

COMMONWEALTH OF MASSACHUSETTS
MASSACHUSETTS GAMING COMMISSION

PUBLIC MEETING

CHAIRMAN

Stephen P. Crosby

COMMISSIONERS

Gayle Cameron

Bruce W. Stebbins

Enrique Zuniga

James F. McHugh

RE: PUBLIC INPUT MEETING IN WEST SPRINGFIELD

March 3, 2014, 4:00 p.m.
WEST SPRINGFIELD MIDDLE SCHOOL
31 Middle School Drive
West Springfield, Massachusetts

P R O C E E D I N G S

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3 CHAIRMAN CROSBY: If I can have your
4 attention please, ladies and gentlemen. We
5 are pleased now to call to order the 111th
6 Meeting of the Massachusetts Gaming
7 Commission. We're sorry we're a few
8 minutes late. One of our members had to
9 drive ten minutes to get here.

10 Let me just lay out a few of the
11 ground rules and explain what it is we are
12 doing here, and I think some of the other
13 Commissioners may have some introductory
14 comments as well.

15 I'm Steve Crosby, the chair of the
16 Massachusetts Gaming Commission and we're
17 here on the Mass. -- all five of the
18 Commissioners are here.

19 This is a second meeting for the --
20 the public input meeting for the western
21 Mass. site that we Commissioners thought it
22 was important to have. The legislation
23 calls for, mandates a final meeting in the
24 host community before a decision is made on

1 a license in any community.

2 In this case, it would be
3 Springfield. But we felt that this was so
4 important, there were so many people with
5 opinions, that we wanted to have a second
6 meeting where we would invite anybody with
7 an appropriate opinion to speak. So this
8 is the second of those meetings.

9 We will run until 8:00 tonight.
10 Some of us have to go back to Boston. If
11 we are done by 8:00, that's great. If not
12 and people have signed up and are not able
13 to speak, we will come back and pick
14 another evening and finish it off because
15 we do want everybody to have a chance to
16 say their piece.

17 There will be a five -- there is a
18 clock down here that will be set for five
19 minutes.

20 Commissioner, do you want to say how
21 it's going to work?

22 COMMISSIONER MCHUGH: The way it's
23 going to work is simple. When you start
24 speaking, this clock will start counting

1 down. When five minutes have elapsed, it
2 beeps and that's the five minute finish.
3 This is done out of an effort to be fair to
4 everybody and give everybody an opportunity
5 to be heard.

6 We have been through a number of
7 these now and learned as we went about
8 about that process and, really, this is the
9 easiest way to be fair to everybody. It's
10 visible, everybody can understand what the
11 time is and it's automatic so we don't slip
12 and make a mistake. And, so, that's why we
13 are doing it this way.

14 CHAIRMAN CROSBY: And just because
15 it's five minutes, please don't feel like
16 you have to use your five minutes. You get
17 some extra credit for coming in under five
18 minutes. We do have something like 80
19 people signed up already, and they're still
20 coming. So, you can see it's going to be a
21 long and interesting evening.

22 We will start out with a certain
23 number of the public officials,
24 particularly folks representing our host

1 tonight, the folks from West Springfield,
2 and then we will be running through the
3 list as you signed up. If you signed up
4 online, you will be in order that you
5 signed up. If you're signing up right now,
6 you will be an addition as you come in.

7 And I will simply read off several
8 names in order to save some time. It helps
9 if you can line up. And, so, I will read a
10 few names in advance and you can line up or
11 maybe take these seats in the front and try
12 to keep the process moving.

13 We're here because we want to hear
14 what people have to say. So, we don't want
15 to over limit it, but I think there are a
16 couple of parameters which makes sense.

17 We know that the issue about whether
18 to have casinos in Massachusetts, whether
19 to have expanded gaming facilities in
20 Massachusetts is still controversial. In
21 some quarters, that battle however has been
22 fought. And we are not here to debate
23 whether or not there should be casinos in
24 Massachusetts or whether or not western

1 Mass. should have the opportunity to have a
2 casino.

3 That has been determined by the
4 legislature and we'd rather not refight
5 that battle, at least not now. If there's
6 a repeal referendum, that's the time for
7 that debate.

8 Also, as much as possible, try not
9 to just repeat things that have been said
10 over and over. Anything you can add that
11 is new is of tremendous interest to us or
12 simply in shorthand saying, as the other
13 speaker said, relative to the traffic or
14 relative to how much I love table games,
15 whatever, you can just sort of not give us
16 the same thing over and over again. But as
17 I said, we are here because we do want to
18 hear what you have to say.

19 The City of West Springfield has
20 been kind enough to stream this
21 presentation, this meeting live on the web
22 and we are hooking it up, I believe this is
23 working, we're hooking it up to our
24 website. So anybody in the entire

1 Commonwealth will be able to see this
2 stream live on the web.

3 I mentioned to you the last meeting
4 that we will have sometime, I think that
5 will probably be -- do we have a date set
6 for the host community meeting; does
7 anybody remember?

8 COMMISSIOINER ZUNIGA: April 1st.

9 CHAIRMAN CROSBY: So it's
10 tentatively set for April 1st. We'll be
11 back again at that time.

12 Any other introductory comments,
13 Commissioners, anybody else?

14 Okay. As we usually do, we want to
15 start with the public officials from the
16 folks who are hosting us tonight, Mayor
17 Edward Sullivan from West Springfield,
18 Jonathan Silverstein, their counsel, Jason
19 DeGray, James Lyons, Jim Czach, Brian
20 Griffin, Simon Brighenti all I think plan
21 to make some introductory comments.

22 And, I believe our kickoff speaker
23 will be Mayor Sullivan.

24 MAYOR SULLIVAN: Great, I appreciate

1 that. I want to extend a warm welcome to
2 the Commissioners. It's a pleasure to have
3 you in our community. It's also great to
4 go first. So if I repeat anything, it will
5 only be myself.

6 West Springfield we like to call
7 ourselves a crossroads to New England.
8 It's where all the major highways in
9 western Mass. intersect, along with a lot
10 of the Tier 2 roads where they also
11 intersect.

12 We understand that, as everyone
13 does, this is a regional project, not a
14 Springfield project. We're delighted that
15 Springfield might end up with a casino. We
16 just want to make sure it's not at the
17 peril of any of the other surrounding
18 communities, especially West Springfield.

19 We also know that there is impacts
20 from this retail entertainment and casino
21 development, some positive, some negative.
22 And you'll I am sure hear much about
23 transportation this evening along with
24 other ones. And we also want to -- it

1 seems to be -- transportation seems to be a
2 key focus. But we also don't want to lose
3 site of the other ones related to public
4 safety, schools, health and ongoing.

5 The one comment I want to make while
6 I have the opportunity is basically a
7 general comment relative to this project.

8 After review, it doesn't seem to
9 demonstrate adequate infrastructure
10 improvements and adequate facilities for
11 bicycles and pedestrians. We know that
12 some of the other government agencies also
13 agree with this and I agree with their
14 comments, MassDOT, MEPA and the Pioneer
15 Valley Planning Commission that the project
16 should identify and rectify barriers to
17 walking and bicycling in the area. Now
18 particularly along the routes that will
19 bring people to the development.

20 I know others will speak towards
21 this, and I won't take my whole five
22 minutes. But, again, I want to thank you
23 for coming. If you choose to come back,
24 want to walk the streets in the areas that

1 are impacted, we are welcome to do that and
2 guide you along those roads also.

3 So thank you again for your time in
4 coming out to West Springfield.

5 COMMISSIONER CAMERON: Thank you,
6 Mayor.

7 COMMISSIONER MCHUGH: Thank you.

8 COMMISSIONER ZUNIGA: Thank you.

9 COMMISSIONER STEBBINS: Thank you.

10 CHAIRMAN CROSBY: Thank you very
11 much for having us.

12 MR. SILVERSTEIN: Good evening,
13 Members of the Commission, Jonathan
14 Silverstein, special counsel to the City of
15 West Springfield.

16 West Springfield is the only
17 community that was designated voluntarily
18 as a surrounding community without having
19 first signed an agreement with MGM and
20 without having it to go through the
21 Commission's process for seeking a
22 designation. And the reasons are obvious.
23 You will hear more about those reasons from
24 the rest of the mayor's team.

1 But, obviously, most of West
2 Springfield is closer to this proposed
3 facility than much of Springfield itself.
4 That includes some of its workers, house
5 and neighbors, the neighborhoods of Merrick
6 and Memorial, as well as a lot of the West
7 Springfield public infrastructure.

8 And, again, you'll be hearing from
9 members of the mayor's team, Jason DeGray
10 from GPI, who was the reviewer, the
11 peer-reviewer for the Pioneer Valley
12 Planning Commission pursuant to the
13 Commission's RPA, Regional Planning Agency
14 process, and as well as Jim Czach and Jim
15 Lyons, who are engineers and town
16 employees, Simon Brighenti, the town
17 attorney, and our counselor, Brian Griffin,
18 who's the chair of the town's casino
19 Mitigation Committee.

20 I just want to touch on a couple of
21 things very briefly, if I might, before the
22 other speakers address their comments to
23 the Commission.

24 The purpose of the mayor's team

1 wanting to talk to the Commission tonight
2 is not to try to negotiate a surrounding
3 community agreement with MGM. Those
4 conversations are ongoing. They have been
5 very amicable. We feel we have a good-
6 faith negotiating partner on the other side
7 of the table. We're not quite there yet,
8 and we are hopeful that we'll get there.

9 But our purpose in wanting to talk
10 to the Commission tonight is really more in
11 line with the notice of the Commission's
12 meeting, how can this project be made
13 better. And I think what you will hear
14 beginning with Mayor Sullivan's comments
15 and members of the other team is a common
16 threat.

17 A clear purpose of the statute, a
18 clear purpose of the Commission's
19 regulations and from what I viewed of the
20 Commission's evaluation of other proposals
21 is a desire to have very green proposals,
22 safe proposals, proposals that benefit the
23 region as a whole.

24 MassDOT, PVPC, various advocacy

1 groups have all given comments to the MEPA
2 process and to this Commission directly
3 that a lot more can be done to make this
4 project what it really could be. A
5 regional proposal that creates benefits in
6 terms of non-vehicular transportation,
7 green energy and that is to connect a very
8 close downtown West Springfield
9 neighborhoods just 1,800 feet away from the
10 proposal itself by bicycle connections, by
11 pedestrian connections.

12 They're grossly underserved and
13 inadequate facilities currently that are
14 going to be further taxed on pretty
15 substantial progress proposal. And from
16 the town's standpoint, something that the
17 Commission can do, whatever happens with
18 the surrounding community negotiations
19 between the town and MGM is to require as a
20 condition of approval that the developer
21 incorporates some of these concepts that
22 MassDOT or PVPC and some of these other
23 entities have suggested from a complete
24 street standpoint is the term to include

1 "non-vehicular improvements to length."

2 Their post residential
3 neighborhoods, supermarkets in West
4 Springfield, all of the amenities that will
5 be benefiting both patrons and employees of
6 this project. And, I think those types of
7 conditions will be reasonable.

8 Because if you look at the order of
9 magnitude in terms of the public
10 infrastructure, transportation improvements
11 being proposed as part of this project and
12 their DEIR is about 3.6 million dollars on
13 an 800 million dollar project as compared
14 to 30 to 50 million dollars for the eastern
15 region projects and transportation
16 infrastructure and so on.

17 So with those comments and seeing my
18 time dwindling, I appreciate the
19 Commission's willingness to hear from us,
20 and I think Jason DeGray of GPI will be
21 speaking next.

22 COMMISSIONER CAMERON: Thank you.

23 COMMISSIONER MCHUGH: Thank you.

24 COMMISSIONER ZUNIGA: Thank you.

1 COMMISSIONER STEBBINS: Thank you.

2 CHAIRMAN CROSBY: Thank you.

3 MR. DEGRAY: Good evening, Members
4 of the Commission. My name is Jason
5 DeGray. I am a project manager with
6 Greenman-Pedersen, Incorporated. We're a
7 multi-disciplinary civil engineering firm
8 based out of Wilmington, Mass. locally. I
9 am a licensed professional engineer in the
10 State of Massachusetts. I'm also a
11 professional traffic operations engineer.

12 As Jonathan spoke, he alluded to the
13 fact that originally GPI was engaged in
14 this process as part of the regional
15 peer-review process engaged through the
16 Pioneer Valley Planning Commission. I'm
17 not going to rehash necessarily the nature
18 of that review.

19 I will say that as part of that
20 review process, we concluded that the Town
21 of West Springfield is clearly the most
22 impacted surrounding community based on
23 vehicle traffic.

24 And if I am so bold, I will say that

1 that is not really in dispute from either
2 side of the negotiating table. That's
3 something that's clearly been agreed upon
4 that in terms of just straight vehicle
5 traffic, the Town of West Springfield is
6 the most impacted surrounding community.

7 One other facet that we did conclude
8 in our review was that the Town of West
9 Springfield is uniquely impacted as well.
10 And what we meant by that is that the
11 impacts are not just limited to the vehicle
12 users; that there will be impacts here to a
13 whole host of non-vehicular use.

14 This is a community that is within a
15 ten minute walk over the Memorial Bridge
16 from the Merrick section of West
17 Springfield that is. There is about 1,800
18 feet that separate the casino site from the
19 Merrick section as the crow flies. And
20 what is interesting to note is, there's
21 quite a bit of pedestrian activity
22 occurring today along the Memorial Bridge,
23 Memorial Avenue, Memorial rotary corridor.

24 In December, December of 2012 during

1 a two hour window, the proponents counted
2 46 pedestrians utilizing that corridor and
3 a three hour window in the summer of 2013
4 that's about 80. Those are notable numbers
5 in their own record. At least even more
6 particularly notable is the general lack of
7 infrastructure that's provided out there to
8 accommodate those users.

9 Given the descriptions of the
10 intersections within the traffic planning
11 study that was done for this, there is a
12 noting of lack of pedestrian and bicycle
13 amenities, insufficient ADA ramps,
14 insufficient METCH compliant signal
15 equipment.

16 The Route 5 rotary is particularly
17 dangerous. I've had the privilege of
18 crossing through that rotary a couple of
19 times in the last couple of weeks, and I
20 would say there was one aspect that will
21 encourage the Commission to take the time
22 to look at before they leave is to actually
23 contemplate crossing the Memorial Bridge
24 from the Merrick section of West

1 Springfield. It is a daunting proposal.

2 People are crossing today for a
3 multitude of reasons. They are leaving
4 West Springfield from the Merrick section
5 and walking to the City of Springfield for
6 jobs and other facets of their daily lives.
7 Something that's clearly going to be
8 exacerbated by the presence of the most
9 transformative development project in at
10 least 50 years in the Pioneer Valley.

11 This employment base is going to
12 encourage people to walk, bike from the
13 facility or to the facility. The other
14 aspect of this is this is not just
15 pedestrians walking into Springfield. It's
16 coming the other way. There is pedestrian
17 traffic today that crosses from Springfield
18 into West Springfield most notably to
19 utilize the Big Y and the Price Rite in the
20 Century City Plaza.

21 I don't think it's a unique problem.
22 I think it's somewhat substantiated that
23 the City of Springfield is experiencing
24 what's commonly referred to as being a food

1 desert. And the most notable grocers in
2 the area for the south end and the downtown
3 happen to be in the City of West
4 Springfield or the Town of West
5 Springfield, excuse me.

6 So, you know, the MGM proposal is
7 also going to bring another 52 market rate
8 units online. That's something they have a
9 stake in. So, you know, the unique nature
10 of West Springfield is just that's a very
11 human scale issue being so closely entwined
12 with the City of Springfield.

13 I want to note that that's not just
14 something that GPI is suggesting, as
15 Jonathan noted, that that has been raised
16 by PVPC, MassDOT, MEPA. There's a clause
17 in the MEPA certificate that states that --
18 comments from MassDOT and Mass. DEP
19 indicate that, "A focus of pedestrian
20 proven should include additional
21 intersections within walking distance to
22 the site. Further, the certificate notes
23 MassDOT calls for a more detailed
24 pedestrian plan and bicycle plan that

1 identifies existing infrastructure,
2 highlights proposed improvements and
3 clearly identifies how the project will
4 fill gaps and access and improve safety."

5 Transportation is no longer about
6 moving vehicles around from point A to
7 point B. It's a metric by which we can
8 start to talk about sustainability in
9 different terms. Public health is a part
10 of this. It is about connecting the urban
11 fabric between these two communities. And
12 if you would forgive me, 30 additional
13 seconds to wrap this up.

14 According to MassDOT, the process by
15 which traffic studies should be conducted
16 nowadays is not just about determining
17 vehicle capacity, but MassDOT expects
18 proponents to maximize project generated
19 travel by non-single occupancy vehicle
20 modes by maximizing transportation choice
21 providing robust connectivity for
22 non-single occupancy vehicle modes
23 proponing transportation to man management.

24 Frankly, we have to put the

1 infrastructure in place to encourage this
2 mode shift. This is about being green.
3 This is about connecting communities and --

4 CHAIRMAN CROSBY: Mr. DeGray, I'm
5 sorry, your time is -- you can send us --

6 MR. DEGRAY: Well, I thank you for
7 your time. I would like the Commissioner
8 to reflect on these -- there were some
9 comment letters --

10 CHAIRMAN CROSBY: Thank you, Mr.
11 DeGray.

12 Mr. Lyons, you've only got four
13 minutes.

14 MR. LYONS: I do?

15 CHAIRMAN CROSBY: We have a lot of
16 speakers so it's important to be fair to
17 them.

18 MR. LYONS: Okay. I'll be very
19 short.

20 I am Jim Lyons. I'm the West
21 Springfield town engineer. Even though I
22 work for the Town of West Springfield, I
23 was born and raised in Springfield in
24 Sixteen Acres.

1 You know, West Springfield is closer
2 to the proposed casino than most of the
3 neighborhoods in Springfield. And the
4 problem in getting back and forth between
5 Springfield and West Springfield is that
6 there is a problem with, say, pedestrian
7 and bicycle access. There is no
8 crosswalks, no ADA compliant ramps.

9 I have to tell you that last week I
10 walked, and a bunch of other engineers
11 walked from the Century Plaza on Memorial
12 Avenue, and we went to the Memorial Bridge
13 around the rotary. It was really dangerous
14 because there are no crosswalks, no signs,
15 no anything. And --

16 CHAIRMAN CROSBY: Mr. Lyons, excuse
17 me. This is important stuff, but it's
18 exactly what Mr. DeGray was saying. Do you
19 have something to add to that that will be
20 more information?

21 MR. LYONS: It is, yes.

22 What I will add to that is that West
23 Springfield currently has two studies going
24 on, two complete street studies, one on

1 Memorial Avenue and one where Route 20
2 comes into West Springfield comes in over
3 the north end bridge. And these studies
4 are intended to improve safety for
5 pedestrians, bicycles and other vehicles,
6 all modes of transportation are considered.
7 And that's what we are looking for.

8 We would be happy to put this
9 project on the transportation improvement
10 project and have it move along under the
11 regular way of doing it. Unfortunately,
12 that takes approximately ten years, and we
13 don't have that amount of time. We need to
14 have improvements done as soon as possible.

15 So, we'd appreciate that being done,
16 and that's all I have got to say.

17 COMMISSIONER MCHUGH: Thank you.

18 COMMISSIONER ZUNIGA: Thank you.

19 COMMISSIONER CAMERON: Thank you.

20 COMMISSIONER STEBBINS: Thank you.

21 CHAIRMAN CROSBY: Thank you very
22 much. I appreciate it.

23 MR. CZACH: Good afternoon. My name
24 is Jim Czach, senior project manager for

1 the Department of Public Works in West
2 Springfield. I'm a professional engineer
3 in the State of Massachusetts, also a
4 lifetime resident of the town. And thank
5 you, Commission, for allowing me the time
6 to address you this afternoon.

7 In the past 20 years, I've been
8 involved in various transportation
9 engineering and regional planning
10 activities. This development will be by
11 far the largest I have seen in my career.

12 The closest complexes similar to
13 this are over an hour drive on the
14 interstate highway system. This will be
15 truly unique to the Pioneer Valley.
16 Between a third and half of our population
17 will be within a 3-mile radius of the
18 casino.

19 We have a map over here where we
20 took away -- the only thing separating us
21 is a body of water. Where the MGM site
22 will be is directly in our backyard. We
23 will be in the bull's eye of this
24 development. By far, we will be the most

1 impacted community by traffic than any
2 other surrounding community that I'm
3 confident of.

4 We need to ensure that people
5 traveling through our community can do that
6 safely and efficiently. And we do need to
7 address all modes other than vehicular
8 traffic alone that they mentioned bicycles,
9 pedestrians, Mass. transit and
10 para-transit.

11 We need to look at this as
12 transportation, not just specifically
13 traffic engineering. It's a bigger
14 picture, and it's a drive that the state is
15 pushing with complete streets.

16 This facility won't close. This
17 will be open 24 hours a day, seven days a
18 week, 365 days in the year. We need to
19 look beyond just as Friday evening and a
20 Saturday peak hour. Events will occur
21 continuous through the year everyday.
22 Traffic will be coming through our
23 community everyday every hour of the year.

24 This is a big impact for us. It

1 will change the complexion of the
2 community, guaranteed. And as I mentioned,
3 we need to look at everything.

4 I have heard of the look-back
5 approach. I disagree with this. I think
6 traffic mitigation and a substantial
7 investment needs to be done up front. When
8 this unique facility opens, everybody is
9 going to flock to it. They're going to
10 want to see what it is.

11 That is where we start getting some
12 of this impact. A look-back should be done
13 to ensure significant investment in our
14 transportation infrastructure is
15 accommodating this development.

16 It will be difficult for us to go
17 back and try and fix things later. It will
18 be very challenging, and it will be a
19 burden for the community. So, I think we
20 need to hit this head-on and make it work
21 for both us, MGM and the region. I think
22 we all need to work together on that.

23 As the mayor alluded to, we are at a
24 unique point in New England. We're at the

1 crossroads. I91 and I-90 intersect into
2 West Springfield. When they get congested,
3 people seek alternate routes, parallel
4 routes. They'll be coming through West
5 Springfield. They'll be coming through our
6 downtown on Memorial Ave. corridor. It
7 happens now, so that will be happening.

8 There will be construction impacts.
9 This is a major development. There will be
10 impacts not only during construction but
11 also operationally, so we need to look at
12 that as well.

13 And as I mentioned, we are right on
14 the back door of that development. You
15 pull that river away it's right there. You
16 look to the right -- we really need to
17 focus on the left more than any other
18 community.

19 I'm hopeful the town can work with
20 MGM and the City of Springfield to address
21 the impacts for everyone, for the region,
22 not only the community.

23 This is almost a billion-dollar
24 development. Impacts here cannot be

1 compared to a CVS or a Dunkin Donuts.
2 Believe me, they can't. Doing minor
3 improvements now and doing a look-back for
4 major improvements later would not be fair
5 to the community or the region. That needs
6 to be looked at now.

