

COMMONWEALTH OF MASSACHUSETTS
MASSACHUSETTS GAMING COMMISSION

CHAIRMAN

Stephen P. Crosby

COMMISSIONERS

Gayle Cameron

Bruce W. Stebbins

Enrique Zuniga

RE: HOST COMMUNITY HEARING SPRINGFIELD

May 14, 2014
MASSMUTUAL CENTER
1277 Main Street
Springfield, Massachusetts 01144

1 P R O C E E D I N G S

2
3 CHAIRMAN CROSBY: Ladies and

4 gentlemen, I am pleased to reconvene the
5 meeting that we temporarily adjourned for the
6 host community -- the host community
7 agreement -- host community meeting pursuant
8 to Mass General Law 23K, Section 17C and 205
9 CMR 118.05 to consider the application for a
10 Category 1 gaming license.

11 Since this is a little bit of a
12 formal meeting, I just want to read the ground
13 rules. Public hearing is a continuation of
14 the commission's April 1, 2014 meeting -- or
15 hearing, and is intended to provide the
16 commission with an opportunity to hear any
17 comments related to agreements executed
18 between Blue Tarp Development, LLC, slash,
19 MGM, the applicant, and town of Longmeadow,
20 and the town of West Springfield, as they are
21 a part of the applicant's gaming application.
22 Copies of those agreements are available, and
23 have been available, for review on the
24 commission's Web site, ww.massgaming.com.

1 No votes or decisions -- decisions
2 will be made at this hearing. It's simply
3 intended as an opportunity for the commission
4 to gather information, engage public sentiment
5 relative to the agreements. The applicant and
6 its agents, and representatives, shall attend
7 the public hearing and respond to questions as
8 directed by the commission, if we have any.

9 Representatives of the town of
10 Longmeadow and the town of West Springfield
11 may attend the public hearing, may make a
12 presentation, and respond to questions about
13 the agreements at the discretion of the
14 commission. Any other interested person may
15 attend the public hearing and may present
16 comments at the discretion of the commission.

17 We initially said that we would only
18 accept comments about the agreements, but we
19 know that there were some people who tried to
20 speak last time and weren't able to stay long
21 enough, so we're going to be a little more
22 flexible on that, and we'll entertain, at
23 least a few folks who have said they wanted to
24 speak and weren't able to last time.

1 I think that is it for any
2 introductions. Is there anything else I'm
3 missing? Pardon? Oh, yes. Thank you. We do
4 have a five-minute rule, ably managed by
5 Darian. And she will be rigorous, and please
6 keep to it.

7 We've said that we -- well, we
8 posted at least four to six, but, of course,
9 we will stay longer, if need be, to give
10 everybody a chance to be heard, if the time
11 runs out.

12 I was told that Mayor Sullivan may
13 be here. We, typically, are respectful of
14 public officials, and would invite him to
15 speak, if he's here to speak. If not, we'll
16 go -- we'll start with the list.

17 MAYOR SULLIVAN: I'll just respond
18 to questions or concerns if they come up.
19 Okay, issues.

20 CHAIRMAN CROSBY: Okay. Okay.
21 Well, I think -- I guess the first item is
22 whether the commissioners had any questions
23 either for the applicants, or for either of
24 the two communities?

1 We have deliberated, I think
2 everybody here knows, we have deliberated.
3 There has been agreements struck. There was
4 arbitration. We did make some very slight
5 amendments to the -- very, very slight
6 amendments to the final agreements that we
7 thought made the -- the final agreements
8 consistent with our statute. And I don't
9 think we have any other questions.

10 COMMISSIONER MCHUGH: When I -- I
11 don't -- this-I'm springing this, so you may
12 not be prepared, and that's perfectly
13 understandable. But, at some point, I would
14 like to get an update on the progress of the
15 historic district -- the historical society
16 interactions. I know that's some progress had
17 been made and would welcome and update at some
18 time. If it's -- if you feel comfortable
19 doing it now, that's fine. If you're not,
20 perhaps, we could have, at a later date, an
21 update. But that -- that's an interest that I
22 have.

23 MR. MATHIS: Commissioner McHugh,
24 we're happy to give you an update right now.

1 Probably, tag team it with my colleague,
2 Chuck Irving. We will come up to the
3 podium.

4 COMMISSIONER MCHUGH: Sure.

5 MR. MATHIS: Is that --

6 COMMISSIONER MCHUGH: Sure.

7 MR. MATHIS: For the record,
8 Michael Mathis, MGM Springfield.

9 MR. IRVING: And Chuck Irving,
10 Davenport Properties.

11 MR. MATHIS: The -- I believe the
12 last time we were in front of you we had
13 talked about -- there was a number of comments
14 from the local representatives of the historic
15 commission, and we talked about a April 10th
16 meeting that we were going to have with
17 representatives of our company and
18 representatives of the commission. And I --
19 Chuck was at that meeting. Chuck Irving was
20 at that meeting. We can report out the
21 meeting did take place, and we talk about
22 where we are subsequent to that as well.

