more
24 about it again. But having taught six

1 years math, science in West Africa, I know
2 something what it takes to raise a kid. It
3 does take a village. But for a casino in
4 Leominster, I think it will take a region.
5 And if the region is served, I'm satisfied.

6 CHAIRMAN CROSBY: Thank you.

7 COMMISSIONER CAMERON: Thank you.

8 One more.

9 CHAIRMAN CROSBY: One more.

10 MS. FREIDA: Thank you,
11 Mr. Chairman. I wasn't going to speak. My
12 name is Claire Freida. I am a city
13 councilor in Leominster. I'm a 26-year
14 elected official, six years on the School
15 Committee, and 16 years representing the
16 area that the casino is proposed. Four
17 years as a councilor-at-large.

18 I still live in the area that the
19 casino is proposed. It's probably a
20 quarter mile from my home. I've lived
21 through the New England Development,
22 massive mall situation. I lived through a
23 divisive community that fought on both
24 sides. There's a real passion when there's

1 a big project that's proposed, and rightly
2 so.

3 The community voted to accept this
4 proposal. It was a 60-percent vote. But
5 the parts of it, there are five wards, 15
6 precincts, and out of those -- that entire
7 area, all but one was opposed to the
8 casino, which is the area that I live in,
9 and understandably people that are
10 concerned surrounding the casino area. I
11 travel 117 very often.

12 I'm very proud of Leominster. We've
13 worked hard in our city. We were bankrupt
14 20 years ago, pretty near bankrupt. We've
15 worked hard to produce tax incentives, keep
16 our tax rate at a single tax rate. We work
17 very diligently. We're very proud of our
18 community. I don't believe that our
19 citizens would have voted for something
20 that is going to damage our community.

21 We've worked closely with the
22 Cordish company. I know that there's --
23 there is perception that the counsel hasn't
24 been involved. I think there was a

1 laid-back approach because it was a
2 referendum and none of the counsel wanted
3 to influence the vote. So one on one, for
4 anybody that called me, knew what my
5 position was. I spoke with the company.
6 Their assistance in a lot of the areas in
7 the community seemed to be different than a
8 lot of the other massive casino moguls are
9 proposing in different areas.

10 The people have spoken, it's our
11 responsibility to watch -- we have
12 regionalized a lot. I think the Chamber
13 can reiterate. We coordinate with the
14 Johnny Appleseed visitor center. We've
15 coordinated with water and sewer to the
16 town of Lancaster. We've participated
17 regionally. And I don't see this to be any
18 different.

19 117 is a problem. I don't think
20 anybody will dispute that. I travel to the
21 Cape, I come that way. But when I know
22 there's something going on at the Bolton
23 Fairgrounds that you can't get through, I
24 Route 2 to go -- it's a little bit longer,

1 but I'll take Route 2 to 495. There are
2 some alternative routes. I'm not expecting
3 that people should do that. But I do think
4 117 needs to be addressed. And I do
5 support that, and I think our community
6 would support that. That, to me, is the
7 largest mitigating issue you have to deal
8 with.

9 But Leominster is a very proud
10 community. We would not allow anything
11 that would hurt our children, hurt our
12 schools, hurt our community, because we're
13 much to proud of that. We've worked too
14 hard to get where we are.

15 So while I'm speaking in support, I
16 also speak in looking at the mitigation for
17 the surrounding community, particularly,
18 Bolton and Lancaster, and Sterling. Thank
19 you.

20 CHAIRMAN CROSBY: Thank you.

21 THE FLOOR: I guess I'm not going to
22 vote for you.

23 CHAIRMAN CROSBY: I think -- I think
24 we are going to call it an evening. I want

1 to say a couple of things.

2 First of all, I very much
3 appreciate -- we very much appreciate that
4 you all were respectful of the time limits.
5 You know, you spoke. These are passionate
6 issues, we fully understand that, but you
7 were respectful of one another, you were
8 respectful of our time, and we appreciate
9 that.

10 You've emphasized, the folks who
11 have been -- expressed opposition, have
12 articulately and forcefully emphasized
13 issues that we were aware of, but not as
14 aware as we are now. 117 clearly is one.
15 117 and traffic is clearly one. The
16 ongoing issue of impacts in the surrounding
17 communities is clearly another. The
18 process of the host community agreement and
19 the referendum in Leominster is another.
20 16 acres versus 26 is another. These are
21 all issues that we knew about, but hearing
22 from you has helped us, will help us inform
23 our thinking as we go forward and try to
24 make this -- this difficult decision.

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So thank you all for coming and for giving us the benefit of your thoughts. And we will continue to appreciate any further thoughts that you have along the way.

(Proceeding concluded at 7:31 p.m.)

1 GUEST SPEAKERS:
2 Dennis A. Rosa
3 Donald Lowe
4 Jane Alessandrini
5 David McKeehan
6 Patrick Aubuchon
7 Richard Brow
8 Robert Healey
9 Curtis Cook
10 Raymond Bissonnette
11 Lynn Percuoco
12 David Nault
13 John Quist
14 Stanley Starr
15 Andrew David
16 Karen Greenwood
17 Christopher Kenney
18 Mary T. Jean
19 David Leger
20 Thomas Hazard
21 William Devereaux
22 Rachel Holmesmaki Lahti
23 Travis Vallee
24 Ryan McNutt

1 GUEST SPEAKERS CONT'D:
2 Ellen Cutler
3 Terri Ackerman
4 Arline Stith
5 Robert Fitzpatrick
6 Yasmin Loft
7 Patrick McCarty
8 Frank Streeter
9 Andrew Zaikis
10 Charlotte Waitkus
11 Jack Donahue
12 David Joyce
13 Suzanne Farias
14 Matthew Venier
15 Stephen Mullaney
16 Lisa Nugent
17 John Barrett
18 Robert Young
19 Corey Shields
20 John Armstrong
21 Marilyn Chambers
22 Sara Spencer
23 Kevin Williams
24 Charles Millhaus

1 GUEST SPEAKERS CONT'D:

2 Peter Stanton

3 Faith Venier

4 Carlos Crespo

5 Eugene Christoph

6 Claire Freida

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C E R T I F I C A T E

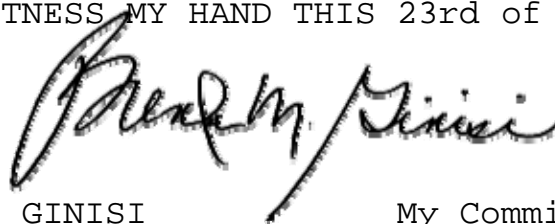
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2
3 I, Brenda M. Ginisi, Court Reporter, do
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7 I, Brenda M. Ginisi, further certify that
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11 I, Brenda M. Ginisi, further certify that I
12 neither am counsel for, related to, nor employed
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16 outcome of this action.

17 Proceedings recorded by verbatim means, and
18 transcript produced from computer.

19
20 WITNESS MY HAND THIS 23rd of October
21 2013.

22 



23 BRENDA M. GINISI
24 Notary Public

My Commission expires:
July 11, 2014