7 And in closing, I think the
8 Commission should look at that seriously
9 for the community and the region. And
10 thank you for the opportunity to address
11 you this afternoon.

12 COMMISSIONER MCHUGH: Thank you.

13 COMMISSIONER ZUNIGA: Thank you.

14 COMMISSIONER STEBBINS: Thank you.

15 COMMISSIONER CAMERON: Thank you.

16 CHAIRMAN CROSBY: Thank you.

17 Mr. Griffin, from the town counsel.

18 Mr. Brighenti will be next.

19 MR. GRIFFIN: Thank you, Mr.

20 Chairman and the Members of the Committee.

21 I just stand before you and just
22 speak with you in reference to one of the
23 thoughts of the committee or one of the
24 major thoughts of the committee when we get

1 together is that of the host agreement that
2 was signed in Springfield. And Exhibit D,
3 I call your attention to Exhibit D of that
4 host agreement.

5 The host agreement says that MGM
6 would put forth 500,000 dollars for
7 surrounding communities all around the
8 region. And that anything above and beyond
9 that, half of it would be paid by the City
10 of Springfield. So one would suggest --
11 and, secondly, the City of Springfield
12 would also approve any agreement.

13 So, I think MGM, quite frankly, has
14 been impacted and prohibited in a way from
15 reaching an agreement with West Springfield
16 that is conducive to our concerns. So,
17 Exhibit D I would just call your attention
18 to.

19 It's a very important cause of what
20 we believe as a committee and concern as a
21 committee that MGM, who I know some of
22 their negotiators very well and respect
23 them and admire them, I have known them for
24 quite a while, respect their work, but I

1 think they've been infringed in prohibited
2 from reaching this agreement.

3 Secondly, as you know this, and I
4 will lend my thoughts to those who know it
5 a lot better than I do. But one parking
6 garage on a one-way street, this is totally
7 inadequate with this traffic plan.

8 We stand willing to work with MGM,
9 the City of Springfield and anybody else
10 who would like to sit down with the City of
11 West Springfield and roll up our sleeves
12 and just get a good traffic plan together
13 that will benefit the entire region as the
14 Chairman so well wants, and I am sure the
15 Commission wants.

16 So, I will just leave you with a
17 fact that West Springfield has stood ready
18 and continues to stand ready to meet with
19 MGM, meet with the representatives, meet
20 with the City of Springfield, meet with the
21 Pioneer Valley, anybody who wants to sit at
22 the table with us and have a meaningful
23 dialogue, we will certainly do that.

24 We appreciate your time and thank

1 you. And I'd also like to call your
2 attention and thank State Representative
3 Finn and State Senator Welch for partnering
4 in this effort in trying to get the Gaming
5 Commission here. We certainly appreciate
6 you here in West Springfield.

7 COMMISSIONER MCHUGH: Thank you.

8 COMMISSIONER ZUNIGA: Thank you.

9 COMMISSIONER STEBBINS: Thank you.

10 COMMISSIONER CAMERON: Thank you.

11 CHAIRMAN CROSBY: Thank you. We
12 will be hearing from Senator Welch and
13 Representative Finn.

14 Next up.

15 MR. BRIGHENTI: Thank you,
16 Commissioners. Again, I would like to pass
17 on my appreciation for your willingness to
18 come out here and have this forum for us,
19 which is going to be very helpful.

20 Again, I'm Attorney Simon Brighenti.
21 I'm the town attorney. I did want to kind
22 of recap the presentation, but also add
23 some additional thoughts here.

24 And, mainly, the way I look at it

1 is, as a lawyer, I realize that there's
2 benefits and needs for definitions and that
3 the gaming staff here is replete with them.
4 You know, when you look at a host in a
5 surrounding community, obviously it's not
6 technically. But for all intents and
7 purposes, West Springfield is more akin to
8 a host community than it is to a
9 surrounding community.

10 If you look again at the maps that
11 our engineer showed and generally just the
12 geography here, we're so close to this
13 development. Other speakers I'm sure will
14 address small business and public safety,
15 other concerns and I'm part of the
16 negotiation team.

17 And one of the reasons we are still
18 in the negotiation stage is because there
19 are so many expected impacts to the Town of
20 West Springfield here. There's a myriad of
21 issues that these were only a small part of
22 them. And when we addressed the same
23 issues with the applicant who was seeking a
24 spot here in West Springfield, the numbers

1 that were brought out there were, were a
2 greater magnitude. It was well into the
3 millions as opposed to, you know, the less
4 than the millions that are being discussed
5 here.

6 So, you know, the same issues are
7 here as were there then and that is why we
8 are looking at making sure that all the
9 potential mitigation, these potential
10 issues are mitigated.

11 West Springfield is a major gateway
12 to the resort through the bridges over the
13 highway over the -- toward the highway and
14 over the river, as was stated. We are
15 going to see this resort casino for most of
16 West Springfield, and much of Springfield
17 won't see it.

18 I mean, you can go out on the campus
19 of this school right here and look over and
20 you are going to be able to see it. I just
21 live up the street here. Everyday I drive
22 to the Town Hall, so I'm going to see it.
23 So it's going to have a visual impact.
24 It's going to have an economic impact.

1 It's going to have a social and cultural
2 impact.

3 Similar, if not even exceeding in
4 some cases, the impact it's going to be
5 seen in Springfield. So we are looking to
6 partner with MGM making it a truly regional
7 resort as is required or envisioned, I
8 guess, by the legislature to include both
9 short and long-term upgrades.

10 That complete street projects is
11 something that we're really feeling is a
12 good starting point with MGM, and there's a
13 number of other issues that we're dealing
14 with them now.

15 So, again, we're glad that you are
16 here and we hope that you listen to all the
17 concerns from both the officials and from
18 the folks that make their presentations
19 here from the community. I thank you
20 again.

21 CHAIRMAN CROSBY: Thank you, Mr.
22 Brighenti.

23 COMMISSIONER STEBBINS: Thank you.

24 COMMISSIONER ZUNIGA: Thank you.

1 COMMISSIONER MCHUGH: Thank you.

2 COMMISSIONER CAMERON: Thank you.

3 CHAIRMAN CROSBY: There's other
4 officials from the town, local officials
5 from the town, Angus Rushlow from the City
6 Council, George Kelly, Ron Campurciani, any
7 of you here? Then I guess no.

8 MR. RUSHLOW: I'm not even going to
9 look at my notes. Everybody is covering
10 this so well, but I am the District 1
11 councilor. My district is going to be the
12 most impacted in the city. It includes
13 Memorial Avenue. Just a few short points.

14 Sixty-four percent of my district
15 walks. You may not see too many of them in
16 the wintertime, but Memorial Avenue is
17 loaded during the summer. A lot of them
18 work over in that area, and they have to
19 walk. They can't afford cars, so the
20 bicycle traffic is heavy. A lot of them
21 can't read and write, your large refugee
22 population.

23 We are going to have to be looking
24 out for the public safety in these

1 instances to make sure those people are
2 taken care of, and it's going to have an
3 impact on the neighborhood. It's the
4 poorest neighborhood in the city. I don't
5 want to see the people driven out. They've
6 got homes here. I want to keep my district
7 the way it is, and I guess that's it. I'm
8 going to be looking for your help to make
9 sure we get that done.

10 CHAIRMAN CROSBY: Thank you.

11 COMMISSIONER CAMERON: Thank you.

12 COMMISSIONER STEBBINS: Thank you.

13 COMMISSIONER MCHUGH: Thank you.

14 COMMISSIONER ZUNIGA: Thank you.

15 CHAIRMAN CROSBY: Nice hat, too.

16 MR. RUSHLOW: It's a bonnet.

17 CHAIRMAN CROSBY: Sorry.

18 George Kelly and then, Chief, is
19 that you?

20 MR. CAMPURCIANI: Yes, it is.

21 MR. KELLY: Chairman Crosby, Members
22 of the Commission, thank you very much for
23 taking the time to hear our pleas here
24 today.

1 Both Angus and I have been on the
2 Mitigation Committee of the city council
3 and have had citizens on it as well. For
4 the whole time we were discussing casinos.
5 We were discussing a casino in Springfield,
6 and then we were discussing a casino here.

7 I, like Angus, at one time I grew up
8 in the Merrick section. I live in another
9 part of town now. I'm a former law
10 enforcement officer. I'm a former chairman
11 of the city council subcommittee, former on
12 traffic. And it's a very frustrating thing
13 to try and fix the real problems that we
14 have.

15 I am concerned about this community.
16 I have been here for most of my 74 years,
17 and I am concerned about the quality of
18 life of our citizens and how this is going
19 to impact that. I am sure some of it will
20 be positive, but I am very concerned that a
21 lot of it may be negative.

22 We've had four pedestrians killed in
23 the 147 corridor in the last year or so.
24 They could use better intersections, better

1 crossing lights. As Angus has said, it's a
2 walking neighborhood. We have a lot of --
3 as the bridges pour over from Springfield,
4 we have a lot of small businesses. Several
5 of them have been family owned for years.

6 I'm concerned on the impacts of this
7 development on those businesses, whether
8 they will be able to survive and feed their
9 families. I am concerned that we need to
10 address this in a very good way.

11 I am concerned, as Councilor Griffin
12 was, about the inadequate response figures
13 given by the casino proponents. And I want
14 to be able, as an elected official and as
15 somebody whose family has been here since
16 the 1870s, to do the right things for our
17 citizens. We really need your help.

18 Thank you very much.

19 COMMISSIONER MCHUGH: Thank you.

20 COMMISSIOINER ZUNIGA: Thank you.

21 COMMISSIONER STEBBINS: Thank you.

22 COMMISSIONER CAMERON: Thank you.

23 CHAIRMAN CROSBY: Thank you.

24 Chief Campurciani.

1 MR. CAMPURCIANI: Thank you.

2 Hello, I'm Ron Campurciani, the
3 chief of police here. Again, I would just
4 like to welcome everybody. Specifically, I
5 had the pleasure of meeting Commissioner
6 Cameron last year at the Major City Chiefs
7 retreat down in the Cape when I was trying
8 to catch up to speed pretty quickly as I
9 could on gaming.

10 So, Commissioner, it's good to see
11 you again.

12 COMMISSIONER CAMERON: You as well,
13 Chief.

14 MR. CAMPURCIANI: You know, one of
15 the things that people in West Springfield
16 know this because when we were heavily
17 involved in negotiations with Hard Rock and
18 not having any background at all in any
19 type of gaming, I traveled down to Florida
20 to the Hard Rock in Florida just to see
21 their operation and to see how it impacted
22 communities down there.

23 So, I met with obviously the people
24 from Hard Rock, and then the chiefs in

1 Hollywood and the seminal tribe police down
2 there and Hard Rock is on seminal tribal
3 ground. I also met with some outline
4 chiefs in Coconut Creek that had a casino
5 also and my mission was two-fold.

6 One to find out what we need to put
7 in place if Hard Rock was to get the
8 license and the casino was to go here, or
9 the second one was what would be our
10 problems and concerns if MGM was to get the
11 license and it was to go 800 yards over our
12 bridge.

13 So now we're into the second phase
14 and, quite frankly, what makes West
15 Springfield unique in this particular thing
16 that we're talking about, the casino, is
17 the fact that on Route 5 we have 16 motels
18 and hotels right now. There's another two
19 hotels and motels that are on Memorial
20 Drive.

21 It is going to be impacted
22 significantly an increase in people staying
23 at these hotels. Whether -- we can sit
24 here and argue whether or not prostitution

1 is going to increase. I think it will to a
2 certain extent or drugs. Regardless,
3 that's a discussion for another time. But
4 it is certainly going to increase our calls
5 for service in these just by the sheer
6 volume of people that are going to be
7 staying there and staying at these offshoot
8 small motels.

9 Two weeks ago I traveled down to
10 Foxwoods at an FBI leader convention and I
11 hadn't been in that area of Foxwoods in
12 probably ten years. And the first thing I
13 noticed when I drove in there was all of
14 these hotels that have now popped up
15 outside of Foxwoods, which to me solidified
16 the argument that I am making here today.

17 So, like I said, if we can discuss
18 what type of crimes are going to come in
19 and, as I've stated, that's a discussion
20 for another time. But we're clearly,
21 clearly going to be impacted. And the
22 police department and the fire department
23 are clearly going to be impacted by an
24 increase in calls for service.

1 And as I said, when Hard Rock was
2 here or coming in, we had an opportunity to
3 get on the ground floor with them and in
4 common vernacular that to the people in
5 Florida that I spoke to and the chiefs down
6 there was a common theme.

7 The problems never got as big as
8 they imagined, because they had the
9 opportunity to put things in place before
10 the casino came in. So, when the casino
11 opened the doors and hit the ground, they
12 were ready also. And that's a discussion
13 that we haven't really had with MGM at this
14 point, and I don't want to see it come in.

15 I don't want to be going back to the
16 town in two years after and saying how much
17 more police I need because all these things
18 have happened. In some ways, I feel like
19 I'm sitting on a perch waiting for --
20 watching two trains collide.

21 So as my time weighs down, just to
22 weigh in one other thing on traffic, I
23 agree with that. And just one other thing
24 that I think has been talked about enough,

1 but just one other note on that in that if
2 you -- at least as a month ago, if you go
3 onto MapQuest or Yahoo maps or Verizon
4 navigator, whatever you do, when you Google
5 the address down there for the MGM project,
6 if you're coming off of the Mass Pike, it
7 sends you up Exit 4 of the Pike and down
8 Route 5. That is where it sends you.

9 So, when you have people that are
10 going to be staying, number one, at these
11 hotels, number two, if they are coming in
12 from the Pike either from the east or the
13 west and they Google it, which is common
14 for people to do now and put it in, that's
15 the directions that they get.

16 So, again, thank you for your time,
17 Commissioners. I appreciate it.

18 COMMISSIONER MCHUGH: Thank you.

19 COMMISSIONER ZUNIGA: Thank you.

20 COMMISSIONER STEBBINS: Thank you.

21 COMMISSIONER CAMERON: Thank you,
22 Chief.

23 CHAIRMAN CROSBY: Thank you, Chief.

24 Senator Welch and Representative

1 Finn who is representing West Springfield.

2 Senator Welch first.

3 SENATOR WELCH: Thank you,
4 Commissioner, Chairman Crosby, and Members
5 of the Commission. It's great to have you
6 here in West Springfield. Thank you for
7 making West Springfield obviously a stop on
8 your tour. It's important to have you here
9 in West Springfield as we are certainly
10 going to be an impacted community.

11 I did want to touch on a couple of
12 topics that I think have already been
13 mentioned. But the biggest thing I wanted
14 to speak to you about I think as a member
15 of the legislature and I think I can add a
16 little bit of a unique perspective on was,
17 you know, the way I approached, you know,
18 going about supporting or not supporting.

19 And I did both in my tenure in the
20 legislature. Because when I was in the
21 house, I voted against expanding gaming.
22 And when I was in the senate, I voted for
23 it and people might be asking why.

24 Well, the reason I voted against it

1 was because there was no guarantee that
2 western Massachusetts would have gotten a
3 casino license when the first proposal came
4 up. And then when it came up a second
5 time, there was more of a guarantee and
6 there was an automatic guarantee because of
7 the regional -- the way the regions were
8 drawn out, that western Massachusetts was
9 guaranteed one of the three casino
10 licenses.

11 And that's how I wanted to approach
12 my conversation here with you was the
13 reason I voted for it. And one of the 200
14 members of the legislature, having a vote
15 on it was approaching it from an aspect
16 that I believe expanded gaming's time had
17 come. I believe that Massachusetts' time
18 had come to get into expanded gaming.

19 The arguments for and against,
20 there's certainly good arguments for
21 expanded gaming. There's certainly
22 arguments against, and we can have those
23 discussions at a later date. I feel as
24 though we've had those discussions already,

1 but the regional impact was the reason I
2 voted for it.

3 I felt as though wherever in
4 Massachusetts or wherever in western
5 Massachusetts the expanded gaming facility
6 would go, it would have a major impact on
7 our entire region, both positive and
8 potentially negative. But the positives I
9 felt would outweigh the negative,
10 especially in the aspect of economic
11 development and jobs.

12 And I just want to make sure that my
13 voice is being heard as one of the members
14 of the legislature that did vote for
15 expanding gaming, that I ask that you look
16 at this from a regional standpoint that the
17 entire region, all of western
18 Massachusetts, whether it's West
19 Springfield, Longmeadow or Agawam or as far
20 out as you can possibly think that we make
21 sure that the most bang for the buck is
22 heard here in western Massachusetts from
23 this entire project.

24 And I'm in a unique situation. I

1 represent both West Springfield,
2 Springfield and Chicopee are all three of
3 those communities. I want to see all three
4 of those communities flourish. I want to
5 see all of western Massachusetts flourish.
6 I want to see MGM flourish. I want to see
7 all of our citizens flourish. But I want
8 to make sure that our entire region gets
9 the most bang for our buck for this entire
10 project.

11 And I'd just ask that you look at it
12 in that perspective, from a regional
13 component that our region is being heard
14 loud and clear and that our region here in
15 western Massachusetts is getting everything
16 that we possibly can out of this investment
17 that's coming here to Springfield
18 potentially, and I hope that it possibly
19 does.

20 So, thank you for your time. I
21 leave a minute and a half for my colleague
22 from the House, Representative Mike Finn.
23 Thank you very much.

24 COMMISSIONER MCHUGH: Thank you.

1 COMMISSIOINER ZUNIGA: Thank you.

2 COMMISSIONER STEBBINS: Thank you.

3 COMMISSIONER CAMERON: Thank you.

4 CHAIRMAN CROSBY: Thank you.

5 REPRESENTATIVE FINN: Thank you.

6 And I think I will be able to get my
7 remarks in that minute and a half.

8 I just wanted to say first and
9 foremost, thank you very much for this
10 Commission for coming out here.

11 When I read your remarks, Chairman
12 Crosby, in the local paper and we did a
13 little bit of research, we realized that
14 this mitigation hearing wasn't mandated by
15 the legislation but it was something that
16 you felt strongly enough about.

17 And it's very important, you know,
18 for the people that are here to understand
19 that our concerns are being heard by the
20 group that is going to be making that
21 decision and I think that it's -- you know,
22 not that anyone here that has voted for
23 either Jim or I or anybody in the past
24 would believe that we weren't looking out

1 for their best interest, but when we got
2 together and worked collaboratively to get
3 you here, I'm very grateful that you
4 accepted our invitation.

5 I think you've heard loud and clear
6 from the municipal officials that have been
7 here tonight about what some of our major
8 concerns on the things that we're hoping
9 that you'll consider as you move forward
10 with this decision. And if I could leave
11 you with one thought and one thought only
12 before leaving.

13 In respect to West Springfield's
14 position and the casino in Springfield is
15 please don't let the scars of Springfield's
16 economic face-lift be seen in West
17 Springfield. Please do all you can to make
18 sure that our interests are protected as
19 much as those from the city, the whole city
20 itself. Thank you.

21 CHAIRMAN CROSBY: Thank you.

22 COMMISSIONER CAMERON: Thank you.

23 COMMISSIONER MCHUGH: Thank you.

24 COMMISSIONER ZUNIGA: Thank you.

1 COMMISSIONER STEBBINS: Thank you.

2 CHAIRMAN CROSBY: Senator Gale
3 Candaras represents Longmeadow and Hampden
4 and also is chair of the Joint Committee on
5 Economic Development and Emerging
6 Technologies, which is the commission --
7 the committee that does our business and
8 she has been a friend and supporter of.

9 Welcome.

10 SENATOR CANDARAS: Well, thank you,
11 Mr. Commissioner, and all of you. It's
12 always a pleasure to see you in western
13 Mass. Hello again. So I'll be very brief,
14 because we have opportunities to talk other
15 times.

16 I represent nine cities and towns,
17 including the City of Springfield.
18 Springfield is very excited about this
19 opportunity, so are a great many people in
20 the region. It means jobs. It means jobs
21 for the construction industries, for the
22 trades. The trades need the work. They
23 want the work.

24 They'd like to be in the ground

1 right now. They certainly want to be in
2 the ground as quickly as possible. I am
3 only guessing because I've not had the
4 conversation but I suspect MGM would like
5 to be in the ground as quickly as possible
6 at some future time should they be the
7 ultimate licensee, receive the license.
8 People need the jobs, the permanent jobs
9 that are going to come with this type of
10 hospitality industry and this type of
11 casino.

12 My concern relates basically to the
13 traffic concerns in a very small and very
14 tight area. I think it's long past time
15 when every part of the government should be
16 talking to each other about what is going
17 to happen in this very tight little area.
18 I am not seeing that happen.

19 I have expressed my concern about
20 the type of siloing that typically occurs.
21 We simply can't afford to have that kind of
22 siloing in this project. It's too
23 important to the people of the area.
24 Again, the jobs are too important.

1 Last week I attended a hearing by
2 the Department of Transportation on the
3 proposed viaduct project. You know, the
4 short-term goal is repair; the long-term
5 goal maybe perhaps to put it underground.
6 I don't know how long or how that would
7 happen. But the individuals who were
8 presenting were engineers, very capable,
9 fine gentlemen, but they talked about the
10 viaduct in the abstract.

11 There was no mention of the fact
12 that this viaduct work is going to go on
13 less than half a city block away from this
14 major endeavor, from this casino
15 construction, which is going to be huge,
16 huge construction effort. They talked
17 about diverting traffic from the viaduct,
18 which is literally on the corner. They
19 talked about diverting the traffic to East
20 Columbus and West Columbus Avenue. You
21 know the area. You know how narrow those
22 streets are.

23 My concern is that MGM is going to
24 start constructing and will, in fact,

1 construct a beautiful casino and the
2 Commonwealth of Massachusetts will probably
3 direct all traffic away from it. I have
4 served 18 years in the government so I
5 don't think I need to -- I have been 18
6 years on Beacon Hill. I've pretty much
7 seen it all.

8 The other piece to this is that
9 there are two courthouses literally across
10 the street, which is a very narrow street.
11 State Street is very narrow, one lane east,
12 one lane west. They're literally putting
13 the courthouse -- excuse me, they are
14 literally putting the casino across the
15 street from the courthouse. Hundreds of
16 people work in that building. Thousands of
17 people have to access it every single week
18 to do business there for public safety, for
19 justice.

20 It is difficult for me to
21 understand, although I'm not an engineer
22 and I'm certainly not Tim Brennan who is
23 sitting right over there, I am not a
24 traffic engineer. I don't understand how

1 we are going to have viaduct construction,
2 a casino going up and we are going to be
3 able to access that court all on that same
4 little street at the same time.

5 It can happen but what has to happen
6 is decamp. The Department of
7 Transportation, the trial courts of the
8 Commonwealth, the engineers at MGM,
9 everybody should be talking about how this
10 is going to be accomplished. I do not
11 believe that is happening and it is
12 starting to be a matter of grave concern
13 for me and my colleague, Senator Welch and
14 Representative Finn.

