

1 THE COMMONWEALTH OF MASSACHUSETTS
2 MASSACHUSETTS GAMING COMMISSION
3 PUBLIC HEARING
4
5

6 CHAIRMAN

7 Stephen P. Crosby
8

9 COMMISSIONERS

10 Lloyd Macdonald

11 Bruce W. Stebbins

12 Enrique Zuniga
13 -----

14 RE: PUBLIC INPUT - MGM DESIGN CHANGES
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20 December 3, 2015 2:43 p.m. - 3:50 p.m.

21 MASSMUTUAL CENTER

22 1277 Main Street, Room 4 & 5

23 Springfield, Massachusetts
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1 P R O C E E D I N G S :

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3 CHAIRMAN CROSBY: Ladies and
4 gentlemen, good afternoon. Today is Thursday,
5 December 3, 2015. This is a public hearing
6 before the Massachusetts Gaming Commission. I
7 am Chairman Steve Crosby. Present also are
8 Commissioners Macdonald, Commissioner Stebbins
9 and Commissioner Zuniga. Commissioner Cameron
10 had to leave.

11 We are here today to accept public
12 comment on the proposed design changes to the
13 MGM Springfield casino project. Before we
14 begin, the Commission would like to thank you
15 all for being here today. This is a public
16 hearing and it's critically important that all
17 of you, the public, be a part of the process to
18 ensure that the Commission achieves the best
19 results possible.

20 The purpose of this public hearing
21 is to offer any interested person or group an
22 opportunity to comment on the proposed design
23 changes. This is not a question-and-answer
24 period or a debate. Once we begin, anyone who

1 wishes to comment may raise their hand, or
2 actually they should go ahead and sign up in
3 back. There's a sign-up sheet in back if you
4 haven't already signed up on this sign-up
5 sheet. Then we will recognize you to come
6 before us. And we will hear from all of the
7 folks who sign in.

8 In order to use the available time
9 efficiently, the Commission asks that speakers
10 limit their comments to three minutes. There
11 will be a clock that Amy is using here to the
12 right of the speaker's podium and that will be
13 set at three minutes for each speaker. We hope
14 you'll be respectful of that time and
15 respectful of everybody else's time and adhere
16 to the three-minute rule.

17 The Commission requests that all
18 speakers identify themselves prior to
19 commenting and please be sure to keep your
20 voices up as this hearing is being recorded
21 audio and video. It is not being streamed live
22 on the web, but it will be archived on our
23 website in video and there will be a transcript
24 prepared.

1 With that we will now open up the
2 floor for comment. We have I believe two city
3 councilors here including Councilor Fenton, the
4 Springfield city council president. He is
5 invited to be our first speaker as we routinely
6 respect elected officials, especially ones that
7 have dentist appointments.

8 MR. FENTON: Yes. Thank you,
9 members of the Commission, Mr. Chairman for
10 hearing me first. I do have a dentist
11 appointment.

12 I'm joined today by my colleagues on
13 the city council, Councilor Tim Rook, councilor
14 from Ward 7 Tim Allen and council vice
15 president from Ward 8 Orlando Ramos.

16 First let me start for thanking the
17 Commission for hosting this hearing and public
18 comment section of your meeting here in the
19 city of Springfield. The council and the
20 residents and surrounding communities to the
21 city of Springfield obviously have an interest
22 in these design changes and are very grateful
23 for your trip out here and your willingness to
24 hear from us and make yourself available for

1 public comment.

2 CHAIRMAN CROSBY: I should note that
3 it was President Fenton who wrote us and asked
4 us specifically if we would be willing to have
5 this hearing and we agreed.

6 MR. FENTON: Thank you, Mr.
7 Chairman. The last time that I addressed this
8 body at a public hearing was over a year ago in
9 West Springfield at West Springfield Junior
10 High School. I spoke in favor of the project.
11 I spoke to the credibility and integrity of MGM
12 Springfield and the design in the plan that
13 they had brought forward to the voters of
14 Springfield, our fine Mayor and the city
15 council and subsequently to the MGC.

16 I still support MGM in their overall
17 vision and mission for the city of Springfield.
18 I think that this is a once-in-a-lifetime
19 economic development opportunity for our region
20 and really for Western New England.

21 However, I also stand before you
22 opposed to their design changes. The city of
23 Springfield, our taxpayers and our Mayor have
24 endeavored and have spent a great amount of

1 resources on negotiating our host community
2 agreement. In that agreement, it calls for
3 certain designs.

4 Those designs always included a 25-
5 story high-rise tower. Many referred to it as
6 the marquis aspect of the project or "the wow
7 factor". And the surprise announcement to
8 myself and many others in leadership in our
9 community that this component to the project
10 would be eliminated was met with resistance. I
11 can speak for myself in this respect in that I
12 have great concerns about the elimination of
13 this aspect of the project.

14 While I recognize that circumstances
15 change and I appreciate MGM's long-standing
16 commitment to the city in light of subsequent
17 referendums and presentations required before
18 historical, MGC boards and other agencies, the
19 fact of the matter remains that we have a
20 legally binding contract with this entity.

21 And in that contract, it calls for a
22 high-rise tower and other amenities that are
23 promised. And I stand before you today
24 unwilling to compromise. I stand before you

1 today as I have indicated to MGM Springfield in
2 recent discussions that the city of Springfield
3 and myself and the city council want to be
4 reasonable parties.

5 We are not immune to changes in the
6 marketplace nor are we ignorant to them. We
7 recognize that accommodations ought to be made.
8 But I have reservations and strong concerns
9 about allowing what was a bilateral contract to
10 be subsequently negotiated in a unilateral way.

11 So, insofar as the HCA agreement had
12 really four parties to it MGM Springfield, the
13 Mayor, the Springfield city council and the
14 voters of the city of Springfield, those same
15 four parties ought to be incorporated and
16 consulted as changes come forward. These type
17 of very substantial and material changes to the
18 project warrant that type of discussion. Not
19 unilateral presentation.

20 So, I want to thank MGM for their
21 recent cooperation and discussion but the fact
22 is that this change was announced to me and
23 many others as a surprise. And if the project
24 from my perspective is to effectively move

1 forward in a way that's in the best interest of
2 the city of Springfield and the surrounding
3 communities we need to do so through a fair and
4 deliberative negotiation process.

5 If the tower is to be eliminated and
6 as I heard MGM present earlier facts that
7 indicate \$50-\$75 million worth of savings, the
8 city and the Commonwealth ought to be
9 compensated for allowing that type of a change.
10 As I said, this is a contract. There needs to
11 be consideration to entice us to do that.

12 So to that end, MGM has been open to
13 contemplating alternatives with me that would
14 go above and beyond what was originally in the
15 HCA. Some examples include expanding
16 potentially their residential market rate
17 apartment footprint. They've currently
18 committed to 54 units. I'm asking them to look
19 at expanding that in terms of the number of
20 units that would be a part of the HCA through
21 the amendments.