23 MR. IRVING: I believe the -- the
24 last meeting was probably our fourth or fifth

1 meeting with the historic commission in
2 Springfield. The commission has been very
3 helpful, very kind and generous with their
4 time. Our plan has evolved over the past
5 months with a lot of their comments, but they
6 still have areas of concern. And we are in
7 the process of producing a report, which
8 should be available within the next week, and
9 it will take each property, individually, and
10 talk about how we are studying it and
11 addressing them.

12 The report will specifically discuss
13 the current conditions of the building, the
14 history of the buildings as we know it, and
15 MGM's plan for each property. As you know, we
16 cannot save all of the buildings. So, in some
17 areas of the report it will say, regretfully,
18 these buildings have to come down to
19 accommodate the casino. In other areas, the
20 report will say, here's a building that we're
21 going to renovate and keep.

22 I believe we have a couple open
23 issues left for discussion with the
24 commission, and we have a meeting scheduled

1 with them on June 5th to discuss the report.
2 We intend to get them that report ahead of
3 time so we can come and have an informed
4 discussion on both sides.

5 CHAIRMAN CROSBY: Were you
6 suggesting that beyond the orig -- there's --
7 there are three buildings, I think, that had
8 already been identified that, to one extent or
9 another, you were going to try to -- you were
10 planning on saving. Are you saying that
11 you've reconsidered and there are now others?
12 Not all -- you can't do all of them, you may
13 be able to do some more?

14 MR. IRVING: We have three buildings
15 that we're definitively going to take efforts
16 to save.

17 CHAIRMAN CROSBY: Right.

18 MR. IRVING: And, then, where we
19 went further with the commission, is where we
20 can look at saving some facades, or where we
21 can look at recognizing structures that would
22 have to be taken down.

23 As you know, the Union Hotel is one
24 of the issues is of high importance to the

1 commission. And, you know, our feeling about
2 that building is it's got a lot of history to
3 it, but it's a wood-frame structure that's
4 caving in on itself, currently.

5 And so, you'll see in our report
6 that what we're going to propose is that we
7 remember the building by recreating its facade
8 on the front of our Main Street structure, and
9 then actually carrying it into our facility,
10 really, straight into our premier restaurant,
11 which will be the steak house. And by doing
12 that, you'll be able to see a corner of the
13 building, you'll be seeing a acknowledgment of
14 the Bliss Street, which is important to this
15 community, but it allows us to go ahead and
16 build our steel frame structure and remember
17 the building that was there.

18 CHAIRMAN CROSBY: Okay.

19 MR. MATHIS: Just to clarify, the --
20 the three buildings we're talking about are
21 the original three that we've always shown. I
22 think what the report will demonstrate is that
23 we went through some efforts, significant
24 efforts, to ensure that we hadn't looked --

1 hadn't passed over any other opportunities to
2 save any other buildings. We won't be able to
3 save any other buildings, is what the report
4 will show in final form. But it will talk
5 about some of the efforts we will do with the
6 facades and something commemorative. We don't
7 expect that to satisfy all the members of the,
8 sort of, commission would want us to save more
9 buildings, but it's -- will represent our best
10 effort.

11 CHAIRMAN CROSBY: Okay. When we --
12 you actually brought this up, did you want to
13 follow-up on that?

14 COMMISSIONER MCHUGH: No. I -- I
15 was not here the last time, so I had a tour
16 today with one of our members of our advisory
17 team and saw some of the buildings and heard
18 some of this -- in fact all of it before, and
19 thought it would be helpful for the other
20 commissioners to hear it, so that's why I
21 brought it up.

22 CHAIRMAN CROSBY: And I -- I made
23 two points when we were here last. One was
24 that I -- I appreciated and respected the work

1 that you've already had done. I mean, you --
2 a lot of people would just start it out at
3 wiping out everything. And the Armory, and
4 the facade of the 73 State and the church was
5 commendable and I -- I really thought that was
6 commendable, but also wanted you to really
7 stretch, if you possibly could.