15 And, I mean, we have filed an
16 amendment to the sub-budget that requires
17 those agencies and everybody involved to
18 get together and start talking about how
19 this is going to happen. All of the
20 parking behind the courthouse is already
21 gone. The casino is going to take the rest
22 of the parking across the street. We have
23 a stranded Hall of Justice and a stranded
24 Juvenile and Housing Court stranded with no

1 parking. There's already no juror parking.
2 And the worst thing that can possibly
3 happen is for people not to communicate,
4 and you can see what the likely results of
5 that would be.

6 Thank you so much for your time.
7 Thank you.

8 CHAIRMAN CROSBY: Thank you.

9 Has Representative Ashe come? I
10 know former Mayor Neffinger is not speaking
11 but I believe he's here and want to welcome
12 him, so thanks for coming. And the
13 president of the Springfield City Council,
14 Mike Fentin, I believe is here. We would
15 like to try to give the public officials a
16 chance to speak first.

17 Mr. Fenton, are you here? And then
18 we'll go to Michael Goldberg, Ted Steger,
19 Sue LaFlamme, Jerome Noonan can start to
20 come up.

21 Welcome.

22 MR. FENTON: Thank you, Chairman
23 Crosby. Thank you, Commissioners. Thank
24 you to the Town of West Springfield for

1 hosting us this evening. We appreciate
2 your hospitality.

3 My name is Attorney Michael Fenton.
4 I am the president of the Springfield City
5 Council. I represent a distinguished body
6 of 13 individuals elected by a city of
7 160,000 residents.

8 We stand behind the MGM proposal.
9 We did so in the form of a referendum that
10 took place last summer and the council that
11 I represent passed the community host
12 agreement after deliberation and adequate
13 consideration unanimously. We did so
14 because this region desperately needs the
15 economic development and jobs that would
16 come with this project.

17 MGM Springfield's proposal that has
18 the opportunity to, as prior speakers have
19 indicated, transform our region. It could
20 make us the entertainment capital for this
21 area and for all of New England. And with
22 that represents tremendous opportunity.

23 There are risks associated with this
24 proposal no doubt, but we have weighed them

1 on a legislative level and through the
2 voting of the city residents and we have
3 come to the conclusion, at least on our
4 local review level, that the benefits
5 outweigh the costs and the potential
6 rewards outweigh the risks.

7 The only thing that I would point
8 this Commission to consider further if I
9 had to choose one item, it would be what my
10 good friend, Senator Candaras, just spoke
11 about in terms of the transportation issues
12 that are now being discussed by Secretary
13 Davey and the Massachusetts Department of
14 Transportation.

15 The Interstate 91 viaduct is
16 absolutely critical to this project, and
17 the future of that viaduct is critical to
18 the future of MGM Springfield. I think
19 that the two projects are indestructibly
20 related and must be considered
21 collectively. So, I would encourage this
22 body to look closely at MassDOT's
23 proposals. I think that you will find that
24 there are some interesting dynamics going

1 on.

2 As the senator pointed out, there's
3 a proposal to spend upwards of a quarter of
4 a billion dollars on renovating the
5 existing structure as it is. But there's
6 also talk in taxpayer money being spent on
7 pursuing the idea of redesigning the
8 highway, potentially underground. These
9 are two diametrically opposed in my
10 determination ideas.

11 And if they are going to be
12 reconciled, it has to be done in
13 conjunction with this major development
14 project that's happening right at its front
15 door.

16 So, I want to reiterate that the
17 City of Springfield stands fastly behind
18 this proposal. We look forward to working
19 with MGM and the Commission as the zoning
20 process moves forward and your deliberation
21 process moves forward.

22 We want to also indicate that we
23 want to be fair partners to our neighbors
24 and the surrounding communities do deserve

1 remediation in certain context. And we
2 look forward to continuing to work with
3 those reasonable partners to have logical
4 and reasonable discussions about those
5 remediation attempts.

6 So, thank you for your time. I
7 think I'll yield the rest of my time,
8 because there's a great deal of the public
9 here who I am sure would like to be heard,
10 and they deserve this opportunity as well.

11 So, thank you and I appreciate your
12 consideration moving forward.

13 COMMISSIONER MCHUGH: Thank you.

14 COMMISSIONER ZUNIGA: Thank you.

15 COMMISSIONER STEBBINS: Thank you.

16 COMMISSIONER CAMERON: Thank you.

17 CHAIRMAN CROSBY: Thank you,
18 Attorney Fentin.

19 All right. Now we'll go to the rest
20 of our sign-up street. If you are here
21 representing a business, please say the
22 name of the business. If you are here as a
23 concerned citizen, just give us the name of
24 the town where you live and I'll simply be

1 going as the names came into us.

2 Michael Goldberg, Ted Steger, Sue
3 LaFlamme, Jerry Noonan, Michael Eagan,
4 Carol Kerr please come forward.

5 Sir.

6 MR. GOLDBERG: Good afternoon. My
7 name is Michael Goldberg. Thank you so
8 much for giving me an opportunity to speak.
9 I'm not the official people that spoke
10 before me, but I'll do the best. I
11 practiced this with my wife, and it should
12 only take about two minutes.

13 My name is Michael Goldberg, and I
14 have lived in western Massachusetts my
15 whole life. My parents grew up in western
16 Massachusetts, raised a family in western
17 Massachusetts and I am part owner in
18 several businesses in Massachusetts.

19 You'll notice that I keep saying
20 western Massachusetts a lot and not
21 Massachusetts. The reason is very simple.
22 Because my whole life growing up in western
23 Massachusetts, I have been told that
24 western Mass. really doesn't play a big

1 role in a real Massachusetts.

2 Now we have this project on our
3 doorstep. One of the largest entertainment
4 companies in the world actually looking and
5 talking to the people of western
6 Massachusetts. I have been following
7 gaming and entertainment in western Mass.
8 pretty much my whole life since 1996 when a
9 small amusement park called Riverside Park
10 in Agawam wanted to get into the action.
11 And I have always felt that this would be a
12 good fit for western Mass. but done
13 properly.

14 Now we have this project -- I'm
15 sorry -- would be very beneficial to the
16 region. The last 18 months I been watching
17 this process unfold. I'm not saying a lot,
18 but I have been listening and watching and
19 going to the meetings and talking to people
20 against and for this project.

21 If you were to think about western
22 Mass. and its entertainment venues as a
23 human body, the Berkshires would certainly
24 be the ever changing hair color of the

1 head. The people would be the blood and
2 the cells and all the towns would be the
3 organs and the brain. But without
4 question, the heart of entertainment in
5 western Massachusetts is and always has
6 been the Springfield Civic Center and the
7 MassMutual Center and the downtown region
8 of the City of Springfield.

9 MGM's proposal is like no other
10 entertainment and intercity gaming proposal
11 that I've ever seen. And, believe me, I've
12 looked at a few of them. Not like you have
13 but I have.

14 With the incorporation of the deep
15 history of the city buildings, the open
16 floor plan and over 18 points of entry and
17 especially the use of all the city's
18 entertainment venues, mainly the MassMutual
19 Center, could only rejuvenate the city, as
20 well as western Massachusetts.

21 With the entertainment power that
22 MGM is behind the body and heart of western
23 Mass., I can only hope and believe that
24 MGM's proposal is a great step forward for

1 the City of Springfield, as well as western
2 Massachusetts.

3 As a commission, you have heard and
4 seen what MGM is going to do with jobs,
5 cross promotional ideas, so I don't want to
6 cover that so I will leave with just a
7 couple of things.

8 35 years ago my father was very
9 proud to talk to me about a small Cat in a
10 Hat and what he did for the City of
11 Springfield, as well as western
12 Massachusetts.

13 Wouldn't it be great if the other
14 Massachusetts that I live in would love to
15 come out to western Mass. to see some great
16 entertainment and actually see a lot of the
17 sites and towns of western Mass. I can
18 someday tell my kids about a great lion
19 that helped rejuvenate our city. As a --
20 I'm sorry.

21 I would like to leave you with this
22 last thought. A great doctor, whose just
23 birthday was yesterday, named Dr. Seuss who
24 loved this region with all his heart once

1 said, "You have brains in your head; you
2 have feet in your shoes; you can steer
3 yourself in any direction you choose." And
4 I would say the direction from western
5 Massachusetts and the City of Springfield
6 is moving forward with this great project.

7 Thank you for your time.

8 CHAIRMAN CROSBY: Thank you.

9 Ted Steger, Sue LaFlamme.

10 MR. STEGER: Good afternoon. My
11 name is Ted Steger from Longmeadow, Mass.

12 And, Chairman Crosby, I respectfully
13 reject the statement that you made that
14 this is not the time to discuss whether
15 casinos are right for Western Mass. You've
16 repeatedly talked, and we have been paying
17 lots of attention, about the need for
18 competition. And right now the competition
19 is between MGM and no casino.

20 The legislation says up to three
21 casinos are allowed by the legislation. We
22 would strongly urge you to do two, one, or
23 preferably zero. I've presented -- put
24 together a packet that I'll be handing out

1 to you that goes through all the reasons
2 why no casino in Springfield is a far
3 better deal for the state, the region and
4 the City of Springfield than having a
5 casino here.

6 So, however, I was intending to be
7 up here explaining this packet but there's
8 a couple of reasons why I'm not going to.
9 I was going to tell you about how
10 Springfield had the lowest passing
11 referendum margin in the state despite a
12 carefully engineered and manipulated
13 election.

14 I was going to tell you about how
15 far more people in western Mass. have voted
16 against casinos than for them. I was going
17 to tell you how legalizing casinos has
18 backfired in several states such as
19 Delaware, Ohio, Illinois in recent years.

20 I was going to recommend some
21 comments and some regulations to reduce the
22 negative impacts of casinos on our region.
23 But two things have happened that made me
24 clear that there's no point in doing so

1 today. One is the quote that's on the
2 front of this packet that makes what is
3 obvious -- makes obvious what we've known
4 for a while, which is that these were never
5 meant to be destination resort casinos.
6 These are convenience casinos meant to prey
7 upon locals and the less fortunate among
8 us.

9 In the words of Mr. Mathis of MGM in
10 a recent interview, "This casino is really
11 for western Mass." That's been our fear
12 all along, that this is going to be a
13 convenience casino that sucks the economic
14 lifeblood out of our economy. The only way
15 casinos makes sense is if money comes in
16 from outside the region, and Mr. Mathis
17 just admitted this is for western Mass.

18 You know, in Detroit 80 percent of
19 gamblers come from Detroit and the
20 surrounding counties. Springfield, it
21 would be even more so, especially with the
22 high concentration casinos in the region.
23 What we'll have is a situation where the
24 casinos bleed the local economy dry sending

1 money to Vegas and Dubai instead of keeping
2 it in Springfield and the surrounding
3 communities where it can boost the local
4 economy.

5 The second reason that trying to
6 reason with this Commission is moot is that
7 recent regulations about a controlled
8 spending reported in the press. As Upton
9 Sinclair wrote, "It's difficult to get a
10 man to understand something when his salary
11 depends upon his not understanding it."

12 Until recently I was naive enough to
13 think that you were working for the
14 citizens of Massachusetts. However, it's
15 now clear who signs your paychecks. It's
16 not we the people. It's the millionaires
17 and billionaires in Vegas and Dubai who
18 stand to get richer at the expense of the
19 least fortune among us.

20 You seem quite happy to rub elbows
21 with them while you hang the residents of
22 greater Springfield out to dry. Our group
23 repeatedly asked for a seat at the table.
24 But because I can't write you a check for

1 400,000 dollars, because I definitely can't
2 write you a check for 85 million, and my
3 wife would be upset with me if I took you
4 out for 111-dollar meal, we didn't get a
5 seat at the table. But I guess that's
6 good, because we can't afford what you're
7 ordering.

8 Our hope is that Massachusetts can
9 get back to the hard work required to have
10 productive, sustainable economic growth and
11 infiltration was an ultimately
12 self-destruction lure of the casinos.

13 Fortunately, in November, the
14 citizens of the Commonwealth will be able
15 to reclaim our seat at the table by
16 repealing this mid-static casino
17 legislation and send the casinos back to
18 Vegas and hope that they stay in Vegas.

19 Thank you very much for your time.

20 COMMISSIONER MCHUGH: Thank you.

21 COMMISSIONER ZUNIGA: Thank you.

22 COMMISSIONER STEBBINS: Thank you.

23 COMMISSIONER CAMERON: Thank you.

24 CHAIRMAN CROSBY: Thank you.

1 Mr. Steger, Sue LaFlamme, Jerry
2 Noonan, Michael Eagan, Carol Kerr, Danny
3 Eaton come on up.

4 MS. LAFLAMME: Hi. My name's Sue
5 LaFlamme, and I'm a resident of West
6 Springfield.

7 We do own a small business, Ye Olde
8 Butcher Shop, but what I'm most proud of is
9 I'm a mom of three young adults. And this
10 sounds a little weird, but I grew up in
11 Chicopee. My husband grew up in
12 Springfield where his parents still live.

13 When we got married 32 years ago, we
14 decided to move to West Springfield because
15 we were close enough to have our parents
16 come and visit when they were invited but
17 they were far enough away where they
18 wouldn't pop over. Thirty-two years later
19 we stayed in West Springfield.

20 I love the community. A lot of
21 people are saying that there's a lot of
22 change coming with the casino in
23 Springfield, and there's going to be and
24 there's been a lot of good points that were

1 brought up.

2 My concern is the young adults. I
3 have a 22 year-old son that I'm very
4 concerned about because there's nothing to
5 do locally, you know. He's not going to go
6 ice skating. He goes to the movies but
7 even that's expensive except on Wednesday,
8 five-dollar night.

9 But mostly what I'm concerned about
10 is he doesn't go to a bar, because he
11 doesn't just want to sit around. So my
12 concern is that he is going to go to a
13 casino, as well as a lot of other young
14 adults. Because what happens at a casino?
15 You can gamble, but you can also drink for
16 free. And then he's going to get in a car.

17 I hope I gave him enough sense not
18 to but enough of these young adults are
19 still going to get in a car and they're
20 going to drive home. And I do think that
21 there has to be resources for these young
22 adults and the parents because that is my
23 biggest concern, and it has always been my
24 biggest concern.

1 So far I have been very lucky with
2 my three kids, and I don't want to see that
3 change because a casino is coming right
4 across the bridge. And I thank you very
5 much for listening to me.

6 CHAIRMAN CROSBY: Thank you very
7 much.

8 Jerome Noonan.

9 MR. NOONAN: Jerome Noonan,
10 Longmeadow.

11 I'd ask the Commission here to make
12 a decision not just about MGM or not MGM
13 but whether you are in office to protect
14 the citizens or are you here to enable
15 casinos without regard to their downsize.

16 And I'd ask you not to assume that
17 the majority in Springfield is behind the
18 casino based on the speechless referendum,
19 which was held last July -- that was
20 railroading at best -- where the mayor who
21 saw no reason to provide balanced
22 information to the elector and who gave the
23 casino the advantage of a special election
24 in the dog days of mid-summer.

1 As to greater Springfield, we've
2 seen several towns vote down the concept of
3 the casino outright by large majorities.
4 And I can assure you that sediment is
5 predominant in the region.

6 I spent a lot of time interviewing
7 people for a film about this topic and,
8 sadly, many of the influential people who
9 fought leaders as a word and told me that
10 they personally oppose the casino but that
11 they could not appear on camera because of
12 fears of reprisal or loss of income,
13 potential income.

14 Oddly, only the clergies spoke out
15 to me freely because, A, they don't have a
16 horse in the race; and, B, they're the ones
17 that are going to have to deal with the
18 heartache that their congregations are
19 going to have to suffer from this thing.

20 In a bigger sense, MGM is
21 threatening to take 500 million-dollars out
22 of our regional economy every year. That's
23 not an economic engine. This is no
24 destination casino. All of those dollars

1 are local dollars, and we cannot afford to
2 ship them off to Las Vegas.

3 This is a pretty small micro economy
4 out here in western Mass. That's a lot of
5 money here. We need to save those dollars
6 for sustainable businesses that are true
7 economic engines. Businesses which
8 actually buy local products, which provide
9 jobs that have a future, which use local
10 banks in which we invest in the community.

11 This isn't about a casino being
12 better than nothing. It isn't about some
13 urban experiment. Just look at Detroit and
14 Atlantic City. And it is not the right
15 choice for Springfield. Western Mass.
16 residents didn't ask for this to be brought
17 upon us. Only Stavros and Berg and the
18 legislators thought this was a good idea.
19 Thanks a lot.

20 And please don't subject this area
21 to the ills of an urban casino, which will
22 soon become a sad and ugly legacy for us to
23 leave to our children. Our forbearers left
24 us with a beautiful Symphony Hall, City

1 Hall, The Kama Meal, the Memorial Bridge,
2 even that you mentioned, Union Station, the
3 Quadrangle, cathedrals, temples and more
4 and our big idea is a casino, really? We
5 can do better than that.

6 CHAIRMAN CROSBY: Thank you.

7 Jerry Noonan, Michael Eagan, Carol
8 Kerr.

9 MR. EAGAN: Michael Eagan from
10 Palmer.

11 I want to talk a little bit about
12 host agreement, and what I found is there
13 is a similarity with every single casino
14 that has come into the state. They've
15 negotiated into these PILOT agreements, and
16 looking at MGM's PILOT agreement -- PILOT,
17 first of all, is an acronym that stands for
18 payment in lieu of taxes. Corporations
19 love loopholes not to pay taxes. We all
20 know that.

21 The summary for MGM shows that the
22 fixed payment or PILOT payment that they'll
23 pay is 17,600,000 dollars. That's the
24 PILOT payment. That's the payment they

1 negotiated now, but they won't even open up
2 for a couple of years from now. So it's
3 really a frozen payment until they open.
4 And guess what the kicker is, once they
5 open, that payment is frozen for ten years
6 to 2024. The 17,600,000 dollars is frozen
7 until 2024.

8 Anybody in this room have an idea
9 how much they should pay under regular
10 business taxes? They are a business entity
11 after all. Well, I figured it out. Took
12 the rate. It's pretty simple to do. Tax
13 rate is 39.04 per thousand. For an 800
14 million-dollar project, they should be
15 paying over 31 million dollars, and that
16 would go up between now and the next two
17 years when they open for business and would
18 go up every year after. And if the value
19 of their property or project increased, the
20 taxes would also go up.

21 There is one heck of a lot of money
22 being left on the table. This is the
23 case -- was the case in Palmer, was the
24 case in Revere and Wynn Casino in Everett,

1 everybody and West Springfield, everybody
2 had this PILOT agreement. It's a nasty
3 little secret.

4 And there have been articles written
5 about it, okay, deals that lead to lost
6 property taxes, money magazine, New York
7 City has lost 100 million-dollars in
8 property taxes because of these deals,
9 okay. This is not new. Just Google it
10 when you go home, payment in lieu of taxes.

11 There are legitimate reasons for
12 PILOT, okay, colleges, universities that
13 can't or nonprofits that can't afford to
14 pay their full share of taxes, they do
15 enter into PILOT agreements. Or if you
16 have a business that can go anywhere in any
17 community, a community may legitimately
18 offer them a PILOT to attract them to their
19 community. There are many legitimate
20 reasons. Casinos is not an example of
21 that.

22 You're probably sitting there
23 thinking to yourself, well, what the heck
24 can we do about it now? It's already a

1 done deal. This is where you come in, and
2 I'm no expert on this but, apparently,
3 these PILOT agreements that every casino
4 has done under Section 121A they have to
5 get approved.

6 Well, my God, I hope they don't get
7 approved because their poultry payments
8 don't compare to what they should be paying
9 under the business tax rate. They have to
10 be approved from the Mass. Department of
11 Housing and Community Development.

12 And I don't know what influence you
13 people have, but you folks need to look at
14 these PILOT agreements and see how the
15 communities are getting shortchanged. I
16 don't care what side of the issue you're
17 on, for or against casinos. You're going
18 to want to make sure that you're getting
19 the most amount of money that's possible,
20 and they are not under this agreement.

21 And, in fact, it is a tax subsidy is
22 what it is. The taxpayers in Springfield
23 are subsidizing the casinos just like the
24 State of Massachusetts is right now is

1 subsidizing Suffolks Downs. How about
2 that? Okay.

3 Also, in this whole conversation of
4 the money that everyone is going to get, no
5 one ever talks about the loss of state aid
6 to the community. In Palmer where I was
7 very much involved in the anti-casino
8 movement there, 20 percent of the money
9 that Palmer was going to get was going to
10 be lost through state aid. And that was
11 out of Chapter 70, Education Funds. How
12 much money is going to be lost in
13 Springfield to local state aid?

14 See you at another date for other
15 topics.

16 CHAIRMAN CROSBY: Thank you very
17 much, Mr. Eagan. I appreciate it.

18 Thank you all who have been so
19 sensitive to our time frame.

20 Carol Kerr, also Gennaro Daniele,
21 John Powers, Christopher Benoit and Judith
22 Matt please come forward. Have a seat.

23 MS. KERR: Good afternoon. Can you
24 hear me?

1 CHAIRMAN CROSBY: Yes.

2 MS. KERR: My name is Carol Kerr,
3 and I live in the lovely historic section
4 of Forest Park Heights. For me, this is
5 not about gambling. I personally am
6 comfortable with it as entertainment.

7 While I recognize that there will
8 always be a certain percentage of the
9 population who have a problem, whether it's
10 gambling, drugs or alcohol, I don't believe
11 it is our right nor our duty to attempt to
12 prohibit on any grounds. I don't see the
13 good in denying millions a source of
14 responsible entertainment for the few who
15 abuse.

16 The same argument was made for
17 alcohol and yet there are bars and liquor
18 stores too numerous to count in our region
19 alone. If you are concerned, then help
20 defuse the problem. Don't attempt to ban
21 the object of their abuse all together. If
22 people want to gamble, they will whether
23 it's here or someplace else.

24 I go to Connecticut to have some

1 fun. I'd much rather keep my money local.
2 Gambling is an intrinsic part of this plan,
3 yes, but it's less than half of the revenue
4 overall. For me, it's about so much more.

5 I would like to talk about who
6 benefits from this plan and the
7 responsibilities. Of course MGM. They
8 wouldn't do it if they didn't think it
9 would be profitable. There's nothing wrong
10 with that.

11 But I'd also like to talk about who
12 benefits because it represents the crucial
13 difference between casino resorts
14 everywhere, whether you're talking about
15 Detroit, Dubai, Atlantic City and the MGM
16 Springfield one and how it differs.

17 Who else benefits? Symphony Hall,
18 City Stage, MassMutual Center, Majestic
19 Theater, all our local vendors whether they
20 have an agreement with MGM or not.
21 Theodore's, Stern Square Concert, Hall of
22 Fame, restaurants, museums, hotels and all
23 the other support businesses that will
24 benefit from an enterprise this size moving

1 to the area both wholesale and retail.

2 Who else? Thousands of workers in
3 our own area, more jobs being creating a
4 larger middle-class and an expanding tax
5 base, a better standard of living, to drive
6 better schools, less crime and improve our
7 infrastructure for cars, pedestrians and
8 bicycles.