22 I've offered up compromising
23 positions saying that perhaps there could be a
24 component that would include in those market-

1 rate units condo ownership as opposed to
2 market-rate apartments to help offset some of
3 the risks for the company.

4 They also have to their credit been
5 proactive about looking at how they can
6 redesign the skyline in light of the
7 elimination, proposed elimination I should say
8 of the tower.

9 So, I wanted that testimony to be on
10 the record before the Commission. I do not
11 support the plan as proposed. I think there is
12 a world in which the city of Springfield could
13 benefit from a design that did not include a
14 tower, but I think that that necessitates a
15 thoughtful deliberation and negotiation not a
16 unilateral discussion based on MGM telling us
17 that they needed to remove the tower and here's
18 why. So, I wanted that on the record.

19 I also wanted to impress upon the
20 Commission two more final points. And I
21 appreciate you allowing me some extended time
22 here. The first is Attorney Stratton correctly
23 pointed out earlier that it is the council's
24 intention to take up a vote on the overlay

1 district later this month in December. That is
2 because we want to cooperate with the company.

3 They have an interest in continuing
4 to build their infrastructure in the downtown
5 and tear down buildings. And to that end, we
6 have agreed to schedule on an expedited basis
7 an overlay hearing to allow them to do that
8 ground work with the understanding that they
9 are proceeding at their own risk with that
10 development. And they will not be binding
11 themselves with infrastructure outbuilds that
12 impact the future design.

13 And secondly, I want to articulate
14 to the Commission in addition to my concern
15 about the tower and the reduction of the
16 capital expenditure of somewhere between \$50
17 and \$75 million, I'm also very concerned about
18 the lack of specificity with respect to the
19 location, ownership model and amenities
20 provided for the 54 guaranteed off-site market
21 rate units.

22 We know not yet where they will be
23 located. I recognize that there are business
24 reasons for why it is not feasible at this time

1 for MGM to have an alternative site located,
2 but from my perspective that is a problem that
3 MGM has created for themselves. By moving
4 their 54 units from Main Street and Howard to
5 some to-be determined location, they have put
6 the city council and the city in a real bind in
7 terms of how we amend our HCA agreement.

8 Any amendments that we make to our
9 exhibits that discuss specifically where these
10 units will go are going to have to subsequently
11 be amended when MGM tells us where they propose
12 to put the market rate units.

13 And of additional concern is the
14 ownership mechanism through which they will
15 take title and subsequently manage these
16 properties. There have been discussions about
17 collaborative and coownership models, if you
18 will, between MGM and other entities for these
19 future units.

20 Obviously, the city has concerns
21 about those types of arrangements. There are
22 worlds in which they may work but again I think
23 the city needs to be incentivized to get to
24 that position.

1 I thank you for your time Mr.
2 Chairman and members of the Commission for
3 holding this hearing here in Springfield. I
4 want to stress in conclusion that myself and I
5 know many of the residents of the city of
6 Springfield and my colleagues appreciate MGM's
7 investment and commitment.

8 And we remain committed to them to
9 finding a good project that we can all be proud
10 of. We were all proud of the project that we
11 were promised over two years getting on three
12 years ago with our HCA and the referendum that
13 was held.

14 But I'm hopeful that through a more
15 deliberative process we can secure a more
16 favorable agreement to the city of Springfield
17 than the one that is currently proposed.

18 CHAIRMAN CROSBY: Thank you,
19 President Fenton. We do cut city council
20 presidents slack, but I hope the rest of you
21 will please adhere to our three-minute rule.
22 City Councilor Ramos, welcome.

23 MR. RAMOS: Good afternoon, Mr.
24 Chairman, Commissioners. I would first like to

1 thank you for accepting the city council's
2 request to hold this meeting here in the city
3 of Springfield.

4 CHAIRMAN CROSBY: Excuse me,
5 Councilor, all of the speakers please identify
6 yourself for our reporter.

7 MR. RAMOS: Sorry. Orlando Ramos,
8 vice president of the Springfield city council.

9 Thank you for holding this meeting
10 in the city of Springfield and giving our
11 residents an opportunity to speak on this very
12 important and historic project in the city of
13 Springfield and in our region.

14 I will be brief. I know that there
15 will be some people that will talk about the
16 process of which MGM proposed these changes and
17 there'll be some arguments made as to the
18 aesthetics of the project.

19 What I want to do is I want to make
20 an argument from the economic development point
21 of view. Being the chairman of the economic
22 subcommittee on the city council, I'm here to
23 address the economic development component.

24 When I initially heard about the

1 changes that were being proposed for this
2 project, I'd be lying if I said I wasn't
3 disappointed. I was disappointed because of
4 the way that these changes were proposed to us,
5 the lack of communication. And I was
6 disappointed because of the elimination of what
7 I believed was the wow factor that was a
8 prerequisite for application for approval from
9 the Commission.

10 But I was also disappointed because
11 I think that if it is built the way it is being
12 proposed now we'll be missing an opportunity, a
13 major economic development opportunity, because
14 there is correlation between cities that build
15 up and signs of a local economy.

16 If you look at the history of our
17 country you look at the beginning of when the
18 cities began to construct high-rise buildings,
19 you will see that the construction of high-rise
20 buildings is a sign of a healthy economy and
21 invitation for new businesses, a symbol of a
22 community on the rise and a way to attract new
23 residents.

24 Columnist and researcher David

1 Holmes put together a very detailed research
2 project on high-rise construction in the last
3 decade. In this study, he determined that
4 there were four major factors and four major
5 reasons why communities and cities continue to
6 build up after the turn of the century.

7 And some of these are very
8 commonsense but there is one that I think that
9 really applies to the city of Springfield that
10 will apply to the city of Springfield once this
11 economic development project is completed. It
12 states that the business centers driven by
13 their status as significant regional business
14 centers as well as cities with high quality
15 downtown and near downtown urban environments.
16 And I believe that's where the city of
17 Springfield will end up once this project is
18 completed.

19 This is not new information the
20 fascination with high-rise buildings is
21 something that goes back centuries.

22 I cited a book from 1959 in a
23 council meeting when this was first proposed.
24 This book was written by Earl Schwartz and

1 Walter Simmons called Offices in the Sky. And
2 in the book the authors state that the
3 character and quality of any city can be told
4 from a great distance by its skyline.

5 But these buildings do more than
6 just advertise a city, they show the faith of
7 many in its destiny and they create a like
8 faith in others. They are evidence of a
9 community's spirit of life, the hallmark of
10 progress, the importance of sustained
11 development and growth.

12 They are a standing notice of the
13 world that a particular -- to the world that a
14 particular city has arrived amongst its elect
15 and it possesses those indispensable
16 qualifications, location and transportation for
17 a community's continued growth.

18 So, it's not just aesthetics. There
19 is an economic development component to it.
20 You need 12 stories to qualify for the national
21 registry of high-rise buildings. And according
22 to studies you need 18 stories to make any
23 significant impact on the city skyline. MGM's
24 current proposal calls for no more than six

1 stories. To me that means that we're missing
2 out on a major economic development
3 opportunity.