8 And I believe the -- a lot of the
9 historic people have written us. As you know,
10 many of them are very supportive of your
11 project. They're not trying to knock down the
12 project. They were saying -- many -- at least
13 ones we're -- we're hearing from, are saying
14 we support this, but can they possibly stretch
15 on these buildings. So, you know, sounds like
16 you're, at least, working on it. That
17 certainly is, I think, our sense of that would
18 be important.

19 MR. MATHIS: We are. And we respect
20 their work very much, and that's why we've
21 gone the extra -- the extra mile to have this
22 last set of meetings and see what we can --
23 what we can -- what we can commit to, and what
24 we can try to -- to appease them about some

1 things they care about.

2 CHAIRMAN CROSBY: Okay. Great.

3 COMMISSIONER MCHUGH: Thank you.

4 CHAIRMAN CROSBY: Thank you.

5 COMMISSIONER MCHUGH: Thank you very
6 much.

7 CHAIRMAN CROSBY: Any questions for
8 the host community? Anybody? Any questions
9 for the town of Longmeadow, or for the town of
10 West Springfield?

11 Okay. Then, I think we will go to
12 comments from the public, and we will just get
13 them in the order of having signed up,
14 initially on the Web, and, otherwise,
15 following folks who have signed up outside.
16 The first name is Michael Toms or Thomes,
17 T-H-O-M-E-S. Also, Ted Steger. If you hear
18 your name, please come up. Al Cabot, Michael
19 E -- yes, sir. Welcome back.

20 MR. CABOT: Try to figure this out
21 this time so people can hear me. Does this
22 get taller?

23 CHAIRMAN CROSBY: Want to send --
24 send an engineer over here?

1 MR. CABOT: How about that? Can you
2 hear me?

3 CHAIRMAN CROSBY: Help is -- help is
4 on its way.

5 MR. CABOT: Okay. Thank you.
6 That's a little better. Thank you.

7 COMMISSIONER MCHUGH: Are you set,
8 Darian?

9 MS. BALCOM: Yep. Ready.

10 MR. CABOT: Pardon? Hi, I'm
11 Al Cabot. During the course of this
12 application process, MGM has made many
13 promises and assumptions that the commission
14 has had to evaluate. The arbitration
15 committee's decisions in both the Longmeadow
16 and the West Springfield cases are significant
17 because this is the first time that an
18 objective third party has had an opportunity
19 to examine the evidence presented from both
20 sides, and to review the claims of the
21 applicant.

22 Let's remind ourselves of the
23 statements that MGM made in its application.
24 At Section 51701 of the application they said,

1 and I quote, "We do not believe that the MGM
2 Springfield project will have a net,
3 significant, adverse impact on any community.
4 They said, "The MGM Springfield site is in the
5 Springfield downtown corridor and is isolated
6 from any surrounding communities because of
7 its natural geography.

8 At Section 50101 MGM claimed, "The
9 research and studies completed for the project
10 have not identified any infrastructure cost
11 that would be incurred by surrounding
12 communities."

13 The arbitrator decisions have shown
14 a completely different story. They show that
15 the problems that casinos create have been
16 hidden and ignored by the gambling industry.
17 The arbitrators awarded many times the amount
18 that MGM had offered to these communities, and
19 they expect that the communities will spend
20 even more. So this leads us to the next
21 questions. What other costs will Springfield
22 have been hidden, and what will they incur?
23 What other benefits have been exaggerated?

24 The chairman of any commission

1 has -- has enormous powers. The chairman
2 obtains a tremendous amount of information
3 both from the applicants and from other
4 sources. So much information so that every
5 commission member here can't possibly review
6 every document and every scrap of evidence
7 that comes to light. It is the chairman's
8 duty to decide what information is important,
9 what has to be followed up on, and what has
10 appropriate to be considered or voted on by
11 the full commission.

12 Under Massachusetts laws Chapter
13 268A, payments made to an entity with the
14 intent to influence decisions or actions of
15 our public officials are considered ethical
16 violations. At some point in time, during
17 this Springfield application process, this
18 commission decided that the payment of
19 \$1 million by the applicant to the city two
20 weeks before the election, for some reason,
21 did not run afoul of these ethics laws.

22 The inner works of this commission
23 are not public knowledge, so the public
24 doesn't know exactly who among you made this

1 decision to proceed with a ballot that the
2 arbitrators have now decided was misleading.
3 What we do know is that the issue of payments
4 being made to towns in advance of this
5 election was brought to the attention to your
6 ombudsman, to your executive director, and to
7 your legal counsel, who assured us that all
8 such matters would be considered by the
9 commission.