9 It's about quality of life, about
10 being able to walk around downtown and
11 along the riverfront in the evening, go
12 bowling, hear music, watch a movie, a show,
13 enjoy a meal, people watch, shop, stroll,
14 go to a bar and, yes, gamble. The
15 pessimists see only the negatives. The
16 optimists see the positives. What I see is
17 opportunity for jobs for people, for
18 business and for the cities and towns.

19 Since it is an entirely new business
20 model for a resort casino to be placed in a
21 downtown area, there is no direct data to
22 confirm what effects it will have. But any
23 enterprise that puts over 2,000 jobs and
24 millions of dollars into the local

1 communities as well as drawing thousands of
2 people who, by definition, are here to
3 spend money is a net win.

4 I struggle with people who say that
5 local institutions will be hurt when the
6 casino comes in. In influx of hundreds of
7 thousands of nonresidents each year could
8 only mean more people to visit, not less.
9 Plus, there will be more residents that
10 will have disposable income to spend right
11 in their local area.

12 Throughout history every town, city
13 and business, large and small, succeeds or
14 fails on how well they adapt to and take
15 advantage of changing environments. This
16 should be viewed as an opportunity, not a
17 threat.

18 There is no hard data to support the
19 idea that a resort embedded in a downtown
20 community will increase crime. It is just
21 as likely that crime will decrease.
22 History has proven time and again that
23 increased affluence in the growth of a
24 middle-class decreases crime in any area.

1 Perhaps the two factors will cancel each
2 other out.

3 MGM has gone to great lengths to
4 mitigate potential issues of concern,
5 provide up-front money to communities that
6 may be effected, as well as continuing
7 commitment to review for any unperceived
8 issues both within Springfield and its
9 surrounding communities. No one knows for
10 sure what will happen.

11 However, the benefits to this plan
12 expedientially outweigh any negatives.
13 With tremendous growth and opportunity
14 comes tremendous responsibility. It is our
15 job, not MGM's, to manage this growth well,
16 police are communities, improve our schools
17 and maintain our infrastructure.

18 The reality is that we are a city.
19 Cities are constantly changing and growing.
20 Will MGM solve all our problems? Of course
21 not. It is not their job to do so.

22 However, the influx of jobs and a
23 revitalization of our downtown will give us
24 opportunities as a city that we have never

1 experienced before. MGM is giving us
2 tools. What we build with it is entirely
3 up to us.

4 Thank you.

5 COMMISSIONER MCHUGH: Thank you.

6 COMMISSIONER ZUNIGA: Thank you.

7 COMMISSIONER STEBBINS: Thank you.

8 COMMISSIONER CAMERON: Thank you.

9 CHAIRMAN CROSBY: Thank you.

10 Gennaro Daniele, John Powers,
11 Christopher Benoit.

12 Yes, sir.

13 MR. POWERS: My name is John Powers.
14 I'm from West Springfield. Mr. Chairman,
15 commissioner members --

16 CHAIRMAN CROSBY: Just a minute.

17 MR. POWERS: Mr. Chairman,
18 commissioner members, welcome to my
19 hometown.

20 I have come here today to have you
21 consider a question. That is to delay the
22 awarding of licenses until November. With
23 all due respect, Mr. Chairman, the battle
24 for casinos is not over. I feel, along

1 with many others, that we have been sold
2 down the river by our statehouse and by our
3 state government. Even our own
4 representatives from my hometown who are
5 here today voted for this bill.

6 If you truly investigate the reality
7 of casinos, we have no value in them and
8 you would be against them, especially in
9 your hometown. Unlike some of our town
10 councilors who seem to be more concerned
11 with the problems of the casino outside our
12 town than the one that was going to be
13 inside our town, which they support, I have
14 my reasons grasp me to delay this and I'm
15 going to throw some facts out.

16 Casinos have never offered an
17 economic boost anywhere they have been
18 produced. It hasn't happened. It's quite
19 the contrary. They have caused more worse
20 conditions, the increasing crime. For
21 example, the crime rate in Ledyard,
22 Connecticut rose 300 percent from 1992 to
23 1998.

24 In that same time frame, the rest of

1 the region's rate dropped ten percent and
2 the State of Connecticut dropped 27
3 percent. What happened? Foxwoods in 1992.
4 Or on the question of job creation, Nevada
5 is a 15 percent unemployment; Atlantic City
6 is 13.8 percent. Every city in the top ten
7 list of unemployment rates in this country
8 have casinos, all of them. Yuma, Arizona
9 is at 28 percent. This information I hope
10 you have, you should have. I hope this was
11 investigated as thoroughly as possible and
12 these are facts and not hype.

13 I think with the casino question
14 still in play with the repeal of question
15 deal, I feel you should withhold the
16 awarding of the licenses until that's
17 settled. It needs to be voted on by the
18 people of Massachusetts. We were never
19 consulted on this. We were not allowed to
20 voice our opinion until after it was
21 passed. We were told casinos were coming.

22 The casino companies are already
23 lining up their money and their lawyers to
24 fight the question. I remind you of that

1 Warren Zevon song "Lawyers, Guns and Money"
2 because our side needs some, too.

3 The people in the State of
4 Massachusetts have the right to vote on
5 this law. It seems to this voter that the
6 statehouse has forgotten who they work for.
7 We need to remind them we the people are
8 the boss, not them. They work for us. And
9 when an employee in my business makes a
10 mistake as bad as this law, they get fired.
11 There are better ways to build revenue.

12 In conclusion, in my opinion I am
13 asking you please to hold back these
14 licenses until the question is decided by
15 the people of Massachusetts. Casinos are
16 not inevitable. Thank you.

17 CHAIRMAN CROSBY: Thank you.

18 Christopher Benoit, Judith Matt,
19 Frank Rossi, Alan Cabot, Thom Fox, please
20 come up and get ready.

21 MR. BENOIT: Good evening. My name
22 is Christopher Benoit, and I am here in
23 support of the MGM project. Before I begin
24 that though, I'd like to first to say thank

1 you to the Commissioner members for taking
2 the time to hear us on this proposal. MGM
3 and Mayor Sullivan for the effort they are
4 putting in to making this a reality, as
5 well as the residents for voicing their
6 opinions.

7 The reason why I'm here tonight is
8 that MGM Springfield is an economic
9 stimulus package not only for the City of
10 Springfield itself, but it's also an
11 economic package for the region as a whole.

12 The reason why I'm saying this is
13 that while MGM will be paying money through
14 agreed contracts to the cities of
15 Springfield and the surrounding
16 communities, the indirect money that they
17 are going to be drawn in from this is
18 extremely higher than those contracts.

19 The vendors, the retailers, the
20 hotels, venues for entertainment are going
21 to see large quantities of people coming
22 in. Those people have money in their
23 pockets to spend. They are going to want
24 to spend it on restaurants. They are going

1 to want to spend it on hotel stays. Not to
2 mention local vendors, because they are
3 going to have items to offer that do not
4 come with an MGM casino.

5 This proposal needs to be passed,
6 and the license needs to be awarded to the
7 MGM Springfield project. There are going
8 to be people complaining crime, poverty,
9 unemployment. They are looking at the
10 speculated facts. These facts should not
11 be rendered in this aspect only because of
12 the fact that while they are looking at
13 negatives, they are looking at small scale
14 negatives.

15 The large scale picture of what this
16 project is going to bring to Springfield,
17 the surrounding communities and the region
18 on a whole is expedientially higher than
19 any aspect of what could be proposed on
20 paper. There are going to be others who
21 are going to say no. It's going to do the
22 exact opposite. It can't. It won't.

23 While all the money that they are
24 going to say is going to leave the area is

1 not going to leave in the way that they
2 think that it will. This is a plan that
3 will do nothing but have a win-win
4 situation. One win, the local people, the
5 local venders. The other win, the region
6 on a whole. Not only besides direct vender
7 sales, there is also going to be tax money
8 that's going to be coming in. You'll have
9 people that stay at the resorts.

10 Those resorts not only have their
11 fees, but they also have resort taxes.
12 That's tax money for the state.
13 Restaurants have sales taxes that they have
14 to pay on meals and a meals tax. More
15 money to the state.

16 This is a project that needs to get
17 the license for this area. It's been too
18 long where this city and this region has
19 been in a stale motion of growth. This is
20 the economic need that has to come forward.

21 In conclusion, I am saying in my
22 opinion that this is a positive project
23 that needs to have the full support of the
24 people and this license needs to come to

1 the MGM Springfield project. Thank you.

2 CHAIRMAN CROSBY: Thank you.

3 Judith Matt.

4 MS. MATT: Good afternoon. My name
5 is Judy Matt and I reside at 36 Mattoon
6 Street in downtown Springfield and I work
7 in downtown Springfield as the president of
8 the Spirit of Springfield.

9 My little company produces large
10 scale events, a large breakfast that feeds
11 12,000 people, fireworks on Star Spangle
12 Springfield, a large parade and what we're
13 best known is for Bright Nights at Forest
14 Park, which has entertained about three and
15 a half million people in the last 19 years.

16 I state these because these events
17 are all held in Springfield, but I think
18 they have made memories for many people
19 throughout the entire region.

20 I come here this afternoon to voice
21 my unqualified support for MGM Springfield
22 and their entertainment resort proposal for
23 the south end of Springfield. Just as the
24 Spirit of Springfield has had a positive

1 impact on the region, so will MGM.

2 When I first moved to downtown
3 Springfield from Wilbraham some 30 years
4 ago, I was considered an urban pioneer for
5 investing in a vacant and vandalized home
6 in the city. A lot of hard work, money,
7 sweat and tears went into my home and my
8 little business.

9 My dreams of a better Springfield
10 have yet to come to fruition. Despite the
11 efforts of so many, we struggle. Yes, like
12 so many who have fled the cities, I can
13 afford to move but I don't choose to live
14 anywhere else but Springfield.

15 I'm dedicated to Springfield, and
16 I'm proud to be one of the first to endorse
17 this incredible gift that MGM wants to give
18 to Springfield, its residents and its
19 region.

20 In closing, I believe this MGM
21 project will be a profound catalyst for a
22 regional renaissance that will respect the
23 history, traditions and pride that are at
24 the heart of the City of Springfield and

1 the region. Thank you.

2 CHAIRMAN CROSBY: Thank you.

3 Frank Rossi, Alan Cabot, Rossi, Thom
4 Fox, Betty Agin, Betty and Leroy Crenshaw
5 will be coming up. Did I miss somebody?
6 Okay. Go ahead, sorry.

7 MR. ROSSI: Hi, my name's Frank
8 Rossi. I'm the president of Teamster 404
9 with our headquarters based in Springfield.
10 Additionally, I'm a resident of the City of
11 West Springfield.

12 Mr. Commissioner and Members of the
13 Commission, good evening and thank you for
14 the work you have done concerning casino
15 gambling in the State of Massachusetts.
16 The work you have done in the past and
17 continue to do is something to be proud of
18 because it is working and it continues to
19 ensure a fair and equitable process for all
20 involved, so thank you.

21 I am here today to brief this
22 commission on this labors union positive
23 relationship with MGM. It is rare, if not,
24 nonexistent, in fact, for a large

1 corporation to come to town and one of the
2 first things that they do is reach out to
3 the labor leaders and ask what we expected
4 of them if they were so lucky to be granted
5 a license and a contract with the State of
6 Massachusetts to develop and operate a
7 casino.

8 In my many years in the field of
9 representing workers and their families, it
10 has never happened. That is to have the
11 opportunity to sit down and explain our
12 expectations for those who shall work not
13 to only build the facility, but those who
14 will work day and night once the facility
15 is up and running to make it a success for
16 the company, the customers, themselves and
17 our communities. We outlined some specific
18 areas we wanted to see for the workers at
19 the facility.

20 One, as many local residents and
21 surrounding local community workers used as
22 possible, not only to build the facility
23 but also to work at the facility once it
24 opens. That has been agreed to.

1 Two, a neutrality agreement for the
2 inside workers to form a union if they
3 choose and ensure a process free of
4 employer interference, which they have
5 agreed to.

6 Three, a process that will get a
7 contract for those who chose to form a
8 union within a specified time limit with
9 binding arbitration if needed to resolve it
10 in a one year limit, which has been agreed
11 to.

12 What these three bullet points will
13 accomplish for our sons and daughters, our
14 neighbors and sons or daughters or, quite
15 frankly, our adult neighbors or someone
16 close to you who is looking for work and in
17 this still high unemployment rate we live
18 in is a best opportunity to get into a job
19 and in MGM.

20 And if they choose to form a union
21 and with the cooperation of MGM through
22 their commitment to the workers complete a
23 contract for themselves and their families
24 just as MGM seeks a contract to build and

1 operate a casino in Massachusetts.

2 The facts are clear that workers
3 under a Collective Bargaining Agreement
4 will do much better than those workers who
5 are not. And MGM gets that, has committed
6 to that and that adds up to corporate
7 responsibility.

8 Our intentions will be to listen to
9 the workers and what they need and
10 negotiate a contract for them that will
11 ensure these core aspects; one, a living
12 wage; two, real health care; three, real
13 retirement benefits; four, a dispute
14 resolution process; five, job security;
15 six, safety committees; seven, the
16 importance of customer service.

17 We want people to come back to
18 Springfield and be happy to see the workers
19 that labor there day in and day out. These
20 are just to name a few, but those core
21 principles are what we will believe will
22 make these jobs lifelong jobs if they
23 choose to and reduce the turnover rate and
24 keep our local citizens employed at the

1 casino and that benefits all the
2 communities.

3 MGM will bring jobs, more business
4 and service, urban revival, entertainment,
5 and the new innovative outward facing
6 design incorporates the casino to the city
7 which should encourage patronage of the
8 downtown area, which is a win-win for our
9 city.

10 I can say confidently that the City
11 of Springfield has the right partner in MGM
12 and MGM has the right partner in the City
13 of Springfield and the workers will have
14 the right employer in MGM.

15 Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

16 CHAIRMAN CROSBY: Thank you very
17 much.

18 Gennaro Daniele. Did I skip through
19 somebody's name? There was a Jerry Noonan.

20 MR. EATON: Danny Eaton.

21 CHAIRMAN CROSBY: Danny Eaton, I'm
22 sorry.

23 MR. WETROWSKI: I was one of the
24 first to sign up, Steve Wetrowski.

1 CHAIRMAN CROSBY: I don't see your
2 name here yet, but we will get to you.
3 I'm sorry, and you are?
4 MR. FOX: Thom Fox.
5 MS. LATNEY: And Ronda Latney.
6 CHAIRMAN CROSBY: Okay. I haven't
7 gotten to you yet.
8 Sir, you are?
9 SPEAKER: My name's Carl Foreman.
10 CHAIRMAN CROSBY: And this gentleman
11 here?
12 MR. EATON: Danny Eaton.
13 CHAIRMAN CROSBY: I'm sorry, please
14 come up. Please come up, my mistake.
15 SPEAKER: You called my name before,
16 but that's okay.
17 CHAIRMAN CROSBY: I'm sorry, but you
18 spoke, right?
19 COMMISSIONER MCHUGH: We actually
20 jumped over him.
21 CHAIRMAN CROSBY: Who did I jump
22 over? Mr. Eaton. I apologize. I'm sorry.
23 MR. EATON: Good afternoon. I'm
24 Danny Eaton, the producer and director for

1 Majestic Theater here in West Springfield.

2 On January 9th, we were made aware
3 by Mayor Ed Sullivan of a clause in the
4 gaming law named Impacted Live
5 Entertainment Venue or ILEV. ILEV is
6 defined as quote, "A nonprofit or a
7 municipally owned performance venue
8 designed in whole or in part for the
9 presentation of live concerts, comedy or
10 theatrical performance which the Commission
11 determines, experiences or is likely to
12 experience a negative impact from the
13 development of the operation of a gaming
14 establishment."

15 We were also informed on that day
16 that the deadline that we had in which to
17 final a formal petition with the Gaming
18 Commission requesting we be designated as
19 an Impacted Live Entertainment Venue was
20 January 13th, four days away.

21 So we promptly conducted an audience
22 survey over the next three performance
23 nights to try and get a sense if we would
24 indeed be impacted by a casino in

1 Springfield and, more specifically, MGM's
2 already in place agreement with City Stage
3 and Symphony Hall, our chief competitors
4 for the fine art theater growing audience
5 here in the Pioneer Valley.

6 While our survey was pretty
7 informal, the clear audience indication was
8 that we would indeed be impacted. And
9 without a crystal ball, however, there was
10 no way to tell the extent of this impact
11 and the casino itself was at least a couple
12 of years away from opening.

13 So we dutifully filed a formal
14 petition with the Gaming Commission to be
15 designated and impacted by entertainment
16 venue. MGM responded in opposition to our
17 request stating that since they,
18 themselves, would not have a ticketed
19 venue, there would be no competition.

20 And, further, that they would cross
21 market the Majestic through their website
22 social media and other marketing channels
23 and that would benefit rather than
24 negatively impact the Majestic.

1 On January 28th, Tom Cadis, the
2 treasurer, and I traveled to Boston to
3 formally present our case before this
4 Commission. MGM, of course, was also there
5 and presented their opposition.

6 At the close of the meeting,
7 Chairman Crosby, you suggested that even
8 though we had each state down our
9 respective positions, there was no reason
10 for us not to meet and negotiate. That
11 initiated a flurry of e-mails and
12 correspondence back and forth and we
13 finally suggested a face-to-face meeting at
14 the Majestic.

15 That happened on February 12th with
16 a deadline of February 18th looming when
17 the Commission would be forced to decide.
18 We met at the Majestic with MGM vice
19 president Kelley Tucky. After a tour of
20 the theater, we sat down at one of the
21 tables in our cafe with no lawyers present
22 and over a cup of coffee began to talk.

23 What we discovered was that there
24 were indeed ways in which MGM and the

1 Majestic could not only work together but
2 provide real value to one another. MGM
3 president Mike Mathis was consulted. And
4 by the end of our meeting that day, we had
5 a working agreement.

6 What I want the public and, in
7 particular, our subscribers and patrons to
8 understand is that we haven't asked for a
9 handout. Our agreement is very much a
10 cooperative agreement, and MGM's support of
11 the Majestic is in harmony with all the
12 folks who have supported us over the years.
13 Our mission of being a professional venue
14 for Pioneer Valley performers and theater
15 technicians will only be enhanced by MGM's
16 support.

17 In conclusion, I would like to add
18 that I was born in Springfield. I went to
19 school and grew up here and I remember all
20 of the things that have fallen by the
21 wayside. MGM's plans, along with their
22 track record of accomplishment worldwide,
23 will bring a long awaited rejuvenation to
24 the Pioneer Valley and to our city and

1 homes.

2 Thank you very much.

3 CHAIRMAN CROSBY: Thank you. It's a
4 very gratifying story, Mr. Eaton.

5 Did I read your name? I'm sorry.

6 MR. CABOT: Yes, you did.

7 CHAIRMAN CROSBY: Please forgive me.
8 What is it?

9 MR. CABOT: I'm Alan Cabot. I'm a
10 resident of West Springfield. I live and
11 work here. I have been educated at New
12 England colleges and graduate and
13 undergraduate degrees in business and I
14 have worked closely with area businessmen
15 and businesswomen for many, many, many
16 years.

17 Personally, I became involved in the
18 anti-casino effort here in West Springfield
19 and, further, as coordinating western
20 Massachusetts repeal the deal signature
21 gathering thus far. I have seen
22 individuals in my life that I know whose
23 lives have been ruined through the
24 addiction of casino gambling. I don't

1 believe personally that there is any
2 ethical way to spread gaming in
3 Massachusetts.

4 I have been listening to what people
5 have had to say. Like I said, my
6 background is in business. I served as a
7 professor briefly. I would love to have an
8 hour to speak with you about the economics
9 behind the gambling issue, but I'd like to
10 boil it down like I would if I was sitting
11 in front of a classroom.

12 I call this the Chicken Little
13 phenomenon. We have this strange feeling
14 that out of the sky 460 million-dollars a
15 year are going to drop right onto the City
16 of Springfield and to MGM. That Chicken
17 Little phenomenon is, as you know from our
18 Chicken Little story, anything but the
19 truth. The money is going to come out of
20 the pockets of the people in the
21 surrounding area. For every dollar that
22 MGM collects, a dollar will be spent by
23 somebody within.

24 What MGM even admits now we've

1 gotten all the details of their marketing
2 plans somewhere around a 30-mile plus or
3 minus radius. 50 percent from the couple
4 of western Massachusetts counties, maybe
5 20 percent east of Springfield, 30 percent
6 from Connecticut but within the general
7 area. You can't spend your money twice.

8 If I take a 100 dollars and I go out
9 to dinner at the local restaurant, they
10 take six percent in the meals tax and they
11 have 94 dollars to hire people, to buy
12 goods and services. If I spend 100 dollars
13 at MGM, they are going to only have 75
14 dollars because they are going to send 25
15 dollars to the state for the state tax rate
16 on gaming. 94 dollars that businesses are
17 using now to charge the economic engine of
18 western Massachusetts versus 75 dollars,
19 it's a loss. Not only are jobs not created
20 through a net result but they are lost by
21 about the ratio between 94 and 75.

22 For every four jobs that MGM
23 creates, five are going to be lost from the
24 surrounding area. You don't see them,

1 because they are not concentrated like MGM.
2 That restaurant that we won't be spending
3 that 100 dollars at, maybe they have to lay
4 off that one part-time individual. You
5 don't feel it. You can't quantify it very
6 quickly.

7 Based on what MGM has told us about
8 their revenues, the area, the number of
9 people, I figure between five and
10 7 million-dollars will come out of the
11 pockets of adult gamblers from West
12 Springfield itself. That translates into a
13 certain number amount of money that won't
14 be spent where West Springfield residents
15 normally would have spent that money and
16 that translates into lost jobs.

17 The economics here say that the
18 Chicken Little phenomenon is a big
19 falsehood. It's not falling out of the
20 sky. Bright Nights will be hurt because
21 people will have less spendable income, not
22 because MGM puts a sign up in their casino
23 that says go see Bright Nights. I'm not a
24 gambler but I've been to Foxwoods and

1 Mohegan and so have many, many people in
2 the room here.

3 Can any one of them tell me that
4 they have driven off a highway and visited
5 a local restaurant in Ledyard? Of course
6 not. And that's what's going to happen,
7 I'm sorry, Danny, but to the Majestic
8 Theater and to the restaurants in the area.
9 When people have less money to spend, they
10 can't spend it and you can't spend it
11 twice.

12 Please remember Chicken Little. As
13 Ted said earlier, you have an option. You
14 don't have to put a casino here. Is it
15 suitable? No. The economy of western
16 Massachusetts is fragile. MGM here would
17 be a much larger negative economic impact
18 than a casino based in eastern
19 Massachusetts.

20 Please consider this carefully. I
21 believe the surrounding communities within
22 a ten mile radius have voted by over two or
23 three thousand votes against versus for
24 this casino. Thank you for your time.