4 I've said this privately to MGM and
5 I've said it publicly before and I'll say it
6 again, I don't support the current proposal.
7 And I'm not willing to support it until we
8 address and MGM addresses how they will change
9 the skyline of the city of Springfield.

10 It doesn't necessarily have to be a
11 25-story glass tower. But I do believe there
12 are things we can do to change the skyline and
13 I'm hopeful that we can get your support on
14 that. Thank you for your time.

15 CHAIRMAN CRSOBY: Thank you
16 Councilor. Councilor Rook.

17 MR. ROOK: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.
18 My name is Tim Rook. I live at 63 Woodcrest
19 Drive in Springfield, Massachusetts. I'm one
20 of the longest serving members on the
21 Springfield city council. And I'm here to
22 state that I am in full favor of the amended
23 plan as presented by MGM.

24 I think what happens sometimes as we

1 go through a difficult process that this has
2 been and you have all experienced it is it's an
3 enormous project. And any project that we've
4 had in the city of Springfield, including the
5 school buildings that we built, there has
6 always been changes and amendments made and
7 agreed to.

8 If you talk about the wow factor
9 that so many people are hung up on, the wow
10 factor to me is that there's over two million
11 square footage that's going to be developed in
12 the city of Springfield that hasn't seen the
13 size of the project -- It's the largest project
14 in the city of Springfield's history.

15 There are going to be changes. And
16 I think everybody has to check their ego at the
17 door and realize that the people that are
18 proposing this, this is their livelihood.

19 I would much rather see the
20 walkability of Main Street like it used to be
21 back in the 50s and 60s than to have a tower.
22 I would take pedestrian traffic over a pedestal
23 any day. We had a tower in Springfield. It
24 was called Bay State West. When it was built

1 that's what everybody thought was going to be
2 great. A lot of the businesses along Main
3 Street dried-up because they moved up into the
4 tower square.

5 Then the Holyoke Mall was built, and
6 guess what, all of the businesses went to
7 Holyoke. What they're proposing is what works
8 in every other city, to have walkability on
9 Main Street. That's what's going to be the wow
10 factor.

11 Right now at 4:30 you can throw a
12 bowling ball down Main Street and you're not
13 going to hit anything. Where they're
14 anticipating eight million visitors a year
15 that's going to be a boost for every small
16 business downtown.

17 Since they made the change of the
18 hotel and laid it down on Main and State down
19 to Howard, each of the properties on the
20 opposite side of the street have been acquired.
21 They've been vacant for years. There's been no
22 activity. There's been very little interest in
23 the city of Springfield.

24 This is a good project for the city

1 of Springfield. It will put people to work.
2 It will bring back by viability to downtown. I
3 think that's what we have to look at. Now
4 since MGM has talked about it, let's revisit it
5 again is the baseball stadium. And some of the
6 members on your board were big supporters of
7 baseball including myself. That now has been
8 resurrected.

9 You're going to have MGM on one
10 side, you'll have hopefully baseball on the
11 other. And we can visit a third issue that was
12 brought up over 20 years ago that was an
13 aquarium along the riverfront.

14 MGM alone isn't going to save the
15 city of Springfield but there are a lot of
16 other elements. This a catalyst for change.
17 And I think that's what Springfield has been
18 stale with for so many years. People living in
19 the past and wanting to talk about what could
20 have been, what should have been, what may have
21 been.

22 The time is now. And these
23 gentlemen are willing to spend \$900 million of
24 private monies which we have never seen in the

1 city of Springfield before.

2 So, I support the project. I have
3 found MGM to be extremely cooperative
4 throughout the entire process. Their
5 availability and their candor has been
6 tremendous. I have met with many of them and
7 had many questions answered. I would urge you
8 to please approve the plan as amended and give
9 Springfield an opportunity to get back upon its
10 feet. Thank you very much for your time.

11 CHAIRMAN CROSBY: Thank you,
12 Councilor. All right. We will go to the list
13 in the order of sign-up. Karen Ford.

14 MS. FORD: Good afternoon. My name
15 is Karen Ford. I'm a longtime resident of the
16 city of Springfield, taxpaying citizen stand as
17 an opponent to MGM in any other casino coming
18 to our area.

19 When I look at the MGM presentation,
20 it is not impressive at all to me. It is a
21 monster and it is a demon that will destroy our
22 city. I attended the meeting on the 18th that
23 was held at City Stage. When MGM broke down
24 the entities that would be reduced from 10 bus

1 birds to three that's a strong indicator that
2 they don't expect the same patronage.

3 They also spoke about the movie
4 theater and the bowling alley and various
5 entities of this project being reduced.
6 However we look today and we see where we are
7 being more concerned about saving MGM than we
8 are about saving Springfield. That's a sad day
9 in the land.

10 When we look at the health impact
11 study, I attended a forum maybe just over a
12 month or so ago. And they spoke at this forum
13 -- This is done through UMass via Bay State. --
14 that anytime a casino comes into a social
15 economically deprived community, it destroys.
16 We continue to hear about Detroit, filing
17 bankruptcy let me add. That's not a plus.
18 That does not add as a positive attribute for
19 one of something of this nature to come to our
20 deprived city already.

21 It's amazing to me that we have
22 absolutely no safeguards. None of our
23 leadership -- It was good to hear President
24 Fenton say today that he's opposed to any

1 design changes however flexible. I'm opposed
2 to the unit coming here, period.

3 No one is saying that this is what
4 we need to bring in because it's not a pro for
5 our city. There are other things that can be
6 done. When they were talking with health
7 impact study that people who live in these
8 communities, and it will not only affect
9 Springfield because gambling has no boundaries,
10 the addiction has no boundaries, it will flow
11 out into all of the neighboring communities.
12 And if anyone chooses to travel a great
13 distance, we may find them on the road dead
14 too.

15 I would also like to add, it's
16 amazing to me that we no longer hear anything
17 about Blue Tarp, which MGM Mike Mathis made it
18 very clear sink or swim MGM is out of here in
19 two years. So, they don't even put great stock
20 in their project.

21 And now who is the head of what's
22 called Blue Tarp, Mike Mathis. How amazing. I
23 hope that you all will take your position
24 serious and think about the fact that this is a

1 socially economically deprived community that
2 does not need the ills of a casino by any
3 means. Thank you for your time.

4 CHAIRMAN CROSBY: Thank you very
5 much. Rhonda Latney.

6 MS. LATNEY: Good afternoon, Mass.
7 Gaming Commissioners. I'm Rhonda Latney, a
8 lifelong resident of Springfield and anti-
9 casino advocate. I find it ridiculous Mayor
10 Sarno was dumbfounded over the reduction of the
11 proposed casino and how the residents of
12 Springfield, our elected officials and Mass.
13 Gaming Commissioners finding out about the
14 reductions over a three-month period and not
15 all at once.