10 And now, the people of Springfield
11 have learned in the news, that the same
12 chairman that was in charge of considering
13 potential ethics violations here in the
14 Springfield voting process, is the same
15 individual who has had to recuse himself from
16 the appearance of conflicts and ethical
17 considerations in Boston. Now we have
18 arbitration decisions that offer objective
19 evidence to the voters in Springfield, that
20 they were misled with exaggerated promises.

21 Financially, over the initial term
22 of the proposed license, the community impact
23 payments promised to the city of Springfield
24 are going to be reduced by \$8 million, when

1 compared to what the voters were shown on the
2 ballot last summer.

3 So now I raise the questions. Why
4 wasn't the other financial promises and
5 projections made by the applicant reviewed in
6 a similar matter by objective third parties?
7 MGM has never revised down its -- its already
8 dubious revenue and jobs numbers for projected
9 competition and reduced investment. The loan
10 department at a bank would require outside
11 CPAs to consider the truth behind assumptions
12 made by loan applicants. Why didn't the
13 chairman of this commission, at the very
14 least, push for that same protection of --
15 that same protection of third-party review for
16 the citizens of western Massachusetts?

17 Arbitration's awards indicate that
18 Springfield voters and the commission were
19 misled. I would urge the commission to look
20 back in -- at every statement and every
21 financial estimates made by MGM with, not only
22 a grain of salt, but with the entire salt
23 shaker in hand.

24 I do not believe that MGM has come

1 even close to meeting the requirements set
2 forth under the regulations for surrounding
3 community support, for economic benefit to the
4 region, for the promise of a destination
5 casino, or for ethical behavior. I urge the
6 commission --

7 CHAIRMAN CROSBY: Thank you
8 Mr. Cabot.

9 THE FLOOR: -- not to approve this
10 application. Thank you.

11 CHAIRMAN CROSBY: Thank you very
12 much. Michael -- Michael Eagan.

13 MR. EAGAN: Yes. Hello. My name is
14 Michael Eagan. I'd like to -- we're here to
15 talk about the negative impacts on the
16 surrounding communities, essentially. I'd
17 like to quote a little bit from the Expanded
18 Gaming Act, Rosenberg said, one of the authors
19 of the Gaming Act, "We have included broad
20 provisions to mitigate negative impacts to the
21 community and the residents of the
22 commonwealth." Further on, "Casino tax money
23 will be used for public safety." And, lastly,
24 it's supposed to be the nation's best and most

1 rigorous public safety Act across the country.

2 Now, let me talk just a little bit
3 about the reality of the situation, where I
4 see the conflict. Okay? Under the
5 legislation, casinos will be able to offer
6 free drinks on the gaming floor. It also
7 calls for the Alcoholic Beverage Control
8 Commission to conduct a study, this is
9 amazing, on what the impact would be on the
10 gaming industry, if all bars and restaurants,
11 like casinos, were allowed to offer free and
12 discounted drinks.

13 So we've had a strong tradition in
14 this state. We are the first state in the
15 country, in 1984, to ban the Happy Hour.
16 Okay. Everything in the Gaming Act talks
17 about protecting citizens of the commonwealth.
18 You talk about mitigating those negative
19 factors. And, yet, we're bringing back the
20 Happy Hour because the casinos want it.
21 That's a disgrace.

22 Furthermore, if you take a look at
23 what the situation was before the ban on the
24 Happy Hour, again in 1984, 32,000 people died

1 in 1982. In Massachusetts, drunk driving was
2 a trigger for at least two-thirds of all
3 deaths on the highways, according to a special
4 commission report in 1974. Throughout the 70s
5 and 80s, drunk driving was an epidemic killing
6 scores of people throughout the country every
7 day, and now we're going to introduce free
8 drinks at the casinos, and soon to follow will
9 be restaurants and bars, and I read today
10 Deval Patrick is -- is going to grant
11 unlimited licenses for drinking purposes. How
12 can you tell me that we're in favor of public
13 safety when we're opening the door to a free
14 alcoholic policy?

15 What I find really troubling is that
16 the gaming commission is involved getting
17 fielding input from the casino industry on the
18 changes that they'd like to see made to the
19 Gaming Act. You know, they're very upset that
20 gaming would have to stop when somebody
21 reaches \$600 win or something and fill out
22 some tax forms. They're very upset about
23 that, but not upset about the drinking policy.
24 They want to make sure that those special tax

1 deals, those 121As get approved. Okay. You
2 know, the 10-year freeze on taxes that
3 Springfield's going to pay.

4 My call for you folks as an action
5 item is, to get that out of the Gaming Act
6 right away. Do something for the public that
7 will really, truly save lives, thousands of
8 lives over time. Get it out of the Gaming
9 Act. We don't want. It we're pound of our
10 tradition of banning the Happy Hour in 1984.