1 CHAIRMAN CROSBY: Thank you, Mr.
2 Cabot.

3 Thom Fox, Betty Agin, Betty and
4 Leroy Crenshaw, Minister Glenn Turpine, any
5 of you here or please come down or Gennaro
6 Daniele.

7 Yes, sir.

8 MR. FOX: Hi, I'm Thom Fox. I am a
9 small business owner. I chair boards in
10 the community and I serve on other
11 community boards, the planning committees
12 and I also host a radio show on economic
13 development.

14 And what I really want to speak to
15 people about today was the story of MGM at
16 least what I have seen it through my eyes.

17 In my experience what has been going
18 on in the city, there has been a lot of
19 challenges. So when Springfield, I'm
20 sorry, when MGM started coming to town,
21 they had open meetings. I went to the
22 meetings, and I didn't know what to expect,
23 but I didn't really expect to see what I
24 did see at many meetings. I saw people

1 from Springfield talking about I remember
2 when, I remember when I could go downtown
3 Springfield. I remember when I could bring
4 my family down here. Just have a good day,
5 have a good night. I could spend my
6 weekend down here. And they were sad that
7 they couldn't do that anymore.

8 MGM is coming into town, and they
9 are giving them an opportunity to look at
10 their city in a different light again. I
11 think all of us would be delusional to say
12 that MGM is going to solve all our
13 problems. It's not, nowhere near that. I
14 think we are equally delusional to say that
15 it's going to bring down this lotus storm
16 on top of this negative economic
17 development.

18 I mean, if you look at it just on
19 the numbers and facts alone, construction
20 jobs, it's going to be over 2,000
21 construction jobs MGM Springfield brings in
22 here. For every one job that's created in
23 construction, there's three subsequent jobs
24 created in the community. So now we have

1 in that area right there we're looking at
2 close to 8,000 jobs just on getting the
3 casino open and going, the entertainment
4 complex up and going.

5 Then we have the other aspect that
6 there would be 3,500 full-time employee
7 jobs out there as well. These aren't just
8 jobs of locally just running tables and
9 things like that. There's management jobs.
10 There's education jobs. There is also jobs
11 for entertainment.

12 And as we look at MGM as a whole
13 too, it's really not a casino. If we look
14 at the aspect of it, there's 67 percent of
15 the revenues that are derived by MGM are
16 going to be from entertainment. We're
17 going to have the ability to use the Civic
18 Center again, get more people downtown and
19 really enjoy it.

20 What I think I enjoy about the
21 complex coming to Springfield above all
22 else but even for western Massachusetts is
23 now is a very good time to be an
24 entrepreneur in western Massachusetts. We

1 have a very vibrant ecosystem that's
2 growing and MGM coming in is going to make
3 capital investments into the city and
4 surrounding areas as well.

5 This is an opportunity for us. Not
6 just to say what to give me and what can I
7 get out of this deal. We've heard a lot
8 tonight about traffic issues and things
9 like that. But if we look back at the
10 issues that West Springfield speaks of,
11 they've had the problem at the rotary there
12 for years, you know.

13 I've ridden my bike over there tons
14 and tons of time. If there's an issue with
15 it, then fix it now. There's no reason to
16 say that MGM has to come into a whole grand
17 redesign of their town simply because
18 there's an issue facing them now.

19 So what I would encourage all of us
20 to do is kind of go back to a lesson I
21 would look after my grandparents when I was
22 growing up with them. When a new neighbor
23 came to town, we'd go over and we'd bring
24 them a cake and we'd say, "Welcome to

1 neighborhood." We didn't ask them to give
2 us a cake before they came here.

3 Everyone right now is lining up to
4 MGM and saying, "What are you going to give
5 me? What are you going to give me?" I've
6 talked to them on a philosophical level on
7 other things as well. But what I talked to
8 them about different kinds of
9 philanthropies that they want to get
10 involved in, not once did they say, "Well,
11 I want a big sign of MGM."

12 They said any time that I make an
13 investment, it has to make an impact. If
14 we invest in children, we want to make sure
15 we are bringing up graduation rates.
16 Springfield has a 56 percent graduation
17 rate right now for high school students.
18 That in and of itself the people have one
19 school in Springfield the graduating class
20 for loss of kids. That's
21 62.5 million-dollar drag in the local
22 economy for one class out of one high
23 school in Springfield.

24 We have larger fish to fry than

1 worry about what's a casino going to do to
2 us. Basically, we have to look at what's
3 the opportunity in front of us. If they're
4 going to make capital investments, how do
5 we use them to make our future better. If
6 they want to invest in philanthropy in the
7 community, great.

8 We don't have big corporate
9 citizenship around here. We have a -- I'm
10 sorry. We have MassMutual, which has been
11 a great corporate citizen but we don't have
12 other organizations like that. When we
13 have an organization like MGM coming in,
14 not only just looking out for themselves,
15 obviously they're going to make money. But
16 how would they be a better person to the
17 community or a better entity in the
18 community? I mean, I think that is where
19 our conversation really needs to fall on.

20 So, I thank you for your time today.

21 CHAIRMAN CROSBY: Thank you very
22 much.

23 Betty Agin from UCVED, Betty and
24 Leroy Crenshaw, Mr. Glenn Turpin.

1 SPEAKER: They're not here.

2 CHAIRMAN CROSBY: Not here?

3 SPEAKER: No.

4 CHAIRMAN CROSBY: Rhonda Latney,
5 Diane Crowell.

6 Rhonda.

7 MS. LATNEY: Thank you. Good
8 afternoon, Mass. Gaming Commission. Thank
9 you. My name is Rhonda Latney.

10 I have always been an advocate
11 against a casino. I have been working with
12 the Universal Voices Eliminating
13 Disparities and Betty Agin and Mr. Glenn
14 Turpin, Just us for Justice.

15 Mr. Stebbins attended the forum that
16 we had back in September. I would like to
17 say we were one of the only organizations,
18 African-American organization that spoke
19 out against casinos. As a matter of fact,
20 we were the only few organizations that
21 voted and that voted against and voiced a
22 concern about the casinos in Springfield.

23 Back in September, we sent a letter
24 to the Ethics Committee because our city

1 solicitor, Mr. Palucka, had sent a letter
2 talking about the advocacy of what the
3 limitations people are supposed to have in
4 voicing their support for a casino. A
5 question arrised about Mayor Sullivan who
6 purposely voted for the residents of the
7 City of Springfield to vote yes for a
8 casino.

9 Also, we had city commissioner --
10 city council member Bud Williams who was
11 transporting residents to vote for a casino
12 but yet none of our public officials ever
13 supported or presented the pros and the
14 cons of this casino to the City of
15 Springfield.

16 We are supposed to have what we call
17 the Western Mass. Health Impact Assessment
18 that was completed. That was to be
19 informing our city. They did not complete
20 that health impact assessment not until
21 January. Those leaders who was supposed to
22 put that information out to the residents
23 of the City of Springfield held onto that
24 information and still has not given that

1 information to the City of Springfield.

2 Also, if you compare the Detroit,
3 Michigan host community agreement, their
4 host community agreement is similar to the
5 City of Springfield. It was to be used to
6 rejuvenate the downtown urban area. Twelve
7 years later Detroit has filed bankruptcy.
8 The City of Springfield is in the same
9 condition of Detroit, Michigan probably
10 before the casinos came here and one of
11 those casinos in Detroit is MGM.

12 Also, there was a concern with the
13 traffic impact study. In 2009, Palmer had
14 their traffic impact studies completed and
15 all impacts regarding how it would effect
16 the City of Springfield. The City of
17 Springfield had no impact studies completed
18 to include the traffic impact study but
19 allowed MGM to do the traffic impact study
20 within our city but did not look at all the
21 local residents and how it will affect us.

22 I just went to a meeting last week
23 with the Department of Transportation who
24 talked about the highways not being

1 suitable for the traffic because of the
2 poor conditions. But yet we are going to
3 increase the traffic on roadways that we
4 already know that are in bad conditions and
5 cannot support the traffic already, but yet
6 that information has not been given to the
7 City of Springfield.

8 No one has clearly looked at how
9 it's going to affect State Street and Union
10 Street, which is the main street in the
11 City of Springfield that has three high
12 schools on it and how the residents that
13 live within that district of the casino,
14 how they are going to be able to leave and
15 exit from their homes. None of that
16 information has been available to us.

17 Also, there was a lot of misleading
18 information about jobs. They were telling
19 us there's going to be 2,000 permanent
20 jobs, 3,000 jobs with construction but they
21 withheld that information saying that prior
22 for you to get these jobs, you have to pass
23 a CORI check, you have to have -- you have
24 to meet other requirements to receive these

1 jobs. And they have promised the residents
2 that they will talk to you to put in those
3 things that will give them an advantage in
4 order to get these jobs, but yet MGM or no
5 one has given us that information.

6 A lot of the main voices that should
7 have been spoken out about this casino, the
8 leaders in the City of Springfield, very
9 few of them voiced any concern. It was
10 very one-sided. And for them not to have
11 no impact prior before the voting date of
12 the July 14th referendum and I feel that
13 Mayor Sullivan had a personal obligation to
14 present both the pros and the cons of the
15 casino to the City of Springfield before we
16 voted on it. Thank you.

17 CHAIRMAN CROSBY: Thank you very
18 much.

19 Diane Crowell and then Betsy Port,
20 Raymond Berry, Marjorie Morgan, Carol Moore
21 Cutting.

22 MS. CROWELL: Good evening. My name
23 is Diane Crowell. I live in the Merrick
24 section of West Springfield. It's been

1 mentioned here a few times.

2 My concern is a concern that I don't
3 believe has been raised yet. My concern is
4 the quality of life for the residents. I
5 believe the residential areas are the sole
6 of a town, of a community, of the city. We
7 live in Merrick. We're closer to the MGM
8 casino than most of the Springfield
9 residents. We are just across the river.
10 Our neighborhood is by the Memorial rotary.
11 Yet we have had no say in this casino,
12 because we do not live in Springfield.

13 So, my concern to present to you
14 tonight is to protect our quality of life.
15 Merrick is the closest neighborhood but
16 Memorial is not far behind it, the center
17 of the town. We have fought and continue
18 to fight and work very hard to keep the
19 quality of life good.

20 Merrick is the oldest neighborhood,
21 quite dense, mostly multifamily houses, a
22 mixture of businesses and residents and it
23 is where the social services agency for
24 refugees is located. We have a high

1 percentage of refugees that live in our
2 neighborhood, and we have a great many
3 children. If you were to drive down Main
4 Street in the morning when the school bus
5 comes, you would see a large number of
6 children there.

7 Our neighborhood needs to be
8 protected, and I think there are ways that
9 the casino in Springfield could adversely
10 affect us, lights, noise and of course
11 traffic. That has been mentioned quite a
12 bit tonight. But I occasionally walk over
13 the bridge into Springfield around the
14 rotary over the bridge. It's a beautiful
15 bridge. I love it. I love walking over
16 it. The rotary is a challenge. The rotary
17 is very unattractive. The sidewalk is
18 terrible around it. The fencing is ugly.
19 It's a struggle to keep the rotary groomed
20 and landscaped nicely.

21 It's a major gateway into our Town
22 of West Springfield. I would hope that
23 somewhere in this agreement this issue
24 would be addressed; that the gateway to

1 West Springfield needs an uplift. We are
2 going to be having much more traffic. I've
3 lived in Merrick for 25 years plus and
4 every year the traffic gets worse. It gets
5 worse, and it's going to get worse with the
6 casino.

7 So even though we don't have the
8 right to vote, we didn't have a say in this
9 casino, I do hope that you strongly
10 consider the residential component. We
11 need looking after and we need protection
12 and I have no idea what's in the agreement.
13 I don't know what the lights are. I don't
14 know if there's a noise issue. Certainly
15 there's a traffic issue.

16 So I am just asking you to consider
17 that we in West Springfield will be more
18 impacted than parts of Springfield, our
19 residential area will and as a high
20 residential area but it's a very nice
21 neighborhood and we who live there try to
22 take good care of it and advocate for it.

23 So I'm advocating to you tonight to
24 look out for us in this agreement, because

1 I can't do it. I don't know what it is
2 that's voted on. You have powers I don't
3 have. So, we are there and we have a nice
4 neighborhood and we value it and Memorial
5 values their neighborhood and the center of
6 town and along Riverdale and we are going
7 to be impacted and residential areas are
8 just the sole of the town or city. Thank
9 you.

10 CHAIRMAN CROSBY: Thank you. I'd
11 say you have some powers.

12 Betsy Port, Raymond Beery, Marjorie
13 Morgan. Are you one of those?

14 MS. MORGAN: I'm one of those.

15 CHAIRMAN CROSBY: Okay, go ahead.

16 MS. MORGAN: I'm Marjorie Morgan
17 from Longmeadow.

18 Mr. Crosby and the Commission, I'm
19 here because we are worried about you guys
20 really. Stewardship is usually defined as
21 a careful and responsible management of
22 something entrusted to others. We feel
23 that maybe you guys are on a slippery slope
24 and have lost your webbing in managing

1 things.

2 To date, your commission and your
3 spending for transportation, food, wine and
4 other things is rivaled the former
5 president of Westfield State University and
6 we are a little worried that we are
7 trusting you guys that seem to be spending
8 on the taxpayers and people are going
9 without food in this manner and you guys
10 are in charge of this casino business. It
11 just doesn't feel right to us.

12 That is all I wanted to tell you.
13 Thank you.

14 CHAIRMAN CROSBY: Thank you.

15 Sir.

16 MR. BERRY: Chairman Crosby, thank
17 you. Commissioners, thank you.

18 Gayle, thank you for your service to
19 the State of New Jersey. I'm a byproduct
20 from the State of New Jersey. Thank you.

21 COMMISSIONER CAMERON: Thank you.

22 MR. BERRY: I stand before you as a
23 supporter of the MGM resorts casino in the
24 City of Springfield. As a senior vice

1 president and CFO of a regional nonprofit,
2 someone who is truly involved day-to-day in
3 the community, I see value. I want to
4 touch on three points. First being job
5 development and business services.

6 We've heard the number several
7 thousand permanent jobs but what about the
8 economic spinoff from that 800
9 million-dollar project? The project that
10 would create and open up a pipeline of new
11 markets and new opportunities. How can you
12 actually place value on that one job that
13 will change generations from here out for a
14 family?

15 The young man or young woman that
16 for quite some time saw their family
17 struggle but now has that opportunity to
18 see both parents or guardians go and obtain
19 a job. It may not have to be MGM because
20 of the spinoff but, again, the impact adds
21 value.

22 Entertainment, there was some
23 discussion around silos throughout the
24 region but the MGM development creates

1 partnerships and collaborations. We've
2 heard the names MassMutual Convention
3 Center, City Stage, Symphony Hall, right
4 here in West Springfield the Majestic
5 Theater, Six Flags and MGM has committed to
6 partner and will bring additional
7 entertainment value to the region.

8 And, lastly, an innovative community
9 integration. I envision a vibrant
10 downtown, increased pedestrian traffic, an
11 array of special events, market rate
12 housing. I am encouraged by the recent
13 designation. Springfield has an arched
14 district council area. I'm encouraged by
15 the University of Massachusetts committing
16 itself to downtown Springfield with a
17 satellite campus. I am encouraged by the
18 conversations around the I-91 viaduct,
19 Union Station, a multimillion-dollar
20 development. That is what economic
21 development is all about. MGM is one piece
22 of a larger puzzle.

23 So let's talk about the MGM project
24 along with the other developments turning

1 the city from a resurgent or gateway city
2 and when we look at the holistic approach
3 turning it into a resurgent region. Thank
4 you.

5 CHAIRMAN CROSBY: Thank you.

6 Betsy Port, Carol Moore Cutting,
7 Melissa Hensen.

8 MS. CUTTING: To the Massachusetts
9 Gaming Commission, MGM representatives and
10 members of the greater Springfield
11 community, good afternoon and thank you for
12 this opportunity. I am Carol Moore
13 Cutting, a member of this community for
14 over 45 years and a Longmeadow resident
15 over 42 years.

16 My husband and I have two children
17 who were born here, grew up here, went away
18 to attend college and later returned after
19 graduation. They are now raising our
20 grandchildren here. I've been very
21 involved on boards in making our community
22 better for everyone.

23 And to give you a brief background,
24 in 1984 I applied for a construction permit

1 to build a commercial FM radio station to
2 serve this community. After over 15 years
3 and with the final granting of the
4 construction permit from the Federal
5 Communications Commission in Washington
6 D.C., WEIB 106.3 smooth FM began test
7 broadcasting.

8 This station was the first and only
9 commercial FM station built by and 100
10 percent owned and operated by a female in
11 Massachusetts and, in fact, all of New
12 England. Today WEIB 106.3 smooth FM is the
13 only Springfield metro-market station that
14 is independent and locally owned. In
15 addition to the terrestrial broadcast, it's
16 programming is served via the internet and
17 Smart phones locally, regionally and around
18 the world via WEIB.com.

19 We have been and continue to be
20 committed to our community and want to see
21 it even better with an MGM presence.
22 Decades ago I can remember browsing at
23 Johnson Bookstore and at the time
24 Springfield's Main Street and surrounding

1 streets were humming with activity. Today
2 they are not. We shopped downtown at
3 Forbes and Wallace or Steiger's Department
4 Store and had leisure lunches at the
5 Steiger's tearoom.

6 I look forward to seeing a more
7 inviting and vibrant downtown Springfield
8 that I believe MGM brings. The only plans
9 I have seen that would bring this vitality
10 back to Springfield, I believe is MGM's
11 Springfield proposal to revitalize the
12 community by incorporating our rich history
13 and not competing with existing businesses
14 and other resources.

15 In addition, I think that local,
16 local, local residents as well as visitors
17 will come to Springfield downtown. I
18 believe MGM is committed and have the
19 ability to help to transform the area into
20 a place where there are family fun
21 activities for everyone.

22 I personally look forward to an
23 opportunity where my husband and I, as well
24 as other families, can joyfully bring our

1 children, grandchildren, nieces, nephews,
2 families and friends to the movies, to
3 bowling, outdoor activities on the plaza,
4 restaurants, various entertainments and a
5 host of other events planned for the
6 downtown Springfield.

7 I am very vested in the community,
8 passionate about our community and feel
9 strongly about the possibilities for the
10 region and look forward to Springfield's
11 potential for becoming a more positive
12 family, fun-filled entertainment place.
13 The entire region and beyond will be the
14 benefactors of MGM I believe to our
15 community.

16 Thank you very much for this
17 opportunity.

18 CHAIRMAN CROSBY: Thank you very
19 much.

20 It's about 6:20. We have a little
21 over an hour and a half. We are going to
22 take a quick ten minute break and pick up
23 again at 6:30 and run through until at
24 least 8:00.

1 (A recess was taken)

2
3 CHAIRMAN CROSBY: It is 6:32ish or
4 so. We are reconvening in West
5 Springfield.

6 We are at Melissa Hensen, Brian
7 Rossini, Jason Garand, Ray Bienia, Michelle
8 Steger. Any of you folks? Hensen,
9 Rossini, Garand, Bienia, Steger.

10 MR. WESTROWSKI: Oh, that's me.

11 CHAIRMAN CROSBY: Steger is you?

12 MR. WESTROWSKI: Yes, that's me.

13 CHAIRMAN CROSBY: You don't look
14 like Michelle Steger to me. Is this
15 Michelle? She is going to give you a
16 minute of her time.

17 Hi.

18 MS. STEGER: Hi, Chairman Crosby,
19 Commissioners, thank you so much for coming
20 out.

21 I would like to start out by saying
22 I would love to believe the promises but,
23 unfortunately, I can't believe the promises
24 because the facts tell a different story.

1 And I'm incredibly frustrated that I'm
2 standing before you today knowing that this
3 Commission fully intends to award this
4 license to MGM at the end of the day.

5 Surrounding community input should
6 not simply be to let you know ways we feel
7 the plan should be approved. I feel like
8 the clear lack of support from surrounding
9 communities, as evidenced by votes at town
10 meetings and at the ballot box, should be a
11 factor in determining whether a license is
12 granted in western Massachusetts.

13 I was disturbed when I heard you,
14 Mr. Crosby, in a recent interview say that
15 surrounding communities support or lack of
16 support would have been a factor if there
17 had been at least two applicants. To me,
18 the fact that Palmer and West Springfield
19 had more time to learn the truth about
20 casinos and vote them down shouldn't change
21 the calculus of this Commission in the
22 least.

23 If somebody had told me five years
24 ago that my family could be living 2.3

1 miles from a casino, I would have said they
2 were crazy. I would never have decided to
3 put down roots in a community close to a
4 casino. It's not the environment I would
5 have chosen for my children.

6 Now my husband and I are in the bold
7 position of being forced by you should you
8 choose to award this license to MGM to
9 gamble on our biggest investment, our home.
10 I promise that the National Association of
11 Relators called the impact of casinos on
12 the housing market unambiguously negative.

13 The Town of Preston, Connecticut
14 which abuts Ledyard, the home of Foxwoods,
15 has seen a 20 percent drop in value for
16 homes that are within a quarter mile of the
17 travel routes to the casino. Let me repeat
18 that. Not a quarter mile from the casino
19 but a quarter mile from the traveled routes
20 to the casino.

21 Our home is located within a quarter
22 mile of the traveled routes to the casino,
23 and we're extremely concerned about what
24 this means to our neighborhood and for our

1 property's value.

2 If the proposed casino were in your
3 area, I am sure that you, Mr. Crosby, would
4 be standing where I am trying to stop the
5 casino as I know you're on record saying
6 you wouldn't want one too close to your
7 home. Governor Patrick, Attorney General
8 Coakley and Speaker DeLeo I'm sure can
9 empathize, as all have famously said that
10 they wouldn't want to live near casinos
11 either.

12 And that's one of the biggest
13 problems I have with this legislation. The
14 loudest cheerleaders for casinos don't want
15 them in their communities. Well, guess
16 what? I don't want a casino 2.3 miles from
17 my home either, and I didn't get to vote.

18 So, it would be great if we could
19 dispense with all this self-congratulatory
20 talk of local control. If there were true
21 local control homeowners living 2.3 miles
22 from a proposed casino site would have had
23 a chance to vote directly, not merely give
24 input at a community hearing.

1 Lastly, I understand that
2 establishing a new industry in the
3 Commonwealth is a daunting task but I don't
4 think that can be used as an excuse to
5 explain 110 dollar plate dinners, luxury
6 hotel accommodations and 422 dollar
7 limousine ride. Casino operators should
8 not be funding this Commission either
9 through fees they pay to the Commonwealth
10 or by any other means.

11 This Commission should be funded by
12 the taxpayers of this great Commonwealth
13 because you should be working for the
14 citizens of the Commonwealth, not the
15 casinos. And this Commission should be
16 held to the same standards as any other
17 state agency.