16 I'm under the impression that all
17 correspondence should have been in writing and
18 channeled to the necessary departments. It is
19 evident that Mayor Sarno, city solicitor Ed
20 Pikula and our elected officials are not
21 attentive to the information they are
22 responsible for and have access to.

23 In an article from Business West
24 dated March 11, 2014 entitled Region Trades

1 People Anticipate Casino Construction
2 Opportunities state the following for instance,
3 landscape architectural opportunities might be
4 limited in an urban casino says Steven Roberts,
5 president of Steven A. Roberts Landscape
6 Architecture and Construction in Springfield.
7 There might be some exterior construction in
8 regard to pavers and maybe water features but I
9 don't see there being a lot of green space
10 available to create parks, he said. From the
11 plans I've seen there's not a whole lot of
12 landscaping. It's mostly a kind of an urban
13 cityscape. End of article.

14 After I viewed the current design
15 proposal, I noticed the adjoining building to
16 the South End Community Center has been
17 eliminated and replaced with a (INAUDIBLE)
18 park. Therefore this changes the urban design
19 and leads to drastic material costs and
20 reduction in material changes.

21 Another change is a pedestrian
22 bridge across State Street and Main Street that
23 has been eliminated also. For MGM and city
24 council to deem the site plan complete at this

1 time seems incomprehensible considering there
2 has been no mention of the location of the
3 market rate apartments in its detailed
4 construction plans or justification of the
5 removal of the adjoining building the South End
6 Community Center and the removal of pedestrian
7 bridge. Thank you.

8 CHAIRMAN CROSBY: Thank you very
9 much. Mark Checkwicz.

10 MR. CHECKWICZ: Mark Checkwicz,
11 resident of Springfield. Thank you Mr.
12 Chairman and Councilmen. Thank you to my
13 fellow residents of Springfield. I really
14 appreciate the passion with which the previous
15 two speakers spoke. They love our city. And
16 they look out for the best.

17 It is difficult to face a decision
18 about design changes coming from an entity who
19 really put their best effort forward in their
20 first proposal. They did however face
21 something very unexpected, and this cannot be
22 eliminated from the discussion. They were
23 given a set of rules from which to play from.
24 We had a democratic process which allowed for

1 three casinos in the state.

2 They came here using the forum or
3 the platform of that democratic process with
4 the investment of time and money and with
5 manpower. They put their best effort forward
6 among many other companies who also did the
7 same. They came out victorious. And I might
8 add, all the other companies who endeavored to
9 come into the Western Massachusetts area all
10 failed to get their referendums passed in their
11 communities, host communities.

12 Upon that moment, they were faced
13 with a referendum on an issue that had already
14 been decided democratically. I do believe that
15 they were blindsided by this. I certainly was
16 because it seems to me if somebody decided to
17 have a referendum on barbershops, we could have
18 that and eliminate all barbershops immediately
19 across Massachusetts if you could get enough
20 people to stop haircuts, which maybe I might
21 vote for.

22 But truthfully, it was an unfair
23 process. Even though it is democratic, the
24 opportunity for people in the democratic

1 process was prior to the investment made by
2 this company.

3 I appreciate -- I have always
4 appreciated Mr. Mathis' willingness to meet
5 with me when I've had problems and issues. I
6 spoke out of order at a previous meeting when
7 there was no public discussion, you may
8 remember. And he immediately came out and was
9 willing to meet with me after that. And he
10 did. And we spoke.

11 I do have no concern about the
12 design changes because most importantly they
13 are making a commitment to the city of
14 Springfield in dollars and they have to make
15 decisions that amount to success. The city has
16 to have them be successful.

17 One last thing I want to say, I know
18 I'm running out of time, very quickly. There
19 is a \$2.4 billion glass tower sitting at the
20 end of the boardwalk in Atlantic City, the
21 former Rebel Casino. It is two years old.
22 It's now bankrupt and empty.

23 Despite being the most beautiful
24 building on that boardwalk, it is empty and has

1 been purchased for \$85 million.

2 We cannot afford to have an empty
3 tower sitting in Springfield two years from now
4 -- or two years hence from their opening. They
5 must be successful. We as community citizens
6 have to hold them to their promises but more
7 importantly we are the holders of the keys to
8 success of our children in the future endeavors
9 in this city. Thank you.

10 CHAIRMAN CROSBY: Thank you very
11 much. Carol Kerr.

12 MS. KERR: Good afternoon. My name
13 is Carol Kerr and I am resident of Forest Park
14 Heights. Thank you for allowing me to speak
15 here today.

16 I completely disagree that a new
17 skyscraper is either essential or even a
18 particularly desirable thing. The new hotel is
19 an excellent layout because the hotel complex
20 is much more in keeping with the feel of the
21 downtown area. It integrates not dominates.
22 It doesn't steal the thunder of the existing
23 skyscrapers. They still hold pride of place.

24 MGM doesn't dominate the skyline of

1 our downtown nor should it. I like that. It
2 doesn't become MGM city. We still get to keep
3 our unique personality. Guests are less
4 isolated in a lower hotel than a big tower.
5 People are more likely to walk an attractive
6 surrounding area. People watch at an outdoor
7 café, shop, walk to shows and such rather than
8 hold up in the glass tower.

9 Regarding the apartments, I love the
10 idea of the off-site building being used as
11 apartments. Great buildings, great location,
12 near to downtown, near to the museum, library
13 and entertainments, Mattoon Street, art venues
14 and the casino but not part of it. The people
15 who live there will feel a part of our
16 community not part of an entertainment complex.

17 Did MGM miss an opportunity by not
18 communicating effectively, absolutely. Shame
19 on them. Every project has changes that need
20 to be made along the way. There's nothing
21 nefarious about it. It's just how large-scale
22 building projects work.

23 Sometimes change necessitated by
24 legal issues, environmental or financial

1 issues, space constraints, material or
2 structural problems, efficiencies in any manner
3 of unforeseen issues. For the most part, the
4 general public sees only the finished product.

5 This is not MGM's first rodeo. They
6 are spending a lot of money and will ensure
7 that they will build an entertainment complex
8 that is the best it can be. That would be true
9 wherever they build. It isn't in their best
10 interest to build something less than
11 spectacular.

12 They want to draw as many people for
13 as long as possible. I think it's
14 counterproductive to micromanage something they
15 do very well all over the world already. Hold
16 them to their contracts, financial obligations,
17 hiring goals and community commitments. But
18 don't examine everything that changes every
19 time under a microscope.

20 These guys are experts. Let them
21 build a world-class complex. The people of
22 Springfield should be concerned and want the
23 council members to make sure that they meet
24 their commitments and how we use the income

1 that we get wisely, not approve what color
2 marble is used in the foyer. Thank you very
3 much.

4 CHAIRMAN CROSBY: Thank you very
5 much. Perfect timing. Vera O'Connor.

6 MS. O'CONNOR: Greetings
7 Commissioners, Mr. Mike Mathis, ladies and
8 gentlemen. My name is Vera O'Connor, a
9 resident of Springfield.