11 And, briefly, I'll mention -- I'll
12 just switch to the another topic. And that is
13 the problem gambler in terms of -- again,
14 we're talking negative impact.

15 Typically, the casino industry will
16 tell you there's a 1 percent problem with --
17 with the general population. The reports from
18 the Institute for American Values, why casino
19 matters, and I'll give you this in a second,
20 debunks that theory of the 1 percent. It
21 says, this isn't me talking. These are 33
22 scholars that came up with this. "Forty to
23 60 percent of slot machine revenues according
24 to studies conducted over the past decade or

1 so, come from problem gamblers.

2 This evidence contradicts claims by
3 gambling lobbyists that their industry wants
4 to attract only those customers who play
5 casually for fun. Indeed, if casinos had to
6 rely on such customers they would not long
7 survive. If you don't know the scope of the
8 problem, of how many problem gamblers are
9 there, how on earth are you ever going to fix
10 the problem, if you don't -- if you don't know
11 the scope?

12 It goes on to say, "A study of
13 members of Gamblers Anonymous found that
14 upwards of 26 percent have gambling-related
15 divorces or separation. Among our young
16 people, it's estimated three quarters of a
17 million young people, ages 14 and 21 are
18 already problem gamblers.

19 There's a list of suggestions, and
20 I'm running out of time, probably. There's a
21 list of suggestions that this report makes
22 that will help solve the problem of the
23 problem gamblers. And one of them, of course,
24 is to get rid of the free drinks. Remove the

1 ATM and credit facilities --

2 MS. BALCOM: That's five minutes.

3 MR. EAGAN: That's five minutes.

4 I'll give you guys a list --

5 CHAIRMAN CROSBY: Thank you.

6 MR. EAGAN: Put it into the Gaming
7 Act and you'll have a stronger provision.

8 CHAIRMAN CROSBY: Thank you.

9 COMMISSIONER MCHUGH: Thank you.

10 CHAIRMAN CROSBY: You can leave --
11 yeah, leave that with us. Thank you. Good
12 evening.

13 MR. STEGER: Good afternoon.
14 Commissioners, I'm Ted Steger from No Casino
15 Springfield. And I'd like to just start by
16 addressing the surrounding agreement that came
17 out of the operation -- arbitration process
18 with Longmeadow.

19 When independent parties look at
20 casino impacts, the broad scope and deep cost
21 that casinos inflict on the host and
22 surrounding communities are obvious. While
23 we're pleased that the arbitrators sided with
24 Longmeadow against a unserious offer from MGM,

1 we want to emphasize that every one of these
2 agreements, especially the host community
3 agreement with Springfield, are woefully
4 inadequate as mitigation against the cost
5 these communities will incur as a result of
6 the casino in downtown Springfield. Not to
7 mention the personal cost to the residents of
8 greater Springfield. Agawam and other
9 surrounding communities are starting to
10 question the paltry agreements they agreed to
11 under pressure from MGM as well.

12 I'd urge you to read the column I'm
13 about to distribute written by a
14 Longmeadow-select board member with inside
15 access to negotiations, that talks about the
16 quote, brass-knuckled, bullying approach MGM
17 used in their negotiations.

18 As you just heard, Springfield will
19 have \$8 million deducted from -- from their
20 winnings as a result of -- of their host
21 community agreement. I guess that's the
22 thanks MGM gave Springfield for their nearly
23 50-percent discount on their pilot agreement.

24 I'd next like to update the western

1 half of the state on developments in recent
2 days that the commission -- about the
3 commission that don't -- doesn't get much
4 error or print time here in Springfield.

5 In the last week, Chairman Crosby
6 recused himself from deliberations in the
7 Boston-area casino, something I expect
8 Commissioner Stebbins to do as well, given his
9 cozy relationship with MGM and city hall.
10 Five gubernatorial candidates have called on
11 Chairman Crosby to resign, and, yet, another
12 lawsuit has been filed against the commission
13 by a losing slot parlor applicant. All I know
14 is, the state will save a fortune in legal
15 fees if we can just repeal this casino
16 legislation in the fall.

17 Now, I don't doubt for a second, the
18 integrity of any -- of you five individuals.
19 The issue is the casino law has established a
20 commission that is directly funded by the
21 casinos, the industry it regulates. It --
22 it's simply a backward approach to regulation.

23 You actually say in documents on
24 your Web site that payments from the casino

1 should be made directly to the Mass Gaming
2 Commission. I don't blame any one of you for
3 wanting to cozy favor with -- with MGM, since
4 they're the ones paying your paycheck. And --
5 so it's a recipe for disaster. It's unreal --
6 realistic to think a commission directly
7 funded by the gambling industry can have an
8 impartial view about the gambling industry.