18 Our representatives on Beacon Hill
19 failed us when they chose to legalize
20 casino gambling. I don't know what kind of
21 arm-twisting went on behind the scenes to
22 get 77 representatives to change their
23 votes but there is no doubt about it,
24 government sponsorship of casinos is

1 socially reprehensible. Government should
2 not be in the business of dubbing citizens
3 out of their money, and it certainly
4 shouldn't be in the business of creating
5 ethics and destroying families and
6 communities.

7 I expect more from the Commonwealth
8 than this. And should the casino ballad
9 measure be allowed to move forward, I will
10 work as hard as I can to see this terrible
11 piece of legislation repealed in November.

12 Thank you for your time.

13 CHAIRMAN CROSBY: Thank you.

14 Brian Rossini, Jason Garand.

15 MR. GARAND: Good evening. Jason
16 Garand. I'm business manager of Carpenters
17 Local 108 and a resident of Holyoke,
18 Massachusetts. So, first of all, I just
19 want to thank the Gaming Commission for
20 coming to West Springfield and western
21 Massachusetts to hear from us, the
22 community, about I think this, you know,
23 very interesting opportunity for all of
24 Massachusetts and I especially want to

1 thank the legislature for Wynn.

2 This language was created and
3 crafted that they thought about western
4 Massachusetts, the people who live here and
5 passed legislation that allowed a location
6 to possibly come here. I am sure you have
7 not made a decision yet. I know that.
8 That is why you're coming out to hear this.

9 But from a perspective of the
10 trades, we ask that you highly think about
11 awarding the license to MGM. We have
12 currently 150 carpenters that are out of
13 work. They have been out of work since
14 September. We've had a great construction
15 boom happening, especially at UMass, and it
16 all slowed down.

17 Those guys are either collecting
18 unemployment or have run out of
19 unemployment at this point in time and they
20 are looking for that next opportunity and
21 casinos in western Massachusetts are real.
22 And the opportunity to have people go to
23 work here that live here because all of
24 those people I am talking about, these

1 members, are in Springfield and Holyoke and
2 West Springfield. They are asking where
3 their next job is, and we give a great
4 service to the community.

5 We create what is drawn on plans.
6 We create what is envisioned by architects
7 and owners and then users and we just ask
8 something back, which is every single day
9 we work on a project there's one less day
10 we will ever be on that. And those skills
11 that create safe, strong and quality
12 buildings are in our hands and today we
13 need more of those opportunities.

14 MGM is committed to creating local
15 jobs. They are committing to 90 percent of
16 the permanent jobs and the construction
17 jobs coming from Springfield and the
18 surrounding communities. And we're going
19 to watch a whole bunch of families be able
20 to pay their bills instead of collecting
21 unemployment. They are going to pay taxes
22 and they are going to paint their fence or
23 mow their lawn because they are going to
24 have income that comes in. They're going

1 to put food on the table. They're going to
2 help pay their kids' college education and
3 maybe take a simple vacation. That is what
4 being in the Commonwealth is about.

5 We, as a community, voted in favor
6 in Springfield to pass this and not every
7 community did that but in Springfield they
8 did. And now we get to watch a really
9 different model be created of residential
10 units, of bowling alley, of movie theater
11 of working with MassMutual hotel. And
12 we're looking at blue tarps as I drive down
13 91 going to my office, which is in Alton
14 Street in Springfield, and those blue tarps
15 are going to be replaced with a beautiful
16 three-block economic development that the
17 City of Springfield hasn't seen in a very
18 long time, and I think that this is a great
19 opportunity for us.

20 We have to look at it for what it
21 is, and I think MGM does that. They are
22 not coming in here promising that they are
23 going to solve every problem, but they are
24 going to solve some very serious ones. And

1 to change the south end to what it used to
2 be, which is a community that is just in
3 need right now, and to create jobs that are
4 going to be for the construction population
5 and then permanent jobs is something that I
6 don't know what comes down the road if it's
7 not this.

8 So, we in the trades ask you to
9 support MGM and their license. They passed
10 all the right tests, and I think they're
11 going to be a great corporate neighbor for
12 us. And I want to just thank you for
13 allowing us time to speak on that.

14 CHAIRMAN CROSBY: Thank you.

15 Ray Bienia and then Brendan Carey,
16 Paul Meara and Gregory Schmutte.

17 MR. BIENIA: Hi, Ray Bienia,
18 carpenter steward of Carpenters Local 108
19 in western Mass. I am here to speak on
20 behalf of my fellow brother and sister
21 carpenters. We are a highly skilled,
22 blue-collar group of workers. We actually
23 build the buildings. We are the men and
24 women in the field that construct all the

1 buildings that will be built for the
2 casinos and the ancillary projects and so
3 on and so forth.

4 Jason, our VA, spoke and said we
5 have 150 members out of work right now. We
6 are the community. We believe strongly the
7 community. We spend our money within the
8 community to give those men and women a
9 chance to go to work and give Springfield a
10 shot in the arm that I really think it
11 really needs.

12 Over the years that we have been
13 busy and built many buildings down there.
14 Lately, it's really slowed down and
15 whatever. We're hoping that this whole 800
16 million-dollar money that MGM is going to
17 bring in is going to get things rolling
18 again and put a lot of us back to work.
19 Not just us carpenters but through the
20 union trades in general.

21 And we'd really like, we'd really
22 like to see MGM come to Springfield and be
23 able to put a lot of us back to work again.
24 Thank you for your time.

1 CHAIRMAN CROSBY: Thank you.

2 Brendan Carey, Paul Meara.

3 COMMISSIONER CAMERON: Paula.

4 CHAIRMAN CROSBY: I'm sorry, oh
5 Paula, sorry.

6 MR. CAREY: Hi, no problem. I'll be
7 quick.

8 Good evening. My name is Brendan
9 Carey and I'm an organizer with UNITE HERE
10 and a resident of Holyoke and thank you
11 very much for coming out to western Mass.
12 to hear from all of us tonight.

13 And on behalf of the UNITE HERE
14 members in the Pioneer Valley and across
15 Massachusetts, I am excited to offer my
16 enthusiastic support for MGM's casino
17 proposal.

18 MGM Springfield has said that they
19 will create 3,000 permanent jobs, and with
20 MGM we know that it's not just a bunch of
21 promises. MGM has a proven track record of
22 creating and preserving family sustaining
23 jobs with excellent pay and benefits.
24 MGM's workforce is heavily unionized. In

1 Las Vegas where MGM is the largest
2 employer, all of MGM's hospitality workers
3 are union. Through unionization casino
4 jobs in Las Vegas have become middle-class
5 jobs. In fact, 68 percent of UNITE members
6 in Las Vegas are able to own their own
7 home.

8 MGM is the largest funder of the
9 culinary training academy, a joint labor
10 management training center that provides
11 free entry level training to people seeking
12 a casino job. When MGM opened in Detroit,
13 they worked with the community and our
14 union to ensure that the Detroit residents
15 had the preparation needed to access gaming
16 jobs.

17 We are confident that in Springfield
18 MGM will continue to work cooperatively
19 with labor to provide stable and
20 middle-class jobs. Thank you very much.

21 CHAIRMAN CROSBY: Thank you.

22 Is Chief Meara still here? I know
23 she was here earlier. Gregory Schmutte,
24 Cynthia -- there we go -- Cynthia Romaniak,

1 John Simpson and Rexene Picard.

2 MR. SCHMUTTE: Good evening,
3 Commissioners. My name's Gregory Schmutte.
4 I'm a vice president for Institutional
5 Effectiveness at American International
6 College and I'm here to lend my support
7 personally, as well as speak on behalf of
8 the area colleges in support of MGM coming
9 to Springfield and I will be brief.

10 I just want to make three quick
11 points, one of which is that MGM will
12 provide increased internship opportunities
13 for our students. And in this day and age
14 where experiential education is so
15 important where so many people go to
16 college because they are looking, quite
17 frankly, for a better job, internships are
18 very often a great steppingstone to that
19 first job for a student coming out of
20 school.

21 Secondly, the institutions in the
22 what we call the cooperating colleges of
23 greater Springfield of which there are
24 eight, that's American International

1 College, Springfield College, Bay Path, the
2 Elms, STCC, Springfield Technical Community
3 College, Holyoke Community College,
4 Westfield State and Western New England, we
5 all have a variety of educational programs
6 that we offer.

7 And by having the influx of new
8 people coming to the greater Springfield
9 area, this will enhance enrollments in our
10 programs, which is really critical to the
11 well-being of the institutions, management
12 programs, marketing programmings, criminal
13 justice, all of these programs are
14 represented by the various colleges in the
15 area and with the community colleges in
16 particularly our well in depth at enhancing
17 workforce development, which we all know is
18 very critical and important to this
19 project.

20 Thirdly, I just want to mention that
21 for both our current students, the MGM
22 resort project will enable students to have
23 increasing numbers of part-time jobs and
24 yet for our graduates, alumnae full-time

1 jobs upon completion and, again, that's
2 just as critical to the area and to our
3 institutions.

4 And I might just conclude by saying
5 that basically, we all benefit -- all the
6 colleges in the area benefit based on the
7 vigor and the health of Springfield, and we
8 feel that this is a positive thing for the
9 City of Springfield. It brings -- makes
10 all of our institutions be that much more
11 attractive to students coming from out of
12 the area as well as students in the area if
13 Springfield is a vibrant, thriving area and
14 not just Springfield but the whole western
15 Mass. region.

16 So, we very much are in support of
17 this project and thank you for your time.

18 CHAIRMAN CROSBY: Thank you very
19 much.

20 Cynthia Romaniak, John Simpson,
21 Rexene Picard, Roberto Nieves, coming up
22 next.

23 MS. ROMANIAK: Hello, and thank you
24 for granting us this public hearing. I

1 really appreciate that. I know it wasn't
2 in the have to do business. I am here to
3 speak about MGM's --

4 CHAIRMAN CROSBY: Nice T-shirt.

5 MS. ROMANIAK: Thank you.

6 Communication or lack thereof. I was a
7 town meeting member for ten years and then
8 after that I was a city councilor for ten
9 years. After leaving the City Council, I
10 was asked to sit on the Casino Mitigation
11 Committee. That's when Springfield had
12 three casinos buying for a place. Hard
13 Rock hadn't entered the picture yet.

14 West Springfield is unique in that
15 we had Hard Rock in our area, although
16 we're a potential host community and I know
17 that's a whole different thing, Hard Rock
18 made itself available to us and other area
19 communities. They sought out the
20 communities. They looked to make contact,
21 so we have the opportunity at the
22 juxtaposition of MGM.

23 Now, in the past year plus that I
24 have been sitting on this committee, we

1 have tried many, many times to talk to MGM.
2 I know Commissioner Stebbins heard me speak
3 at the Springfield mitigation meeting
4 saying they won't talk to us. I understand
5 they are now in negotiations with Mayor
6 Sullivan but my concerns -- I looked up at
7 the matrix on the Mass. Gaming Commission
8 website and for any casino there is a real
9 regional approach, which we are not seeing
10 from MGM.

11 Now, I don't have a problem with the
12 casino. West Springfield voted not to have
13 casino. Springfield voted to have a
14 casino. I teach in Springfield. I'm
15 looking for seeing some money influx into
16 the schools for Springfield yet MGM is the
17 only one left in the running. And I
18 understand people think just because they
19 are running, you are going to grant them
20 the license because they are the only game
21 in town.

22 But my question is: Are they
23 playing by the rules? The matrix in there
24 says they have to look -- well, first we

1 have heard many people talk about traffic,
2 housing, school population, public safety.
3 West Springfield participates in mutual
4 aid, security and unlawful behavior.

5 Now, we've been reaching out to
6 them. Springfield has been reaching out to
7 them, Longmeadow, other communities we
8 all -- I know you were there. We all
9 talked about how do we get them to talk to
10 us. Now, it's not a good situation right
11 here. And by the way they are
12 communicating with area communities,
13 although I hate to say it, I want you to
14 really look hardly on -- I really look
15 strongly at whether you should grant them
16 the license, because they are not upholding
17 their end.

18 They are this big entity that's
19 coming into town and they don't -- I don't
20 know. They don't talk to anybody about
21 this stuff. I understand they're talking
22 to the mayor, but Hard Rock was totally
23 different. And, I know, Hard Rock is
24 another big entity, but they were looking

1 at the community and they were talking to
2 people and I don't see that from MGM.
3 Senator Welch talked about the regional
4 approach and I think that is something that
5 is sorely lacking with MGM's communication.
6 Thank you.

7 CHAIRMAN CROSBY: What is the
8 committee that you are serving on, the name
9 of the committee?

10 MS. ROMANIAK: The Casino Mitigation
11 Committee. Councilor Griffin was the
12 chair. Several members have spoken
13 tonight.

14 CHAIRMAN CROSBY: Okay, thank you.
15 John Simpson, Rexene Picard, Roberto
16 Nieves Chelan Brown, Robert Bolduc.

17 Yes, sir.

18 MR. SIMPSON: Hi there, John
19 Simpson. I'm an artist and a professor at
20 UMass Amherst. I wanted to thank the
21 Gaming Commission for coming out tonight to
22 listen to all our different viewpoints.

23 I grew up in West Springfield, both
24 my parents grew up in West Springfield. My

1 father belonged to the West Springfield
2 Elks, the Fishing and Game Club, the Birdy
3 Club. My mother was in the West
4 Springfield Catholic Women's Club and I
5 went to St. Thomas for K through eight and
6 my brothers went to high school here.

7 I remember as a child catching a bus
8 in Midnight Park with my friends to go to
9 downtown Springfield. We'd go to Johnsons
10 Bookstore and shop for different things,
11 mechanical drawing supplies, toys and
12 things and books and being able to walk
13 around downtown Springfield with my friends
14 and later going to Baystate West and
15 feeling quite safe and, like, it wasn't
16 really a danger.

17 But now times are changed and I
18 don't know if I'd recommend any ten
19 year-olds take a bus over to the south end
20 as it is right now and wander around in
21 search of books or other things.

22 We used to go to the Steiger's
23 tearoom, loved the holiday window displays
24 in the old Forbes and Wallace. It always

1 seemed important and interested in
2 downtown.

3 The arrival of MGM resort
4 international is a chance for a major
5 expansion of all kinds of opportunity for
6 the people of West Springfield and
7 Springfield from jobs, to entertainment, to
8 cultural development. All different types
9 of people and businesses could find a
10 chance to express themselves on a much
11 larger stage all of a sudden.

12 We need to make connections here to
13 ensure a fruitful development on both sides
14 of the river. West Springfield has always
15 had a strong economic tie with the downtown
16 Springfield. Maybe we could have these
17 trolleys bringing people back and forth
18 between the resort and the events that the
19 Big E puts on. What an excellent
20 additional offering for both sides with all
21 the trade shows open for visitation and the
22 Big E itself drawing in so many people.
23 The fast and easy access from the resort
24 will greatly increase attendance.

1 Traffic's an issue, but it's never
2 stopped us from doing large events before.
3 And I don't remember the City of
4 Springfield wanting to charge the Big E for
5 blocking traffic. We've always complained
6 about the lack of attention from the state
7 government when it comes to spending money
8 out here. Here's a private company about
9 to do it, which hopefully can help us
10 leverage more funding from the state. This
11 could make it not a gamble for others but
12 also to invest.

13 We need to think of ourselves as
14 really being a major part of the great
15 state Massachusetts and it is our time to
16 get it together and make it happen. This
17 is our chance to resuscitate our city and
18 town and rejuvenate and improve the Town of
19 West Springfield. There should be enough
20 money in the budget to take care of Route 5
21 with the taxes from the greatly increased
22 income to all the businesses in the
23 downtown area.

24 We need to truly capitalize from the

1 new markets that we'll develop for food,
2 farms, endless supplies, trophies, car
3 repairs, all the things that support an
4 increased infrastructure which will allow
5 for many more levels of opportunities for
6 the citizens.

7 As an artist and an educator, it
8 excites me to think about all the creative
9 opportunities that will present themselves
10 to the artistically inclined living in this
11 area with the creation of the MGM
12 Springfield, Massachusetts Public Arts
13 program.

14 MGM will be exhibiting works from
15 local artists and students. The works will
16 be for sale to benefit the artists and the
17 local arts program and will have an annual
18 audience of approximately 8 million people.
19 What better exposure could be given to
20 budding artists? How many students
21 graduate from college with a degree in art
22 and plan to go to New York City and wind up
23 in a gallery that has 100 people annually
24 practically attending it.

1 Their willingness to work with
2 colleges and give students incredible real
3 world experiences in every level of
4 management, hospitality, culinary and
5 entertainment is something that shouldn't
6 be ignored.

7 Up at UMass I teach class, and it's
8 called Art in the City and I shuttle
9 students down to Springfield to look at the
10 city the way it is and how art hasn't
11 impacted it over the years. MGM is
12 planning to resuscitate, restore the
13 fountains and some of the major monuments
14 in downtown Springfield and to people some
15 of the dead store fronts for vendors.

16 It's a plan to create walkability
17 and that with the more walkable bridge and
18 circle on the West Springfield side and
19 some more walkability right into the
20 downtown West Springfield should help all
21 of our citizens. And I just like the idea
22 of giving artists, too, a chance here, you
23 know, besides all the other occupations
24 that people have.

1 And with that, I'd just like to see
2 MGM put Springfield on the map. Because
3 with the class that I teach Art in the
4 City, a student and all the students seem
5 to agree.

6 One of them wrote a paper called
7 "The Springfield Problem," and he talked
8 about how his family from Northampton would
9 drive by Springfield. They thought it was
10 a driveby city. And the one time they went
11 into the city together, it was to the Hall
12 of Fame and they wanted to get out again as
13 fast as possible.

14 So, I think we really have to change
15 the views of the upper valley here. Make
16 people start seeing Springfield as their
17 city and West Springfield will compliment
18 it and benefit from it as well. Thank you
19 for your time.

20 CHAIRMAN CROSBY: Thank you very
21 much.

22 Rexene Picard, Roberto Nieves.

23 MR. NIEVES: Good evening,
24 Commissioners. I am here as a

1 representative from Common Capital, but I
2 have a two-prong presentation, because I
3 was also involved with MGM going back
4 almost probably past a year in terms of my
5 affiliation with the chamber when I worked
6 there.

7 At Common Capital, one of the things
8 that we've been fortunate enough with our
9 partnership with MGM is we were able to
10 secure half a million dollars from the US
11 Economic Development Administration for
12 funds to be used for a small business
13 development within tornado affected or
14 disaster affected communities.

15 They've actually expanded that out
16 now to the four regions, which are the four
17 counties. But we've also been in
18 partnership with the city and I don't want
19 to steal the development of Springfield's
20 thunder but we currently have around 1.1
21 million dollars available for small
22 business development in the tornado
23 affected areas, so that's one thing that
24 we've leveraged with our relationship with

1 MGM from a Common Capital perspective.

2 And Common Capital, really our
3 specific role is to lend to small
4 businesses that aren't able to go to a bank
5 and get traditional financing. We're an
6 alternative lending source. So, that
7 helped us out in terms of securing this
8 funds.

9 From my other standpoint in terms of
10 the chamber, I was involved with the
11 procurement piece with Mike Mathis and Mark
12 Delowski from MGM procurement. We've been
13 in discussions now for, like I said, over a
14 year. And one of the things that MGM has
15 been able to do is to bring a lot of these
16 resources together that we've worked in
17 partnership before but never with a
18 specific goal.

19 And I think the important piece is
20 that MGM has been able to the procurement
21 piece focus these organizations to come
22 together and work as one. What we're
23 looking at is MGM has had agreements with
24 many local chambers and the procurement

1 process that they're developing really
2 encompasses a lot of the economic
3 development organizations that are in the
4 area.

5 They reached out not only to the
6 chambers in the four counties but also
7 educational institutions like STCC and HCC,
8 government agencies like supplier diversity
9 office, local banks. We have the regional
10 employment board. We've got credit unions
11 involved, banks and of course Common
12 Capital is there to fill the need if you
13 can't go through the traditional lending
14 source.

15 Now, one of the things that we're
16 looking at is to develop a process that
17 helps the businesses who are eligible to go
18 and acquire one of these programs is to
19 really engage them in a process that makes
20 them a better business and it really is a
21 standpoint of bringing in, for example, one
22 of our local educational institutions to
23 help businesses with their operations, to
24 bring in, again, another educational

1 institution to help them with capacity
2 building.

3 So, it will be a process that we can
4 work together to get technical assistance,
5 grants, operational training, capacity
6 building. And hopefully when that passage
7 is done, we are looking at providing some
8 funding even whether a bank or us to help
9 build that capacity, add equipment or add
10 to that or actually some work in Capital
11 because the payment structure is a little
12 bit different when you deal with a larger
13 corporation.

14 So, out of our work with them, you
15 know, one of the things that no one talks
16 about -- we hear about the 2,000
17 construction jobs and the 3,000 permanent
18 jobs. But what's the effect on job growth
19 with 50 million-dollars of procurement and
20 these vender contracts? We don't know, but
21 I think that that's fairly significant.
22 Because if you create a working model that
23 works, then at that point we can take this
24 model and then go to the Baystate and the

1 Smith & Wessons and the Friendly's and so
2 on and to create even more vender
3 opportunities for our local businesses.

4 So, we're using this as a catalyst
5 to bring together our resources and really
6 develop a program that we then can take
7 it -- once it's successful with MGM, if we
8 can deal with MGM procurement issues, we
9 can deal with just about anybody else's.
10 So, we're really using the model, but they
11 have been able to provide that catalyst to
12 provide that energy to bring these
13 resources together and create this
14 spearhead of a path for us to go and do
15 business development.

16 That is what I've experienced with
17 MGM from the perspective that they've been
18 at the table with us now with us for a long
19 time and this economic development
20 procurement piece has been going on now for
21 over a year. So, I just wanted to add that
22 to it, and of course I support an MGM
23 casino.

24 CHAIRMAN CROSBY: Thank you very

1 much.

2 Rexene Picard, Chelan Brown, Robert
3 Bolduc, David Gaby, Carol de Carlo, Alex
4 Schwerin coming up.

5 MR. BOLDUC: My name is Robert
6 Bolduc. I represent Pride stores, an
7 immediate abutter to the proposed casino.

8 Pride, who owns and operates a very
9 busy gas station and diesel fueling station
10 with a very busy convenient store, Dunkin
11 Donuts and Subway, is right at the
12 intersection with the majority of all
13 vehicles, cars, buses and delivery vehicles
14 are proposed to enter and exit the casino.
15 We are right there on the very corner.

16 My very strong concern has been
17 around the intersection itself. Without
18 doubt, we have the most experience with
19 that intersection and the traffic problems
20 and accidents that already exist there.
21 The problems are also well-known to all
22 motorists who use that intersection. They
23 are also well-known to the city and to
24 MassDOT and the intersection is, in fact,

1 in the top 15 problem intersections in the
2 Pioneer Valley.

3 You should know that in the past
4 four years, Pride has applied to MassDOT
5 and to the city to improve the traffic
6 problem at that intersection. Both times
7 our applications were denied. But they did
8 agree that it was a serious problem.