10 I really thought that all of the
11 discussion about Springfield MGM plans were
12 over before the host agreement was signed. And
13 MGM would not try to change horses in
14 midstream. At the last hearing before the host
15 agreement was signed, I told Mr. Mathis that we
16 in Springfield would hold his feet to the fire
17 to make sure he kept his promise and that the
18 agreement would be kept.

19 Since then, there have been many
20 changes. First the opening date was pushed
21 back. The design with the glass tower has been
22 changed. The straw that breaks the camel's
23 back however is their most recent proposal to
24 decrease the size of the building and make the

1 parking garage smaller.

2 The last proposed change was
3 announced just before the last municipal
4 election, a bombshell. It could not have
5 happened at a worse time. Although in my
6 opinion, at least one city councilor benefited
7 from it by getting a lot more votes than he
8 would have.

9 I have received a lot of flak from
10 some people who oppose the idea of Springfield
11 casino. And they never cease to remind me that
12 they told me that MGM would not live up to the
13 host agreement.

14 Those same people have no control
15 over their kids either, so don't always try to
16 tell people what to do. It is my hope that
17 there will be no more changes to the plans. I
18 still would like to see plans that include the
19 glass tower that was promised and give
20 Springfield casino the wow factor just like
21 Malaysia and Las Vegas. That's a wow factor.
22 So, thank you for your time. Respect all.

23 CHAIRMAN CROSBY: Thank you very
24 much. Mario Fiore.

1 MR. FIORE: Good afternoon
2 Commissioner Crosby and members of the
3 Commission. It looks like everybody's had a
4 long day. So, I'm going to keep my comments
5 short and brief.

6 My name is Mario W. Fiore. I'm 65
7 years old born and raised in Springfield's
8 south end. And I've been a resident of the
9 city of Springfield for my entire 65 years.

10 I am neither an expert at
11 construction or finance, so I'm going to talk
12 about my experience with MGM. A little over
13 three years ago I saw somewhere that there was
14 going to be an informal meeting at a community
15 office hosted by MGM. I said, wait a minute
16 MGM, the world leader in hospitality and
17 entertainment right here in my hometown of
18 Springfield?

19 I just had to go and I liked what I
20 heard at that informal meeting more than three
21 years ago. And I like what I've seen since
22 that meeting. Civic groups and organizations
23 knocking on MGM's door. Examples such as
24 \$20,000 towards Fourth of July fireworks,

1 \$60,000 toward improved lighting for downtown
2 Springfield. Most of all the millions of
3 dollars towards a brand-new Springfield rescue
4 mission to house our city's homeless.

5 So, MGM has certainly worked with
6 our city over these past three years. So, I
7 would hope that both the Mass. Gaming
8 Commission and our city of Springfield would
9 work with MGM on these proposed changes to the
10 original hotel casino plans. That's just my
11 opinion. Thank you for your time.

12 CHAIRMAN CROSBY: Thank you very
13 much. Jeffrey Ciuffreda.

14 MR. CIUFFREDA: Mr. Chairman,
15 Commissioners, good afternoon. I'm Jeffrey
16 Ciuffreda, the president of the Springfield
17 Regional Chamber of Commerce.

18 I've had the pleasure or distinction
19 of appearing before you before.

20 CHAIRMAN CROSBY: Welcome back.

21 MR. CUIFFREDA: Thank you. In
22 deference to your time and to those behind me
23 who want to testify, I have handed in some
24 written testimony for you. And I'm sure you

1 will consider that.

2 So, I am just here really just to
3 personally reconfirm the Springfield Regional
4 Chamber's support for MGM Springfield and that
5 includes given their design changes. The board
6 has looked at those, have been briefed by those
7 and recommitted it's support for MGM with the
8 modifications.

9 In my comments, I talk about the
10 commitment that MGM has really shown to this
11 city. And clearly, much of what they are doing
12 is based upon their great experience that is
13 certainly good for them. But I know from
14 working with them so much that every
15 consideration is given to make sure that that's
16 also good for the city of Springfield.

17 Clearly recognized MGM in our early
18 support for them as a world leader, not just a
19 national leader in gaming and entertainment.
20 Even though we have architects and lawyers and
21 bankers you name it on our board, it's very
22 difficult for us, quite frankly, to second-
23 guess an entity with their reputation and their
24 ability to spend \$950 million into the fine

1 points of architecture.

2 As I said to you the last time I was
3 in front of you, not only does MGM have to open
4 up this resort and we want them to open up this
5 resort, it has to be sustainable for a long
6 time into the future. So, I think some of the
7 changes they perhaps were not ones they
8 necessarily wanted to make but in order to make
9 sure they're sustainable I think they did.

10 So, they have shown a commitment to
11 local vendors. I just want to leave you with
12 that. That's one of the things the chamber
13 really insisted upon. They have had some
14 construction, as you know, going on at that
15 site.

16 They've got some contracts out to
17 bid right now. And I know not from MGM but
18 from my members that many of my members have
19 been working on that site. They've kindly
20 incorporated many of our members both in the
21 construction and vendors in the bid package
22 they put out.

23 And I know that my members have
24 gotten back to me that some of the contractors

1 interested in bidding on them have been
2 contacted by those. So, I think they made a
3 commitment to that. And I just want to let you
4 know that they have lived up to that commitment
5 and it's one that I see only strengthening
6 going forward.

7 So, in summary the Springfield
8 Regional Chamber continues to support MGM
9 Springfield designs. We would ask for an
10 expedited approval on this so that we can get
11 this great project underway and get those
12 construction jobs and permanent jobs which we
13 so sorely need in this area.

14 So, Commissioners, thank you for
15 your consideration of this and my written
16 testimony. I appreciate your time.

17 CHAIRMAN CROSBY: Thank you very
18 much. And thank you for your written
19 testimony. We do have all of the
20 correspondence, every email, every letter that
21 we get is in our books. We do read it all.
22 So, please feel free to comment that way as
23 well. Tom Lott.

24 MR. LOTT: Good afternoon. My name

1 is Tom Lott. I live in Forest Park Heights. I
2 am an avid supporter of the casino.

3 I and most of the people in my
4 sphere of influence are okay with the design
5 changes. We see the changes as very minute.
6 The casino project, from our perspective, is
7 the most significant development in the history
8 of Springfield. And we should do whatever we
9 need to do to facilitate and expedite the
10 completion of the project.

11 MGM is investing \$950 million in a
12 city. Obviously, they are not going to make
13 any major changes that would negatively impact
14 their projected revenue stream.

15 Getting rid of the tower hotel and
16 placing people closer to the street and
17 expanding the area where people will congregate
18 is no-brainer. It just makes good sense.

19 I am not a gambler, but I want
20 Springfield to be a place where there's plenty
21 to do. For instance, entertainment, shops,
22 events, activities and more. This will attract
23 more foot traffic and help all of the
24 surrounding businesses.