9 Case and point, the five of you
10 stand poised to award a casino license to a
11 city that has an active FBI investigation into
12 contracts doled out by the city, by the
13 department that was, until very recently, run
14 by the wife of a real estate developer that
15 stands to run million -- stands to earn
16 millions if the casino goes through. We know
17 for a fact that casinos and corruption go hand
18 and hand, and Springfield is certainly no
19 stranger to con -- corruption as well. It
20 simply makes no sense to award this license at
21 this time with an active FBI investigation.
22 There's -- there's no rush. Let's let the --
23 the repeal process play out, and, hopefully,
24 it'll be a mute point in November.

1 On that happier note, the repeal the
2 casino deal effort moves forward. There was a
3 very positive hearing. The only voice of
4 descent happened to be from a judge who used
5 to work for Suffolk Downs. And we're actively
6 collecting signatures to place the casino
7 repeal before the voters in November. We have
8 the support of both democratic attorney
9 general candidates and the Boston Globe, for
10 the fact that the people deserve the right to
11 decide whether we want this corrupting,
12 cannibalistic and, ultimately,
13 self-destructive casino presence in our fine
14 commonwealth, and our -- our great city.
15 Please join me in helping to repeal the casino
16 deal in November.

17 And I'd just like to quote -- close
18 with a quote that strikes home, from
19 Pearl Buck. "Every great mistake has a casino
20 halfway moment, a split second when it can be
21 recalled and, perhaps, remedied. This is our
22 halfway moment. We need to repeal the casino
23 legislation. Thank you.

24 CHAIRMAN CROSBY: Thank you.

1 Kathleen Conley Norbut. Kathleen or
2 Ellen Wallace?

3 THE FLOOR: Bill Devlin?

4 CHAIRMAN CROSBY: I'm sorry?

5 THE FLOOR: Devlin. Bill Devlin?
6 Did you say Bill Devlin?

7 CHAIRMAN CROSBY: No, not yet. I'm
8 getting there.

9 MS. WALLACE: Okay. I have the
10 opposite problem.

11 CHAIRMAN CROSBY: Bend it down.
12 There you go.

13 MS. WALLACE: Okay. Commissioners,
14 good afternoon. I'm Ellen Wallace. I'm the
15 Massachusetts subregional director for the
16 United Auto Workers in Region 9A. I'd like to
17 read into the record, a statement from
18 Julie Kushner, the director of Region 9A.
19 She's unable to be here today. As a member of
20 the international executive board, she's in
21 Detroit at a meeting of the board.

22 Julie Kushner's the director of 9A,
23 which covers the New England states, New York
24 east of the Hudson, including New York City,

1 and Puerto Rico. In the gaming industry UAW
2 represents more gaming workers nationwide than
3 any other union, with members at facilities in
4 Connecticut, Rhode Island, Atlantic City,
5 Ohio, Detroit, Indiana and Las Vegas. We
6 represent about 1800 dealers at Foxwoods in
7 Connecticut, and all of the workers at Newport
8 Grand Slots in Rhode Island.

9 At last month's host community
10 hearing for MGM, Julie Kushner testified about
11 our concern about MGM and labor harmony for
12 gaming dealers. But we are pleased to report
13 that we are in discussions with MGM, and we
14 are optimistic about reaching such an
15 agreement with them, and we'll keep you
16 posted.

17 Labor harmony agreements are
18 important. They help achieve the three goals
19 of the gaming -- of The Expanded Gaming Act.
20 They ensure an uninterrupted stream of revenue
21 for the employer and the state. They bring
22 labor peace at the facility to help regional
23 economic development. And they lead to good,
24 safe jobs with good wages and benefits through

1 collective bargaining. That's why the license
2 applicant should have signed labor harmony
3 agreements with knew neutrality and card check
4 that cover 100 percent of its permanent,
5 nonsupervisory employees.

6 As the largest single group of
7 employees, and among the highest skilled at a
8 casino, it is essential that the dealers be
9 included in these agreements. We believe
10 these dealer jobs can not just be good jobs,
11 but great union jobs. We look forward to the
12 fully-unionized workforce at the Massachusetts
13 casinos. Thank you.

14 CHAIRMAN CROSBY: Thank you.
15 Rhonda Latney and William Devlin.

16 MR. DEVLIN: Thank you.

17 CHAIRMAN CROSBY: Welcome.

18 MR. DEVLIN: I'm an architect here
19 in Springfield. Small guy by myself, so I'm
20 not a candidate for this kind of work. I have
21 been interested in historic work for decades,
22 since the time when the only good thing you
23 could do with an old building was to tear it
24 down, and Mr. Stebbins is familiar with some

1 of my work.