9 Imagine my surprise when I learned
10 this intersection would be the primary
11 entrance and exit to the casino and that
12 extremely limited improvements, basically
13 restriping only were planned to compensate
14 for the additional traffic. These
15 improvements are merely window-dressing.

16 What concerns me is it appears it's
17 the city, mass -- and I have spoken to the
18 engineering department directly, MassDOT,
19 Mass. DEP and the Pioneer Valley Planning
20 Commission have all basically accepted the
21 casino proposal without demanding realistic
22 improvements. For these agencies to accept
23 the MGM promise to improve them after they
24 open for business is frankly pie in the

1 sky. I wonder if they will be that easy on
2 our next project.

3 We happen to have two in the works
4 with MEPA now, and they are not being
5 anywhere near that easy and our issues are
6 much less critical. If, in fact, the city,
7 many agencies and MEPA have changed their
8 standards for this project, many developers
9 in this state and many anti-casino people
10 will find this very interesting.

11 Another concern is air quality.
12 Again, our company has experience in this
13 since we have had to address air quality
14 concerns and complaints from MEPA and from
15 Mass. DEP on what I would say are far less
16 critical issues. Some in fact just
17 recently. The fact is the significant
18 traffic and bus additions will certainly
19 add air quality problems to the area. From
20 what we can read, they are not being
21 addressed or even questioned by anyone.

22 Another issue that I am asking you
23 to question is what I understand a
24 discrepancies in the traffic accounts that

1 MGM is using. I am told they use their
2 Detroit casino for traffic data but Detroit
3 has four casinos in that city, so their
4 Detroit numbers and now our numbers should
5 be increased by factor of four.

6 Another question is the gas station
7 that appears in the MEPA proposal. Yes,
8 it's there in the fine print. This fine
9 print by itself should be an alarm to all
10 that we are not dealing with a totally up
11 front enterprise. Since the casino itself
12 will bring significant new traffic to what
13 is already an overburdened narrowed road,
14 how can they justify adding to the problem
15 with a gas station? There are already five
16 stations in a one-half mile radius, so one
17 can hardly say the area needs another.

18 Also, they have said they will not
19 harm any existing businesses but bringing
20 in another station will certainly impact us
21 all. Being from that area, I am also
22 familiar with another problem that seems to
23 be ignored. It is the proposal loss of 700
24 parking spaces in the area they will take

1 over. How can we all just ignore this?
2 Where are these 700 downtown people going
3 to park? Earlier we heard from our state
4 senator, Gale Candaras, when she brought
5 this same problem to your attention. It
6 must be fixed, but this proposal doesn't
7 address it.

8 CHAIRMAN CROSBY: Thank you.

9 MR. BOLDUC: I'm going to ask for
10 someone else's time. I have one more
11 paragraph.

12 CHAIRMAN CROSBY: You can leave your
13 remarks with us, and we will distribute
14 them around.

15 MR. BOLDUC: Thank you very much.

16 CHAIRMAN CROSBY: Okay, thank you.

17 MS. BROWN: Good evening.

18 CHAIRMAN CROSBY: Good evening.

19 COMMISSIONER STEBBINS: Good
20 evening.

21 MS. BROWN: My name is Chelan Brown,
22 and I'm a lifelong resident of the City of
23 Springfield. I want to thank the Mass.
24 Gaming Commission for allowing us to come

1 here tonight and present to you our
2 thoughts on MGM Springfield.

3 I am currently a founder of a local
4 nonprofit organization in the City of
5 Springfield that works with young people,
6 youth and young adults. And I've also been
7 very involved in my community in the local
8 politics ever since 1994 when I decided to
9 become the city's youngest mayoral
10 candidate in Springfield, Massachusetts at
11 the age of 18.

12 I mention that run because at that
13 time, casino gambling was very big and it's
14 a very big election issue during that time
15 and myself -- I found myself 18 years old
16 trying to figure out what was going on with
17 city government and economic development
18 plans and city ordinances and I joined the
19 majority of voters at that time saying that
20 I was against casino gambling.

21 I was a skeptic. Up until recently,
22 I was a very big sceptic of casino gambling
23 in Massachusetts. Didn't see the real
24 benefits. I am tonight a supporter of MGM

1 Springfield. I want to explain to you why
2 I support MGM's project. There were a
3 number of things that contributed to my
4 changing my mind or convincing me that this
5 was good for our city.

6 One was seeing the failure by our
7 state and local elected officials and
8 businesses to come up with a solid economic
9 development plan and economic
10 revitalization plan for the Commonwealth of
11 Massachusetts and for the City of
12 Springfield.

13 Secondly, a big turning point for me
14 was seeing all my peers have graduated from
15 Springfield high schools, have graduated
16 from local colleges, have recently uprooted
17 their families to leave and they're younger
18 professionals and they are leaving because
19 they can't get any economic jobs. There is
20 no economic opportunity for them here. So,
21 we're talking about lifelong Springfield
22 residents like me that grew up here and are
23 now leaving to go places like Atlanta or
24 down south where they can get more jobs and

1 feed their families.

2 And the third turning point for me
3 was the MGM Springfield proposal itself.
4 Being my experience with MGM was different.
5 Being active in the community, I am at a
6 lot of places, community fairs, community
7 meetings, different venues where I would
8 see the MGM Springfield officials and the
9 MGM Springfield team aggressively and
10 actively seek out people and pull people
11 out of a crowd and walk up to people and
12 say, "Hey, let me talk to you about MGM
13 Springfield."

14 I never wanted to listen to them. I
15 would always leave and run the opposite
16 direction. I just didn't even want to
17 listen to their proposal. I didn't want to
18 listen to anything they had to say.

19 I was invited to a meeting of area
20 minority, young professionals and business
21 leaders where I actually had the
22 opportunity to see the MGM presentation,
23 read the MGM proposal and hear from the MGM
24 team. And ever since then, they have

1 done -- they have been only the big
2 corporation that I have worked with that
3 really has a true commitment to inclusion
4 and diversity and has gone above and beyond
5 what I think is appropriate to reach out to
6 people of all ages, of all background,
7 people of all social economic status
8 indicators, minority business leaders and
9 young people and young professionals to
10 keep us here.

11 During my work with young adults and
12 young professionals, I often work with a
13 lot of young people who are struggling to
14 enter into the workforce and,
15 unfortunately, some of these young people
16 end up to participating in either crime or
17 violence, which is a huge issue for our
18 region and our city.

19 But all the research that I've
20 worked with and all the best practices that
21 I've worked within programming shows that
22 one of the single most effective
23 concurrence to violence and crime is to
24 give someone a job. And if you don't

1 believe the research, come talk to the
2 people I work with.

3 They will tell you that to wake up
4 everyday and to go to sleep and wake up
5 everyday knowing that they have to get up
6 and go to work the next morning is
7 something that they can be proud of that
8 their kids -- they can feed their families.
9 They can feed their children. They can
10 provide housing for themselves and their
11 families and maybe they can become
12 productive members of our community.

13 And the last point I want to make is
14 that MGM should not be considered an in all
15 be all for economic development. As the
16 gentleman spoke before me, it should be
17 considered a catalyst and we should rely on
18 our state and local leaders to provide us a
19 solid economic development plan moving
20 forward utilizing the benefits and the
21 economic benefits of MGM to bring our
22 region back to be able to thrive so that
23 more of my friends can stay here and we can
24 stay rooted here and keep our families

1 here. Thank you.

2 CHAIRMAN CROSBY: Thank you.

3 David Gaby. Did I skip over you,
4 sir, in the glasses?

5 MR. GABY: I'm David Gaby.

6 CHAIRMAN CROSBY: Gaby, excuse me.

7 MR. GABY: It's a common mistake.

8 Thank you all for coming out. We
9 oftentimes have to travel to Boston, and we
10 appreciate peopling making the effort.

11 I am here to speak in favor of the
12 overall proposed casino on a couple of
13 grounds and also to make a couple of
14 suggestions.

15 Oftentimes, I say most of the time
16 for the past 45, 50 years, we've seen
17 development proposals, development
18 practices, malls, highways impact the bulk
19 of the post toward development has been to
20 move everything out of the cities,
21 especially in Springfield. Not so much
22 Boston. Oftentimes, Boston policies assume
23 that there is a vital core that everyone
24 wants to be downtown. That's not true in

1 Springfield.

2 The gentleman that talked about
3 going to Johnsons as a memory was very
4 accurate. We all used to go down to
5 Johnsons. We used to go to Steiger's.
6 There's nothing down there now. You
7 wouldn't be able to buy a book if you did
8 go over there on a bus. So this proposal
9 is positive, and it's groundbreaking in two
10 ways.

11 In the first place, it's
12 groundbreaking in that we are taking
13 economic activity and we're moving it back
14 into the urban core where the investment
15 has already been made in infrastructure.
16 It's not only a socially responsible
17 investment, it's also a serious investment
18 in moving us back to a sustainable future
19 where we're creating, recreating an urban
20 pattern that uses less energy and has a
21 lower environmental impact and a lower
22 carbon impact. We really should applaud
23 the basic impulse to locate in the city.

24 The second part of it is MGM has a

1 very different model of the casino, which I
2 have compared with some of the other ones
3 that have been developed in the past, which
4 were four to five boxes, for instance,
5 planning city which did not work with the
6 city. They were like, "How do we keep the
7 city out so that our suburban customers can
8 come here?"

9 This is designed to be different.
10 It's designed to be open to Main Street.
11 It includes housing. It uses facilities
12 like MassMutual Center as integral parts of
13 the development. So, it is in its general
14 overall approach a great innovation and a
15 potential milestone for what I can see for
16 the casino industry, as well as for
17 Springfield.

18 At the same time, and I'm very much
19 in support of those aspects of the project,
20 I think that as several speakers indicated,
21 this needs to be a catalyst or used as a
22 catapult. And I would encourage the
23 Commission to ensure that they -- we're not
24 only being ethical in terms of our

1 procurement of proposals, but that we're
2 making sure that this is a successful
3 development. And I think there are several
4 threatening aspects.

5 One threatening aspect is, as
6 Mr. Bolduc was talking about, there are
7 some very serious issues with the traffic.
8 I went to a public hearing that MassDOT
9 held the other day where they are proposing
10 to build in the next, quote, five to six
11 construction sites an improvement, alleged
12 improvement of Route I-91, which is going
13 to have a serious impact on traffic
14 accidents to this area of Springfield.

15 I think that in addition to the
16 intersection that was referenced by
17 Mr. Bolduc that's adjacent to his station,
18 the entire parking and traffic access will
19 be impacted, and there are better
20 solutions. In effect, this is a monkey
21 wrench being thrown at the successful
22 implementation of the proposed casino. And
23 I know it's outside your jurisdiction but I
24 think if you're responsible for successful

1 implementation and development, there has
2 to be some coordination among the different
3 parties, and that's one place that that's
4 lacking.

5 Another place that it's lacking is
6 in the fine tuning of the development.
7 Initially, when MGM folks came to
8 Springfield, they were very positive and
9 had some good ideas and said we'll work out
10 the details. More lately it seems as
11 though everything is being worked out
12 inside of a closed box in terms of this --
13 they are requesting proposals that was
14 given by this Commission and the
15 relationship with the City of Springfield.

16 So, for instance, they have reduced
17 the amount of parking in their proposal in
18 order to -- and lay some concerns with the
19 City of Springfield parking authority.
20 That is not a good long-term proposal.

21 In other words, the Historical
22 Commission has asked that they preserve
23 several buildings. They are not open to
24 those suggestions, because it's seen as a

1 set thing. I would encourage you to be
2 open to those ideas.

3 CHAIRMAN CROSBY: We certainly will.
4 Thank you, thank you very much.

5 Carol De Carlo, Alex Schwerin, Evan
6 Plotkin, Carlos Gonzalez, Robert Wojcik,
7 okay.

8 MR. GONZALEZ: Good evening,
9 Chairman and Commissioners. Thank you for
10 being here in western Massachusetts. My
11 name is Carlos Gonzalez. I'm the president
12 and CEO of the Massachusetts Latino Chamber
13 of Commerce. And we support small business
14 and workforce development in particularly
15 the minority communities.

16 I want to commend the city leaders
17 of West Springfield for highlighting their
18 concerns upon the impact of casino and some
19 of those traffic and transportation on
20 behalf of their residents and also the
21 small business community.

22 Particularly, those micro small
23 business communities that represent 86
24 percent of all businesses in Massachusetts

1 today. Those are the under five employee
2 small businesses, and a lot of those are
3 the ones that we represent.

4 Casino is not only a Springfield
5 project, it's a regional economic project.
6 And we know that working together everybody
7 will win. We do have a regional problem,
8 that is that it's high unemployment in this
9 area, particularly in the inner-cities.

10 And when it comes to the communities
11 of color, diverse communities, there's an
12 unemployment crisis that exists, whether
13 it's in West Springfield or Springfield.
14 So, we have researched MGM. We have met
15 with them on many occasions and we have
16 visited over four casinos throughout the
17 country and talked to our partners around
18 the country about the casino industry,
19 particularly about MGM and they are
20 diversity champions.

21 They have conclusive programs that
22 impact positively in the workforce of our
23 communities of color and also on small
24 business procurement contracting when it

1 comes to women and minority businesses.

2 So, we support their effort to the
3 tune that we hope that the same report card
4 that they use, our present corporations in
5 this area will appear to uphold also
6 because we know today there is no report
7 card on some of our large corporations
8 around. So, we know that MGM will not only
9 bring opportunity but also a road for some
10 other corporations to follow.

11 And I also just want to just
12 highlight that training opportunities and
13 contracts that are presented in the host
14 agreements, as well as monitored by the
15 gaming commission, that all these awards go
16 to some of our large institutions, which we
17 know are great champions on working on
18 training our communities but they work to
19 be a commitment to partner with community-
20 based organizations that are met and led by
21 community of color and that they work on
22 collaborative efforts not only on getting
23 the word out but also the financial
24 opportunity for these training

1 opportunities and procurement contract
2 opportunities.

3 Thank you, and we hope you can
4 support the MGM casino.

5 CHAIRMAN CROSBY: Thank you very
6 much.

7 Did I read your name?

8 MR. WOJCIK: Yes. I want to thank
9 you all for coming, and I don't know how
10 the heck you can do it up there. I would
11 have fallen asleep already.

12 My name is Robert Wojcik. I am here
13 on behalf of David Gader, who is the
14 director of CareerPoint, one of the one
15 stop career centers here in Massachusetts.

16 And listening to everybody speak
17 tonight, I heard there's going to be
18 traffic problems and they're going to need
19 to be fixed. To me, that equates to jobs.
20 They are going to build a casino. That
21 equates to jobs. They are going to need to
22 run the casino. To me, that equates to
23 jobs. They are going to need people who
24 run the retail opportunities that open up

1 in Springfield. That equates to jobs.
2 People are concerned about issues with
3 crime. Again, that is going to equate to
4 jobs.

5 I found out about a lot of things
6 about MGM while working with them, speaking
7 with them and speaking with other people.
8 One of the things that amazed me is what
9 they do for our Veterans, and I don't know
10 if you are familiar with their program for
11 Veterans.

12 When a Veteran goes away to serve
13 our country, they continue to collect a
14 paycheck from MGM. They continue to get
15 paid, not subtracting what they earned in
16 the service but on top of that. To me,
17 that is a corporation that takes serious
18 concern about their community.

19 And at CareerPoint we serve up -- I
20 want to make sure I get the numbers right
21 for you -- 11,000 to 12,000 individuals a
22 year that are looking for work, that are
23 looking for training that are scared. I
24 personally am a job development

1 coordinator, and I work directly with
2 homeless families. I have worked with
3 families who lost their home because of the
4 tornado and they are scared they cannot get
5 jobs. I don't know how many times they
6 say, "Oh, my God, Bob, when is the casino
7 coming? Can you help get me in it?"

8 It's hope for the people who do not
9 have jobs. And we support, as you can
10 tell, we support the casino. We support
11 jobs coming to Springfield. I understand
12 the concerns that people have, and I am
13 confident that they can be worked through
14 to bring more jobs to our community where
15 they are needed. I will leave plenty of
16 time for other people. Thank you.

17 CHAIRMAN CROSBY: Thank you very
18 much.

19 Jeff Hayden. And then I'm going to
20 read some other names. I think this might
21 be from a different list. But if you are
22 in the room, please come forward.

23 Allen Zippin, Bill Messner, Bob
24 Lepage, Brent Bertelli, Christopher

1 Thompson, Colleen Loveless, any of you
2 here?

3 Jeff.

4 MR. HAYDEN: Good evening,
5 Commissioners, and, again, thank you.

6 At the heart, the enhanced gaming
7 legislation was framed as a job,
8 construction jobs, hospitality
9 industry-related jobs, all kinds of direct
10 and indirect jobs. The jobs resulting from
11 this economic stimulus, this development,
12 are jobs that will make an impact that's
13 very broad in our region but it's two
14 primary issues.

15 Two primary issues is that we need
16 to scale up the workforce. We need 3,000
17 jobs. When do we need them? We need them
18 less than two years. Where are we going to
19 find 3,000 people? We have to scale up the
20 workforce.

21 The second issue I think in relation
22 to that is that we have people in our
23 region who are unemployed and underemployed
24 but there's not a scale match. So how do

1 we scale up the workforce and yet train
2 them so that we have quality workers for
3 this new Massachusetts industry?

4 If new individuals don't enter the
5 labor pool, if the size of the regional
6 workforce does not expand or scale up, then
7 the primary source of workers for the
8 casino could be individuals from outside of
9 Massachusetts or those employed in the
10 existing hospitality sector or those in
11 related jobs in other industries.

12 For example, the need for cash
13 handlers could stress more workers in our
14 banking institutions or the fact that
15 facility maintainers at a local hospital
16 might mean that the casino would be a good
17 opportunity for them as individuals.
18 However, that hospital goes lacking for its
19 quality of workers.

20 Growing the labor pool locally will
21 not only help us to meet the demand of the
22 casino development, but it will also
23 provide stability for our existing
24 employers. The challenge of having enough

1 workers for things like hospitality
2 positions, I will give you an example.
3 Entry line cook, right now we know that for
4 entry line culinary in western
5 Massachusetts there's about 240 open
6 positions.

7 So, in other words, we need to train
8 240 people to fill those positions. With
9 the casino coming, we're estimating that
10 that's going to go well over 600
11 individuals. So, a problem with filling
12 these existing jobs all of sudden becomes
13 exacerbated, because we need to fill these
14 casino jobs as well.

15 We're currently talking and working
16 with MGM on behalf of the Massachusetts
17 Casino Careers Training Institute to create
18 a culinary training center, hospitality
19 training center right in the heart of our
20 urban core. We're hoping that that comes
21 to -- becomes a reality. But expanding that
22 training capacity will help us meet the
23 need that's current but also the future
24 need.

1 And, lastly, a workforce development
2 plan needs some details and teeth. And,
3 so, we're hoping that over the next few
4 months we will begin to do that work with
5 MGM as we're going to be doing that with
6 the proposed slot license that you just
7 awarded.

8 We will work with the Regional
9 Employment Board. We will work with the
10 City of Springfield. We will work with
11 CareerPoints, Future Works, community-based
12 organizations, the Latino Chamber of
13 Commerce, other chambers of commerce.

14 We will work with everyone because
15 we know to scale up and get 3,000 workers
16 in this short period of time will require
17 all hands on deck and all hands doing the
18 job. We know you're part of that team as
19 well. Thank you.

20 CHAIRMAN CROSBY: Great, thank you.

21 So other names, if you are here
22 please come forward. I mentioned
23 Christopher Thompson, Colleen Loveless,
24 Daryl Gibbs, David Gadaire, Griffin, Ivette

1 Cruz, Jay Minkarah, Jay Griffin, Jill
2 McCarthy Payne, Joan Kagan.

3 Yes, sir.

4 MR. MINKARAH: I feel like I'm
5 jumping the line.

6 CHAIRMAN CROSBY: You get to.

7 COMMISSIONER STEBBINS: Sir, you've
8 waited to speak. Sir, was your name
9 mentioned before?

10 MR. WETROWSKI: Yes. And all of
11 sudden a gal came in, and then you didn't
12 get back to me.

13 CHAIRMAN CROSBY: Your name wasn't
14 on the list.

15 MR. WETROWSKI: I signed up first
16 thing today. It's one of the first names.

17 CHAIRMAN CROSBY: We'll get to you.
18 If you're on the list, we'll get to you.

19 MR. MINKARAH: I will be brief.

20 My name is Jay Minkarah. I'm
21 president and CEO of Develop Springfield.
22 We are a non-profit development corporation
23 that's dedicated to the revitalization of
24 the City of Springfield. And on a personal

1 side, I'm also a downtown resident and I
2 live within about a block and a half of the
3 proposed MGM site.

4 Overall, I agree with a lot of the
5 comments that I've heard previously and I
6 won't repeat them about the importance of
7 this project in terms of job creation, in
8 terms of the overall economic impact that
9 it's going to have, the supply chain, but
10 I'm going to focus really my comments more
11 narrowly.

12 As has been said previously, this
13 proposal is more than a casino. This is a
14 multi-venue entertainment destination that
15 is spread throughout the downtown. It
16 provides a dynamic mixture of restaurants,
17 retail shops, hotel, and as is mentioned
18 also, market rate housing which is critical
19 to downtown Springfield.

20 The potential impact of this on
21 revitalizing the downtown area is, I
22 believe unprecedented and that benefit will
23 be spread widely throughout the region.
24 Across this country we are seeing a trend

1 towards a growth in urbanism. Young
2 professionals, in particular, are being
3 drawn to the more dynamic and vibrant urban
4 centers around the country.

5 I think that's particularity true in
6 the northeast. I think one of the best
7 examples we see in that is right in Boston.
8 In the Boston area, we've seen a tremendous
9 growth in jobs, particularly high paying
10 jobs and professional high-tech sector.
11 The construction that we see is evident.
12 The population in Boston is growing about
13 three times or close to three times the
14 rate of the state as a whole.

15 The percentage of young adults in
16 the population is one of the highest, if
17 not, the highest of any major city in the
18 country. That's why they are growing so
19 dynamically.

20 In western Mass., we are really a
21 slow growth or no growth region. The rate
22 of growth in Hampden County is half that of
23 the state. We are seeing a net loss of
24 jobs. We need that kind of vibrancy in the

1 community. And, ultimately, if we don't
2 have a vibrant and dynamic urban core in
3 Springfield, this region overall can't
4 succeed.

5 The kind of mixed use development
6 that we're looking at both the magnitude,
7 as well as the way that it is designed and
8 integrated into the community is exactly
9 the type of transformational development
10 that cities all across this country are
11 seeking.

12 I think we are very privileged, and
13 we had the opportunity to pursue the MGM
14 proposal, and we hope you will grant the
15 license at the soonest possible date.

16 CHAIRMAN CROSBY: Thank you very
17 much.

18 Joan Kagan, John Winkler, Kimberly
19 Lee, Leonard Underwood, any of you here,
20 please come forward.

21 MR. WINKLER: I know you've had a
22 long day but thank you so much for staying
23 with us.

24 CHAIRMAN CROSBY: No problem. Thank

1 you for staying with us.