1 We have been promised \$25 million
2 per year and 2000 and 3000 construction and
3 permanent jobs respectively. As long as we are
4 getting the revenue and the jobs, these minor
5 design changes should have no impact on us.
6 Let's let MGM decide what's best for their
7 business and do what we can to expedite the
8 entire process so that we can get this
9 development open for business prior to the fall
10 of 2018.

11 And I want to thank you guys number
12 one, for taking the time and thank you for your
13 concern for the city of Springfield.

14 CHAIRMAN CROSBY: Thank you. Thank
15 you for your comments. Jeffrey Burstein.

16 MR. BURSTEIN: Commissioner,
17 Chairman, thank you. Jeffrey Burstein, I own
18 property at 1317 and 1343 East Columbus Avenue,
19 which is in between the entrance and the exit
20 to the proposed development.

21 Not long after the unsuccessful
22 repeal referendum, Michael Mathis stated this
23 is where we go from promises made to promises
24 kept. Shortly thereafter, MGM came to you

1 requesting additional time to complete their
2 project on the premise that they had to
3 coordinate with the viaduct reconstruction.

4 Soon thereafter, they announced that
5 they no longer wanted to build the glass tower.
6 And yet again just a short time after that, MGM
7 filed a notice of project change making
8 additional changes and reductions to the retail
9 space, the bowling alley, movie theater, the
10 parking garage and other areas, along with the
11 bus and traffic pattern.

12 They also previously made a change
13 that wasn't very public that was to eliminate
14 the designated turning lane recommended by
15 their experts, which is the roadway widening on
16 East Columbus Avenue which would help traffic
17 flow onto Bliss Street and into their parking
18 garage.

19 That decision was made when they
20 chose to default on the contract to purchase
21 our property between Howard and Bliss Streets.
22 That decision has consequences on the safety of
23 the motoring public which will be weaving lanes
24 to access the parking garage and proposed bus

1 depo. Safety of pedestrians as well as the
2 safety of the residents, employees, occupants
3 and visitors of our building.

4 Our building has five residential
5 apartments along with two businesses. In
6 addition to the great risk to public safety,
7 the consequence of MGM's decision is that we
8 will have no parking. There will be no access
9 to the building as it will become landlocked.

10 The project will create a nuisance
11 for the owners and its occupants and guests.
12 The proposed project does not protect the built
13 environment which is a requirement of the city
14 of Springfield zoning ordinance.

15 Moving the garage entrance on Bliss
16 Street 50 feet closer to East Columbus Avenue
17 will cause busses and other traffic to back up
18 onto East Columbus Avenue causing traffic
19 snarls. The new bus pattern will also cause
20 emission and noise pollution along with severe
21 vibration and shadowing in front of the
22 building.

23 The proposed parking behind the
24 building for extended vans and limousines will

1 cause excessive emissions as those vehicles
2 will need to warm up in the cold New England
3 winter.

4 There will also be noise 24 hours a
5 day from people in vehicles immediately behind
6 the building disturbing our residential
7 tenants. The proposed signs on the parking
8 structure if allowed to be illuminated will
9 shine into our apartments causing a nuisance to
10 the tenants.

11 Our apartments are the only
12 residences on the casino and retail block. The
13 elimination of parking on Howard Street, which
14 is less than 10 feet from our building, should
15 be replaced by parking that is equally as
16 close. Our residential tenants need to be able
17 to park overnight and close to there residences
18 to bring up groceries and other items.

19 The generators that are proposed to
20 be located behind our building in between the
21 parking garage and our building will create
22 excessive noise and emissions that will result
23 in a nuisance to our occupants and tenants.
24 Those generators if run at night will

1 potentially keep my tenants awake.

2 The transformer that was installed
3 on the property behind our building is not
4 depicted on any of the plans and will result in
5 elimination of parking spaces that have been
6 represented.

7 Surely, if MGM can turn a hotel on
8 its side and reconfigure its plans for its
9 benefit in such an expedited manner, then they
10 should be able to accommodate the built
11 environment.

12 I respectfully request that you re-
13 examine the risk presented arising from not
14 widening East Columbus Avenue to add a turning
15 lane, and that you require MGM to keep
16 designated parking immediately behind my
17 building for the benefit of the occupants
18 including overnight parking for the tenants.

19 Provide an area next to our building
20 to keep our trash and recycling that is
21 accessible for garbage trucks to enter and
22 turnaround. Provide the designated drop-off
23 space adjacent to the building.

24 CHAIRMAN CROSBY: Mr. Burstein, are

1 you about done?

2 MR. BURSTEIN: I'm pretty close,
3 Chairman. Install an elevator in the garage at
4 the west side of the garage abutting Howard
5 Street to promote walkability to the
6 Riverfront, East Columbus Avenue businesses and
7 the courthouse.

8 Restrict MGM from illuminating their
9 signs that will shine into the tenants'
10 apartments and relocate the generators which
11 should be able to be relocated away from the
12 only apartments in the Main Street, Union
13 Street, State Street, East Columbus Ave. block.
14 I also ask you --

15 CHAIRMAN CROSBY: Sir, why don't you
16 submit the rest of this. This is pretty
17 technical stuff. Give this in writing and
18 we'll take it from there.

19 MR. BURSTEIN: I have, Chairman, but
20 can I just wrap it up?

21 CHAIRMAN CROSBY: If it's quick.

22 MR. BURSTEIN: It is. I also ask
23 that you consider requiring MGM to build the
24 garage as promised as well as the residential

1 apartments as promised. I believe that the
2 residential apartments will help promote a safe
3 environment.

4 Lastly, if I ask that you require
5 MGM to grant a recorded easement to the
6 abutters and to the city of Springfield for
7 parking that has been promised by MGM. Let's
8 make sure from now on promises that made are
9 promises kept. Thank you.

10 CHAIRMAN CROSBY: Dr., is it Gloria
11 -- I don't want to take a risk on the last
12 name. I can't read it.

13 DR. CABALLER-ARCE: I don't blame
14 you for not wanting to take a risk. It's a
15 mouthful. It's Dr. Gloria Caballer-Arce.

16 CHAIRMAN CROSBY: Okay.

17 DR. CABALLER-ARCE: Good afternoon
18 to all of you, Commissioners. As a citizen of
19 Springfield for over 30 years, I have watched
20 this great city evolve, struggle and become a
21 force to be reckoned with as a result of its
22 people, their hard-work and commitment to a
23 better Springfield for all.

24 We are and proudly a very diverse

1 community. And for the most part we work
2 together for our common causes. We have a rich
3 history as a city of firsts. Founded in 1636
4 by English Puritan William Pynchon and named
5 Springfield in 1641. We are the first
6 Springfield in the New World.

7 We are the city of homes, Victorian
8 in style second only to San Francisco.
9 Basketball was created here. Dr. Seuss known
10 worldwide was a product of Springfield.
11 Mulberry Street was made famous as a result of
12 his books.