2 The trend has changed somewhat among
3 many people, but MGM seems to have a rather
4 callous attitude towards a lot of the
5 buildings that are on the site. A lot of the
6 big buildings that were in the main part of
7 the site have already been yielded, including
8 the large school there but -- the Howard
9 Street School. And most of the site is
10 available for clearcut development. Very few
11 buildings around the edge are historic and
12 require some proper care. I have heard the
13 excuse about a building is falling in on
14 itself, but I can't help but notice that the
15 same building is currently occupied. I've
16 seen that many times through the years. I do
17 a lot of historic work.

18 COMMISSIONER MCHUGH: I missed
19 that --

20 MR. DEVLIN: I have been on jobs
21 where my first question is, can we discuss
22 this outside? But these buildings, it's just
23 not complicated to take care of them. We
24 have -- if MGM's existing consultants cannot

1 figure this out, there are many, many
2 architectural firms in this immediate area
3 that could provide plenty of direction and
4 guidance that have saved these buildings, and
5 buildings in far worse condition, and it is
6 just not that difficult, doesn't have to be
7 that expensive.

8 The Springfield -- when MGM was
9 first proposing to come to Springfield, one
10 of -- some of the great characteristics of
11 Springfield were Springfield's history,
12 Springfield's character. Now we're going to
13 wipe it out. That does not make sense.

14 The buildings at the perimeter
15 include the Union House. Again, it's occupied
16 so how dangerous is it? United Electric --
17 Atrium is a stunning space, unique to
18 Springfield, rare in this whole region of the
19 country, and there is no reason to whack that
20 and remove it. The State Street facades could
21 all be linked together. Those buildings'
22 first-floor levels could be linked together
23 and maintained.

24 Handicapped accessibility solutions

1 have been figured out decades ago. That's old
2 stuff now. It's automatic. You look at a
3 building and say, oh, okay, yeah, well, here's
4 what we can do. And, actually, the higher
5 floor levels in many facilities are a
6 preferred choice because people love to have
7 an upper level, no higher than your table, or
8 they can be sit and lounge, sit and drink, sit
9 and eat and overlook the activity below.
10 That's a great asset. Those buildings already
11 have it.

12 The YWCA building in Howard Street,
13 the -- some of the other facilities in -- the
14 -- the apartments are going to be on
15 Main Street, but some of the other buildings
16 could be apartments, or they can be boutique
17 hotel suites, in addition to the 31 Elm Street
18 hotel. They can be business suites. If you
19 want somebody to come and maybe spend some
20 time, if they can have their own suite of two
21 or three rooms and they can have a temporary
22 office, bring one or two staff people, spend
23 more money on rooms and meals, and be able to
24 operate out of Springfield for a week or two,

1 that would be a very nice thing to have.

2 The large parking garage is
3 well-sighted and takes up a lot of space, and
4 around it there's a lot of space to work with.
5 Foundations, deep foundations, have been done
6 for centuries with deep buildings being built
7 next to shallower-foundation buildings. So
8 putting the super cellar for deliveries and
9 service next to these existing buildings is
10 not complicated. It's been done in New York
11 City and around the world for years, and it
12 goes back to gothic times when cathedrals were
13 built next to houses. So there's a little bit
14 of mileage on that kind of work.

15 The historical commission met with
16 MGM in early '13, and again in January of '14.
17 Since then, the January '14 plan was very
18 little -- had very few sell concessions from
19 the plan a year earlier. The negotiating
20 since then has involved little tiny bits and
21 pieces of facades. It's not really a sincere
22 negotiation with the commission. It just
23 isn't. I've heard it directly from
24 commissioners. And I just hope that the

1 commissioner -- commission can extract some
2 more reasonable time from this procedure.

3 Thank you very much.

4 CHAIRMAN CROSBY: Thank you very
5 much, Mr. Devlin. Just one more time for
6 people who had signed up on the Web,
7 Michael Thomes, Kathleen Connolly Norbut and
8 -- that's it.

9 MS. LATNEY: I'm Rhonda Latney. You
10 want me to come up?

11 CHAIRMAN CROSBY: Oh, yes, I'm
12 sorry. Yes, please.

13 MS. LATNEY: Good afternoon, Mass
14 Gaming Commissioners and residents. My name
15 is Rhonda Latney. I'm speaking to you once
16 again. Two weeks ago, I sent an e-mail about
17 concerns that I had regarding the host
18 community agreement and mitigations that was
19 forward to Elaine Drouse (phonetically).
20 I'm not certain if you received that e-mail
21 that was sent to the Mass Gaming commissioner
22 Web site. But some of the things that I have
23 concern was with the mitigations.