2 MR. WINKLER: I'm John Winkler. I'm
3 the president of Six Flags New England in
4 neighboring town Agawam, Massachusetts.
5 Six Flags would like to welcome MGM to the
6 region and to the Pioneer Valley.

7 As you know, tourism is the third
8 largest industry in the State of
9 Massachusetts. There are 33 plus million
10 people that live within just a couple of
11 hundred miles of this region. And I have
12 no doubt that MGM as a world-class brand
13 will help bring more tourism to the region.

14 We expect MGM to bring a high level
15 of energy and vision. It will only
16 multiply the region's offering. It will be
17 new and fresh and, most importantly, it
18 will create synergy. And we start adding
19 it all up, we have the Basketball Hall of
20 Fame. We have Six Flags. We have the
21 beautiful Berkshire mountains. We have
22 Yankee Candle and then we have MGM Grand,
23 and then we're a couple of puzzle pieces
24 away from being a really fun place to live,

1 work and play.

2 Long-term we expect MGM to help
3 beautify Springfield in the surrounding
4 areas and we hope that they will, you know,
5 continue to invest in growth just as
6 companies like ours has and will continue
7 to do.

8 That is all I needed to say. I
9 thank you for your time. Have a great
10 night.

11 COMMISSIONER CAMERON: Thank you.

12 CHAIRMAN CROSBY: Thank you very
13 much. You have been very patient. I am
14 not sure where you are on the list, but you
15 deserve a chance.

16 MR. WETROWSKI: The gentleman from
17 Six Flags, I wish you could hear my
18 remarks. You're mentioned.

19 MR. WINKLER: I'll stay.

20 MR. WETROWSKI: Hi, I'm Steve
21 Wetrowski, Jr., lifetime resident of
22 Longmeadow 71 years and counting and I am
23 pro-casino and I challenge anybody from
24 here who has to go to Tunica, Mississippi

1 the nearest airport is Memphis.

2 I go down there for a film
3 convention, Memphis film convention which
4 takes place at one of the hotels down
5 there. In that town, there are nine
6 casinos. It used to be -- in that county,
7 it used to be the worst in the United
8 States for all these economic reasons and
9 schools, you name it, they were divide.
10 Not any more.

11 With nine casinos, MGM has a hotel.
12 The Gold Strike, which has more rooms than
13 there are people living in Mississippi, in
14 that town, in that county. They have 1,100
15 rooms. There's only about ten thousand
16 fifty -- 1,050 people there. And, so,
17 everybody has got a job that wants a job.
18 And then if they wait until summer, they
19 can always go and pick cotton. There's
20 cotton fields right next to the casinos.
21 Anyway, that is all I have to say about
22 Tunica.

23 What I have to say about -- I know
24 that MGM has signed an agreement with Six

1 Flags. I live in Longmeadow and one thing
2 that bothers me I travel -- I go from
3 usually make it from New Haven to
4 Longmeadow. And if you take Route 47 west,
5 it leads you onto Route 159, which is where
6 Six Flags is. It's less than five miles.

7 However, the sign for that, the exit
8 that will take you there is way down the
9 road. You can't possibly get on that exit.
10 As a result it takes you 11 hours -- 11
11 miles to get to Six Flags instead of less
12 than 10 minutes sometimes during the high
13 traffic. During the tri-season, there is a
14 lot more.

15 But, as I said people, it's one we
16 can't stop. The Town of Longmeadow can't
17 stop the Big E traffic. Bay Path, which is
18 expanding and has a sister -- is going to
19 have a graduate school in East Longmeadow.
20 The easiest way to go is take a road
21 through Longmeadow, use Frump Road. It
22 goes right there. You can't and -- but we
23 can possibly work together.

24 If I understand, somebody has told

1 me that Garmins for wrong directions for
2 people coming from Connecticut and Rhode
3 Island to not have to go through Longmeadow
4 and take that exit, which goes through
5 Suffield. I have relatives who live on
6 that road, both sides. I have been to
7 three funerals lately. That is why I have
8 been talking to them. And guess what, they
9 don't experience any big overflow of cars
10 during the time -- the seven months that
11 Six Flags are open. Only if there is a big
12 maybe a concert name in there, then they
13 notice it.

14 They had more traffic problems when
15 a cooking school was on the ground of the
16 former monastery and that would have the
17 same time for classes -- they would open to
18 about the same time. They would close.
19 So, you have two parts of the day in which
20 the road was tied up. But this is what,
21 you know, needs to be done.

22 And then to go to -- possibly go to
23 Six Flags and see what their directions are
24 to get there and to have them use that --

1 coming up from Massachusetts, New Hampshire
2 or Vermont it's a different story because
3 you're not going that direction.

4 But anyway -- and the other way,
5 too, is there is new technologies on the
6 internet. I don't know. I'm not on the
7 internet. Are these directions to get or
8 are the directions right, Exit 47 west?
9 That is all I ask to take and look and see
10 what they can do with their advertising.

11 I remember years ago probably when
12 Carol ran Riverside Park in the Meadow
13 section of Hartford there was a big -- they
14 had a big billboard which said 47 west, the
15 exit to take to get off for Riverside Park.
16 But right now Six Flags, I haven't seen any
17 Six Flags billboard. It's probably one
18 type of advertising they don't use, but
19 they probably do use the internet to
20 advertise it.

21 That's it. That's all. I agree
22 with MGM's proposals. You're doing the
23 right thing.

24 CHAIRMAN CROSBY: Thank you very

1 much.

2 Meredith Griswold, Mike Recchia,
3 Nicole Griffin, Patrice Swan, Peter
4 Gagliardi, Rosemary Woods, Tony Calabrese,
5 Vincent Maniaci. We had somebody else from
6 AIC. Wayne Hooker, Carol Costa, Rico
7 Daniele, Joe Frigo. We're making progress.
8 George Sarcis, Laura Broad, JP Hammond it
9 looks like. All right. Just takes a
10 little patience.

11 MR. HAMMOND: JP Hammond, resident
12 here of West Springfield. I was born,
13 raised, grew up and educated in
14 Springfield, Mass. My mother, brother
15 still there. I patronize the city
16 everyday.

17 My concerns are two-fold. One being
18 traffic, and I know you heard a lot of it
19 but I don't think anybody has spoke to what
20 I am about to speak. 91 southbound and
21 northbound has an S-turn and never a week
22 goes by there isn't a crash and a backup
23 and it can go all the way to Enfield,
24 Connecticut. Getting into the City of

1 Springfield over the Memorial Bridge going
2 east, the Senator spoke in regard to the
3 courthouses and how condensed everything is
4 there.

5 Your next avenue east is Union
6 Street, and Mr. Bolduc spoke of his Pride
7 station which is there. Simple Dunkin
8 Donut tractor-trailer truck there two days
9 ago, I couldn't even get in at 7:00 in the
10 morning because it was backed up onto West
11 Columbus. So, people would take a left and
12 circumvent that by going down Bliss or
13 Howard Street, which would be totally
14 eliminated by the casino.

15 So, I don't know what avenues going
16 east into Springfield would be available at
17 all. It could be something as simple as a
18 Verizon truck or utility truck or something
19 on Union that blocks up the traffic all the
20 way to the Memorial Bridge all they around
21 the corner.

22 Also, the Big E is a huge problem,
23 and the Memorial Bridge takes the brunt of
24 it all. So, I can't fathom how this casino

1 could be placed where it's being put.
2 Unfortunately, the 41 acres of industrial
3 wasteland where the Westing House was would
4 have been a perfect location but that
5 washed out.

6 My other point of interest is crime.
7 And I go there approximately 7:00 in the
8 morning at daybreak and there isn't any
9 corner there isn't someone flagging me down
10 for drugs or prostitution. And it just
11 seems crazy to me to put a casino smack-dab
12 in the middle of that, because there is
13 just these people roaming around the
14 streets.

15 And the police department are
16 wonderful and I hold them in the highest
17 quarters but they are up to their eyeballs.
18 And I don't understand what is going to
19 happen to all the people visiting that are
20 going to take their way out of the casino
21 and be confronted by these people.

22 I have witnessed two Sunday morning
23 shootings approximately 8:00 in morning
24 this past fall. One man was in a

1 wheelchair. It's just crazy down there. I
2 don't know if you have been down there. If
3 we all got in a van right now and took a
4 ride over there, you'd see what I am
5 saying. It's pretty bad. Whether a casino
6 somehow will cure all that, I don't know
7 but my points are traffic and crime. And I
8 thank you very much.

9 Oh, one other thing. John Simpson,
10 the professor at UMass of Art, and he
11 brings his students down. On Howard
12 Street, I was a proud member of the 104th
13 Infantry. That is where the original
14 armory is. It's a beautiful, historical,
15 red stone in granite armory.

16 I would hope that the casino builds
17 around it if this does happen, and that
18 they don't bring that to a demise, because
19 John Simpson could load his students up
20 from UMass and go down there. And to me,
21 it's the most beautiful, architectural
22 piece left in the City of Springfield.
23 Thank you.

24 CHAIRMAN CROSBY: Thank you for

1 those comments.

2 Carl Ronca.

3 MR. PEREL: Perel.

4 Mr. Chairman, Members of the
5 Commission, thank you so much for the
6 opportunity and I waited a long time for
7 this.

8 This is one of the biggest
9 opportunities that we have ever had in my
10 lifetime and I certainly hope you will look
11 at it very, very closely and consider it
12 really strongly.

13 We had some other people were
14 talking about how they used to go to
15 downtown Springfield and go to Steiger's
16 and Forbes and Wallace. And when they
17 built the Holyoke Mall, which was equal to
18 your Wrentham Mall in the Boston area, it
19 sucked the life out of Springfield.
20 Waiting now for this -- many years living
21 in East Longmeadow most of my life and now
22 living in West Springfield, we travel back
23 and forth to work everyday. I'm a
24 commercial real estate broker, as well as

1 residential broker for over 30 years and I
2 understand that all boats rise with the
3 tide and traffic has been a major issue and
4 it will be a major issue in any development
5 process.

6 In the City of Boston right now, the
7 traffic is in my opinion horrific. It's so
8 hard. This is the best traffic patterns
9 that you could ever imagine living in West
10 Springfield. And West Springfield has
11 something a little bit unique that no other
12 city and town in Massachusetts,
13 Connecticut, Rhode Island have is we host
14 one of the ninth largest fairs in the
15 country and bring a 160,000 people on one
16 day into West Springfield flawlessly with
17 broken down bridges that the governor and
18 the MassDOT have recognized as some of the
19 worst intersections that need replacement
20 and revamping and they are working on it.

21 So, I think with the development and
22 the development that MGM has put forward in
23 my opinion as a commercial broker and the
24 blend of the Basketball Hall of Fame and

1 the MassMutual Center is second to none.

2 I looked at Hard Rock. We looked at
3 all the other casinos that would bring them
4 way out into the country and eliminate the
5 opportunity to redevelop a city that has
6 been devastated by crime and by lack of
7 industry and lack of reason to go into the
8 city. We need this support. We need the
9 MGM. We need the progress. Thank you so
10 much and good luck to you guys.

11 CHAIRMAN CROSBY: Thank you.

12 Greg Neffinger and looks like
13 Shelkey, Steven Abdow, Stan Gonbrowski,
14 Mario Feori, Nicoli Laptin or Laptor. I
15 think we heard from Jay Minkarah. Robert
16 from Prides, we heard from Mr. Bolduc,
17 Cynthia Romaniak, heard from her. Alex
18 Schwerin, Julia Cruz, Don Rogers, Hillary
19 Weiss, getting close. Joe Frigo again.
20 John could be Winacar.

21 COMMISSIONER STEBBINS: We heard
22 from her.

23 CHAIRMAN CROSBY: We did, okay.
24 Colleen Loveless. Said her name before.

1 Carol Costa, heard that name before. Rev.
2 Chuck Wimer.

3 MR. WIMER: It's Pastor Chuck Wimer.

4 CHAIRMAN CROSBY: Got it.

5 MR. WIMER: Good evening. I'm
6 Pastor Chuck Wimer from Jubilee Family
7 Outreach Center right here in West
8 Springfield. I'm also a member of the
9 Council of Churches of western Mass. I
10 also am the founder of the United Pioneer
11 Valley Ministers Fellowship, and I
12 appreciate you giving us the opportunity to
13 voice our opinion.

14 I know that there's a lot of concern
15 here in the city for jobs and for the area
16 for what this region needs. And I know
17 that there's a lot of hope that, you know,
18 the casino might bring that and it will
19 bring some short-time jobs into the area
20 for some of the trades and things like
21 that.

22 But I just want to remind us what
23 the scripture says, the Book of Prophet is
24 to not put our hope and trust in uncertain

1 riches because there's myth out there that
2 the casinos will bring jobs and to be
3 long-lasting and great pay.

4 But if you do some research, which
5 you can do online, you'll see, you know,
6 what those jobs really pay. They are just
7 basically over minimum wage, and those are
8 our facts. One of the things I am going to
9 speak just real quickly from is from some
10 experience.

11 I come from a state. The city I
12 grew up in has four casinos. Actually, it
13 has more in the state, but the city had
14 four casinos, one on each corner. The city
15 was a beautiful city. And after the
16 casinos moved in, in a short period of
17 time, now the crime rate, the drug rate,
18 prostitution rate, rivals out of New York
19 City. As a matter of fact, just recently
20 in that state, one of the casinos was shut
21 down because of its involvement with drugs
22 and also with the Mafia.

23 I've had to sit, and I don't know if
24 you've ever had to sit across the table

1 from a family or families that have
2 suffered because one of the spouses is
3 addicted to gambling. Gambling is an
4 addiction. I have seen children that were
5 not fed and families not provided for
6 because of that addiction.

7 It's a reality. It's something we
8 are going to have to address, have to face.
9 We hosted one of the health impact studies
10 at our church. There are many things I
11 really ask you to consider and really look
12 at some of those things that were brought
13 forth.

14 But as a pastor, as a minister for
15 the well-being of this city and the
16 outreach of the community, I believe
17 there's better ways that we can get jobs
18 into this city.

19 If the casino comes to an area, it
20 should probably be somewhere out away from
21 the city. One of the things that people
22 have said to me, Pastor, I'm so thankful
23 that the casino was far enough away,
24 because they had to drive all the way to

1 Connecticut, that it wasn't right here
2 because I don't know what we would have
3 done.

4 So, in all your consideration, I
5 want you to consider this, of the impact,
6 because I know personally what it does to
7 families, to children and I have seen what
8 it does to cities. Thank you.

9 CHAIRMAN CROSBY: Thank you.

10 COMMISSIONER STEBBINS: Reverend,
11 what community were you mentioning you were
12 in?

13 MR. WIMER: Tulsa, Oklahoma.

14 CHAIRMAN CROSBY: We have one more
15 name on the list. Roberta Paige.

16 MS. PAIGE: I don't know if that's
17 saving the best until last or last but not
18 least. I don't know.

19 CHAIRMAN CROSBY: Absolutely.

20 MS. PAIGE: Roberta Paige, born in
21 Springfield, lifelong resident of West
22 Springfield.

23 In another life, I actually taught
24 English and French here at the high school

1 and I have been an adjunct professor at two
2 of our local colleges, American
3 International College and Western New
4 England College now University. I'm very
5 interested in education.

6 We have an awful a lot of community
7 colleges here, STCC, Holyoke Community
8 College. We have other colleges and
9 universities in this greater West
10 Springfield, western Massachusetts area.

11 I honestly don't know whether MGM or
12 any casino would be a panacea in
13 Springfield or any urban area. I am sure
14 you have done your homework to find out. I
15 would love to know what urban cities with
16 casinos are prospering. There are those
17 who have rose-colored glasses on and say,
18 "This would be great and things would be
19 fabulous." I don't know if all of that has
20 been sustained for any length of time.

21 I would love to know that but we
22 have colleges here and universities. We
23 have Bay Path College somebody mentioned,
24 Elms, UMass, Smith Holyoke, you name them,

1 Elms. We have a whole bunch of them here
2 in western Massachusetts. Would I
3 personally like to have seen some
4 exploration to bring other business
5 entities into this area? We would never be
6 a simi valley. I get that.

7 For some time, a little bit of time
8 I actually worked and lived in LA, worked
9 at Universal and, so, I know what that kind
10 of industry is and I have been in the
11 corporate world and I've traveled
12 extensively throughout this country and
13 elsewhere, as you all have.

14 I would much rather have seen that
15 happen where we bring in those kinds of
16 businesses that could avail themselves of
17 our fantabulous, fantastic graduates that
18 we have from all of these institutions of
19 higher learning. I think that would be
20 great.

21 Some time ago Springfield had what
22 was called "Time for Springfield." There
23 are some of us who are old enough to
24 remember this and it was a plan for the

1 rebirth of downtown. And at that time,
2 Theodore Demaro, Ted Demaro was the mayor,
3 the governor was Mike Dukakis.

4 We had -- the spearhead for this
5 was what was called "Springfield Central by
6 Carl Marketti." We had Congressman Boland
7 who was on board with all of these kinds of
8 plans. I happen to have this, because I
9 serve on a number of commissions here in
10 West Springfield and I was looking at some
11 of these things that they had for some
12 plans and I thought maybe we can do some
13 things in West Springfield.

14 They are great plans. They haven't
15 worked. A lot of the plans are the same
16 plans that MGM has for Springfield. You
17 know, sometimes you can't say, "Well, that
18 was then and didn't work then. We can't
19 try it now." On the other hand, if they
20 couldn't implement some of these things way
21 back when over the course of years, how can
22 other things happen. I don't know.

23 I'm concerned about what Senator
24 Candaras had said earlier. We have a lot

1 of infrastructure problems, not only in
2 Springfield but all around this area, you
3 know. The Route 5 underpass in West
4 Springfield is a problem. So, how can we
5 have all of this happening all
6 simultaneously?

7 I really think we need some real
8 strategic planning here, ladies and
9 gentlemen, to have all the different
10 entities come together and really work
11 things out.

12 And, again, I don't know that if a
13 casino is good or bad for Springfield. But
14 the way things are at this point in time, I
15 don't think we're ready for it. We may be.
16 I don't know, but I would just ask you to
17 really do some research about urban
18 communities and urban casinos.

19 From my experience, they work for a
20 number of years, you know, a year or two
21 and everything is glitz and glamour and
22 wow, the wow-factor. And then after that,
23 they seemed to have lost the glitz and the
24 glee and the polish and now we find --

1 you've heard about Detroit. We've heard
2 about Atlanta City, and we've seen all of
3 that. I think I just have some concerns.
4 So, I think if we can get more information
5 out to the general public so we can all
6 know a little bit more about the
7 potentials.

8 But the ramifications we all won't
9 know until two years from now, three years
10 from now, five years from now if, in fact,
11 in your wisdom you grant a license whether
12 all of that can be -- will have been
13 sustained and whether we can experience
14 some good things as a result of something
15 in that community.

16 Thank you all for being here. Thank
17 you for listening to all of us. Safe
18 travels back to where you're going and
19 thank you again.

20 CHAIRMAN CROSBY: Thank you very
21 much.

22 Believe it or not, it is one minute
23 of eight. Is there anybody else who I
24 don't have on the list but would like to

1 speak? Going once, going twice. Do I have
2 a motion to adjourn?

3 Before I do that, let me just say
4 thank you to Mayor Sullivan and to the
5 people of West Springfield and the
6 officials of West Springfield, to the West
7 Springfield Middle School for hosting us
8 and putting up with us and to all of you
9 who have stayed with us this whole time.

10 And to the 60, 70, 80 of you who
11 spoke, you saw us busily taking notes. We
12 learned some things today that were
13 important. I thank you all very much.

14 Commissioners, anybody else want to
15 say anything?

16 COMMISSIONER MCHUGH: This was a
17 very, very good evening.

18 CHAIRMAN CROSBY: And I very much
19 appreciate everybody's attention to the
20 time limit. Everybody was extraordinarily
21 courteous. I much appreciate that.

22 Do I have a move to adjourn?

23 Second, all in favor?

24 COMMISSIONER MCHUGH: Aye.

1 COMMISSIOINER ZUNIGA: Aye.

2 COMMISSIONER STEBBINS: Aye.

3 COMMISSIONER CAMERON: Aye.

4 CHAIRMAN CROSBY: Ayes have the
5 unanimously.

6 Thank you, good night.

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8 (Meeting adjourned at 8:01 p.m.)

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1 SPEAKERS:
2
3 Edward Sullivan, Mayor of West Springfield
4 Jonathan Silverstein, Kopelman and Paige
5 Jason DeGray, PE, Greenman-Pedersen, Inc.
6 James Lyons, PE, Town of West Springfield
7 Jim Czach, PE, Town of West Springfield
8 Brian J. Griffin, West Springfield Town Council
9 Simon Brighenti, West Springfield Town Attorney
10 Gale Candaras, Senator
11 Angus Rushlow, City Council, West Springfield
12 George Kelly, West Springfield Town Council
13 Ronald P. Campurciani, Chief of Police
14 James Welch, Senator
15 Michael Finn, Representative
16 Michael Fenton, Esq.
17 Jeffrey Hayden
18 Michael Goldberg, Theodore's Restaurant
19 Ted Steger, Longmeadow
20 Sue LaFlamme, West Springfield
21 Jerome Noonan, Longmeadow
22 Michael Egan
23 Carol Kerr, Springfield
24 Danny Eaton

1 SPEAKERS:
2
3 John Powers
4 Christopher Benoit
5 Judith Matt, Spirt of Springfield
6 Frank A. Rossi, Teamsters Local Union 404
7 Alan Cabot, West Springfield
8 Thom Fox, BrunoFox Group Architects
9 Rhonda Latney, UCVED
10 Diane Crowell, West Springfield
11 Raymond Berry, United Way of Pioneer Valley
12 Marjorie Morgan, Longmeadow
13 Carol Moore Cutting, WEIB 106.3 FM
14 Jason Garand
15 Ray Bienia
16 Michelle Steger
17 Brendan Carey, UNITE HERE
18 Gregory Schmutte, American International College
19 Cynthia Romaniak
20 John Simpson
21 Roberto Nieves, Common Capital, Inc.
22 Chelan Brown
23 Robert Bolduc
24 David P. Gaby

1 SPEAKERS:

2

3 Carlos Gonzalez, Latino Chamber of Commerce

4 Robert Wojcik, CareerPoint

5 Jay Minkarah, Develop Springfield

6 John Winkler, President of Six Flags

7 JP Hammond

8 Mr. Perel

9 Chuck Wimer

10 Roberta Paige

11 Steve Wetrowski, Jr.

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COMMONWEALTH OF MASSACHUSETTS

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I, KRISTEN M. EDWARDS, COURT REPORTER,
do hereby certify that the foregoing is a true and
accurate transcription of my stenographic notes,
to the best of my knowledge and ability.

WITNESS MY HAND, this 6th day of March,
2014.

Kristen M. Edwards