13 St. John's Congregational Church
14 founded in 1844 played a pivotal role in the
15 abolitionist movement. John Brown attended
16 services there. Springfield leads in trade and
17 transportation, education and health services,
18 manufacturing, tourism, hospitality and
19 government.

20 We are considered as one of
21 America's top emerging cultural markets. A 33
22 percent Latino population with buying power
23 that has increased over 295 percent. Quite
24 impressive when one considers we arrived a

1 little over two decades ago.

2 The citizens of Springfield are an
3 intelligent, creative, highly motivated,
4 hardworking, honest people of integrity.
5 Historically, we take a backseat to no one in
6 terms of accomplishments.

7 We have had a great impact on all
8 sections of our society from education to
9 politics, to arts and sports. I want to keep
10 this momentum going. That is why we came out
11 in strong support of MGM's casino resort. I
12 see MGM as transparent with clear communication
13 regarding every phase of this project and
14 resort casino.

15 Despite recent media sensationalism
16 to the contrary, they recently addressed our
17 concerns by coming forward with sound reasons
18 for the changes that may or may not be approved
19 by the Gaming Commission.

20 These changes will hopefully benefit
21 the community now and in the long run. In my
22 opinion, my support for MGM is based on the
23 fact that it will create 3- to 5000 jobs at
24 every level from entry to executive levels.

1 These jobs are direly needed by our community
2 to keep us on the fast track to the future
3 Springfield deserves.

4 MGM has taken into consideration the
5 geographical layout of Springfield with its
6 residences, small businesses and entertainment
7 venues, and have tried to maintain the
8 integrity, character and charm of our
9 Springfield.

10 I believe the revised plan will work
11 for the city of Springfield especially in the
12 area of employment. I also believe that the
13 building of MGM casinos will catapult us into a
14 brighter future for all of the citizens of
15 Springfield that are so deserving of this.

16 I say put aside the recent past and
17 move forward with the confidence in MGM. A
18 brighter future in all sectors of our society
19 depends on it. As an addendum, I'd like to say
20 I too wanted a tower but still want jobs more.
21 I want a better infrastructure. I hope that as
22 a revamping of this proposal that this is
23 exactly what happens. I want to thank you for
24 your time.

1 CHAIRMAN CROSBY: Thank you. Ray
2 Caporale.

3 MR. CAPORALE: Good afternoon,
4 Chairman. I am Ray Caporale. I grew up in the
5 south end where this project is going to be. I
6 have seen its highs. I've seen its lows.

7 I heard a lot of negativity. Down
8 the street there there is a facility called --
9 for the homeless shelter. They built this. It
10 was Sterling Cadillac. It was a sore eye.

11 They tore it down. They rebuilt the facility
12 now. I go by it on a day to day basis. It is
13 presently in my backyard. It's a beautiful
14 facility and you wouldn't even know what it is.

15 The charitable contributions they've
16 made since they've been here to various
17 organizations, I don't hear anybody turning
18 that money back because it's coming from
19 gaming.

20 This tower, let the dust settle. I
21 know when I go out of town and I stay in a
22 hotel, the first person I call is the fire
23 department. I want to know what the highest
24 hook and ladder is, because I ain't taking a

1 room above it, God forbid something happens.

2 This thing will get done. I don't
3 see jobs construction wise being lost. I don't
4 see permanent jobs being lost. I don't see
5 money going to the city being changed. I don't
6 see revenue going to the state being changed.
7 Let the dust settle.

8 Down the street there's the
9 basketball Hall of Fame. Mayor Mike Albano is
10 a friend of mine when he was the mayor of the
11 city. That's design number four that final
12 project, four. It's there. Everybody's happy
13 with it.

14 We've gotta stop worrying about this
15 and let this thing go. Let it settle out. The
16 smoke will settle. As you probably have seen
17 the presentation, a lot of their project has
18 taken bigger sizes not smaller sizes.

19 People are getting too big on a
20 tower. It's a tower ladies and gentlemen. It
21 ain't going to change this city. And when they
22 get done building this facility, I'm sure
23 they're going to have it designed in a way that
24 if you are coming down the highway, you are

1 going to see it, because it's only going to
2 better them to make people stop there. If I
3 don't see it, I don't go in it.

4 I'm sure they're going to do
5 something to make it so the people coming down
6 the highway or coming there to find it will
7 find it. This thing will be done. Just let
8 them do their jobs.

9 You people are doing your due
10 diligence. I hope the city council, yourself
11 and the historical society will all take a deep
12 breath and write off on this project. Thank
13 you for coming. Have a safe journey back to
14 Boston. Thank you.

15 CHAIRMAN CROSBY: Some of us go back
16 to Boston, not all of us. Thank you for your
17 time. Bill Devlin.

18 MR. DEVLIN: Greetings. I'm Bill
19 Devlin, an architect in Springfield. I live
20 and work at 235 State Street in what we
21 optimistically call downtown Springfield.

22 And I've been there for several
23 years. I grew up in the area, was out for 15
24 years and came back about 30 years ago. And

1 there have been a lot of changes. But I still
2 must be pretty naïve because my first thought
3 that MGM -- Where are they? -- MGM was a large
4 worldwide sophisticated organization should
5 understand that large projects have changes.
6 Should understand that there are always delays,
7 things happen. Things hit the fan.

8 If they have a 40-year commitment I
9 hope you can hold them to that through whatever
10 financial security is required. We pessimists
11 tend to put them in the five years or so range.
12 Before they even came here, the surrounding
13 casinos in Connecticut and elsewhere were
14 already in trouble.

15 But thankfully to MGM's presentation
16 at the City Stage they apparently have it down
17 to two years for some of them. They seem to
18 think -- Basically, with the finances they are
19 complaining about the fact that we have a
20 casino boom. A casino comes in prices go up.
21 And they're complaining about prices going up.

22 Sensibly somebody would budget in
23 extra time. And if you're going to spend \$800
24 million, design something that prices out now

1 at 550 or 600. If you're going to price it out
2 now at 800, you know it's going to be 1.2 or
3 whatever around there when you get around to
4 building it. That's just commonsense which
5 isn't that common.

6 The underground delivery that they
7 had initially discussed sounds great. And only
8 Bay State West did a similar thing. The semis
9 go down there and they actually drive around
10 underneath that building. But that two-story
11 underground parking was tried by the Sheraton,
12 by the federal building and Columbus Center had
13 other issues when they were building. And it
14 didn't work out to have two stories below
15 grade.

16 This is bottomland. That is no
17 secret. We have a big river. We had floods
18 seven feet, 10 feet high on South Main Street
19 in the 1930s. This is bottomland. It's mud
20 and muck. You have trouble. It's saturated
21 with water. This is not rocket science. In
22 the 60s and 40s, planners of Springfield
23 labeled this whole downtown area the hasiky
24 (PHONETIC) marsh. That's what they're building

1 in. They should be able to figure that out.

2 The hotel, I don't really miss the
3 tower all that much. I think the low-rise on
4 Main Street maybe is a good idea. We've had
5 skyscrapers for well over 120 years. It's no
6 secret that a smaller floor area in a tower
7 because you want to make the floor small make
8 it tall, make it sexy.

9 That's never been a secret that that
10 requires more space for stairs and more space
11 for elevators but they discovered that when
12 they made the last presentation. That's why
13 they had to do the low-rise hotel.

14 That hotel that glass tower for
15 better or for worse was a great advertising
16 banner for people and anyone especially the
17 ones coming in from the south. That was a
18 grabber, a real eye-catcher was a wow factor
19 and I just hope you will keep their feet to the
20 fire in the finances, because when you give up
21 a flag like that that tells me you are in
22 major, major trouble. That is not something
23 you part with easily.

24 CHAIRMAN CROSBY: Mr. Devlin, you

1 all set?

2 MR. DEVLIN: Almost, on historic
3 especially is my pet peeve. The rotunda, they
4 showed this ridiculous little drawing here.
5 They wrote so-called dome in 73 State Street.

6 73 State Street is their best asset.
7 They had to move the dome because the hotel was
8 there. When the hotel is gone they're still
9 moving it. Every place they've put it, it's
10 butchered.

11 They've talked about a great
12 entrance in the front of 73 State Street which
13 was approved by Springfield Historical
14 Commission, but I don't recall that anything
15 was even shown to the Commission. They are
16 butchering that building, but they love that
17 render view from across State Street which
18 somehow in the rendering is 150 or 200 feet
19 wide.

20 I just think it is a terrible shame
21 what they're doing to the history. They claim
22 to love our history. Their original pitch
23 coming here was we love your history and we
24 love your character. Now watch what we do to

1 it. Thank you.

2 CHAIRMAN CROSBY: David Ciampi.

3 MR. CIAMPI: Thank you for giving me
4 an opportunity to talk in front of the
5 Commission today. I am going to keep this very
6 short. Basically, I am completely for the
7 changes and the plans that MGM has put forth.
8 I just want to comment on something that's been
9 going on.

10 About a couple of years ago, I tried
11 to get Whole Foods and Trader Joe's to come to
12 Springfield. They wouldn't come. The reason
13 is because the area is economically depressed,
14 profoundly economically depressed. South end,
15 as I'm sure you know, has a 66 percent poverty
16 rate. Back in 2012 that's a statistic for
17 2012. People aren't going to come here.

18 MGM on the other hand is willing to
19 put a lot of risk capital down in this city. I
20 think it's very important for the people of the
21 city of Springfield to be very mindful of that
22 fact. That MGM is going to come in here, do
23 some economic revitalization that's really so
24 important for the city, something that we

1 really haven't seen in Springfield for many,
2 many years.

3 The city has been on an economic
4 slide for many decades. I've lived here since
5 '54. So, I've seen quite a lot. And what I've
6 seen hasn't been really good.

7 So, this is a great opportunity for
8 the city. And I think that MGM coming here is
9 really something really important. And I think
10 we have to cut some slack. MGM is in the
11 process of doing some fine-tuning. It's a
12 very, very big economic project for the city.
13 And it would be expected. I anticipated that
14 there would be some fine-tuning along the way.
15 That's my take. Thank you very much.

16 CHAIRMAN CROSBY: Thank you very
17 much. That is the last name on our list, I
18 believe. Is there anybody who didn't sign up
19 that wanted to speak? Yes, Sir, three minutes.

20 MR. ALIKTA: Good afternoon. My
21 name is Muwakkil Alikta. I live at 55 Foster
22 Street here in Springfield.

23 What I wanted to say Commissioners
24 is that when this process was going on about

1 the selling of the casino to the citizens of
2 Springfield, they had this image that they
3 projected. And this image they projected was
4 high-rise office building, this 25-story
5 building. And in this roadshow that they went
6 to the city to sell it, it would grace the
7 skyline of the city of Springfield and make it
8 a new paradigm.

9 And now they have changed course.
10 And the people in my neighborhood, they feel
11 they've been cheated. They've been cheated to
12 the fact that this is not going to happen now.
13 It was going to change the image of the city
14 for years to come.

15 In this case, it is tantamount to
16 almost like a Ponzi scheme, if I'm not being
17 disrespectful. Other members of my family
18 across the country when they saw this
19 advertisement, it gave the image that it was
20 going to change the image of the city forever
21 hopefully. And now, this is not going to
22 happen.

23 These people down in Las Vegas who
24 run MGM, they are among the most sophisticated

1 and savvy investors of the world. So, these
2 people they know what they're doing. They're
3 not little children in a candy store. They are
4 not at a craps table. They know what they are
5 doing.

6 In that case, I may make a bold
7 statement. And the bold statement I'm going to
8 make is that why not revoke their license in
9 this case because not being truthful to the
10 citizens of Springfield.

11 In this roadshow, they went around
12 the city almost a year and half ago, gave this
13 image that this was going to happen. This
14 beautiful tower was going to grace the skyline
15 of the city of Springfield and make a change.
16 And that's all I want to say. Thank you very
17 much.

18 CHAIRMAN CROSBY: Thank you very
19 much. Anybody else? All right. It's about
20 3:50. I want to thank everybody who took the
21 time to come and talk. We appreciate it very
22 much. They will be an important part of our
23 considerations. We will be back here, I'm
24 sure, many times in the future.

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Do I have a motion to adjourn?

COMMISSIONER ZUNIGA: So moved.

COMMISSIONER MACDONALD: Second.

CHAIRMAN CROSBY: All in favor, aye.

COMMISSIONER MACDONALD: Aye.

COMMISSIONER ZUNIGA: Aye.

COMMISSIONER STEBBINS: Aye.

CHAIRMAN CROSBY: Unanimous.

(Hearing closed at 3:50 p.m.)

1 ATTACHMENTS:

- 2 1. Massachusetts Gaming Commission December
3 3, 2015 Notice of Meeting/Hearing and
4 Agenda

5
6 GUEST SPEAKERS:

- 7 Michael Fenton, Pres. Springfield City Council
8 Orlando Ramos, Springfield City Councilor
9 Tim Rook, Springfield City Councilor
10 Karen Ford
11 Rhonda Latney
12 Mark Checkwicz
13 Carol Kerr
14 Vera O'Connor
15 Mario Fiore
16 Jeffrey Ciuffreda, Springfield Regional Chamber
17 of Commerce
18 Tom Lott
19 Jeffrey Burstein
20 Dr. Gloria Caballer-Arce
21 Ray Caporale
22 Bill Devlin
23 David Ciampi
24 Muwakkil Alikta

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C E R T I F I C A T E

I, Laurie J. Jordan, an Approved Court Reporter, do hereby certify that the foregoing is a true and accurate transcript from the record of the proceedings.

I, Laurie J. Jordan, further certify that the foregoing is in compliance with the Administrative Office of the Trial Court Directive on Transcript Format.

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

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

WITNESS MY HAND this 7th day of December, 2015.



LAURIE J. JORDAN
Notary Public

My Commission expires:
May 11, 2018