24 One thing was, on April 22nd

1 Kathleen Szegda presented a forum on the
2 western Mass. health impact study at the
3 Springfield library. During the presentation,
4 she stated that the traffic study only that
5 was conducted by MGM, only in -- included the
6 areas outlined in MGM -- in MGM, and not the
7 entire city of Springfield. To include the
8 study on housing did not include realtor and
9 affordable housing. This is a major concern
10 since the report is compiled to inform the
11 Mass Gaming Commission.

12 Surprisingly, the information and
13 data compiled on casino gaming for the western
14 Mass health impact assessment was based on the
15 standards and performance from a different
16 casino and not data driven from MGM.

17 Also, there was concern with the
18 traffic impact study that was concluded
19 because it only included one public school
20 system that's here in the downtown area. I
21 mentioned that we have three high schools on
22 State Street to include two colleges, and that
23 there is no traffic impact study to look at
24 how they're going to deal with the increase of

1 the 10,000 traffic that's going to be on our
2 cities, and the affect it will have on our
3 students that are walking to and from.

4 Another concern that we had was with
5 the -- a report that was done by, just a
6 minute, Mr. Steven -- Mr. Pikula, who sent a
7 letter out to the City of Springfield
8 regarding the ballot question referendum for
9 approval of a destination report casino, and
10 that it outlined the pros and the cons that
11 public officials can take regarding advocating
12 for a casino. And it was a huge concern here
13 with Mayor -- Mayor Sarno, taken and
14 participating in that advertisement, to
15 include city council members as well. When
16 Mr. Pikula sent out that, city officials were
17 not supposed to partake in any type of
18 advertisement in that manner.

19 Also, there was a concern with the
20 amount of money that is allocated in the host
21 community agreement. And the money that they
22 allocated, it's interesting that no traffic
23 impact studies was actually com -- completed
24 prior to the host community agreements, or to

1 the referendum vote. And there was a concern,
2 how did the City of Springfield and MGM come
3 across with the that amount of money for
4 mitigations when there was none done. None
5 done whatsoever. And based on the traffic
6 impact -- based on the -- I'm sorry. Based on
7 the impact studies from Palmer, they had five
8 areas that they listed that they wanted to
9 look at to mitigate for in their host
10 community. And we, in our host community
11 agreement, no impact studies are -- are looked
12 at.

13 Another incident we had was -- I'm
14 sorry I kind of -- yes. Palmer, Mass.
15 conducted impacts studies in 2000 and 2009,
16 and had them available on their Web site. And
17 West Springfield and their host community
18 agreement listed organizations that would
19 provide services to the community as a
20 reminder, these community vote -- voted, was
21 well prepared, and, yet, they voted after the
22 city of the Springfield with our host
23 community agreement.

24 Also there was a concern with the --

1 all right, let's see -- I'm sorry. Oh, the
2 traffic impact studies are only to -- to be
3 mitigated on a one- and five-year, and with a
4 look-back approach. This process is
5 insufficient in itself, considering no traffic
6 city impact studies have been conducted by
7 Springfield to provide adequate information or
8 data ahead of time, before they made that
9 decision on the amount of money that City of
10 Springfield would have for their mitigations,
11 when you consider the amount of money
12 mitigation has been allocated for all the
13 surrounding communities.

14 I talked with another -- a number of
15 residents within the city of Springfield.
16 We're also concerned with the people, whoever
17 it is, buying up the property for the
18 affordable housing. We don't know where these
19 people are, but it's rumored that it's MGM
20 buying up city affordable housing throughout
21 the city of Springfield.

22 CHAIRMAN CROSBY: Thank you. Thank
23 you, Ms. Latney.

24 MS. LATNEY: Thank you.

1 CHAIRMAN CROSBY: Thank you very
2 much. Okay. Raymond Caporale, and
3 Stephen Wichrowski.

4 MR. CAPORALE: Good evening, folks.
5 Ray Caporale, Springfield. Lived in the
6 Forest Park district for 67 years. All I've
7 been hearing here is negativity. Haven't
8 heard any resolutions to -- to do what we
9 would do around here if these people don't
10 come into this city.

11 We've given a lot of money to
12 surrounding communities, yeah. I don't agree
13 with it. The problems in two of the areas
14 that you've just gave money to have been
15 existing for 67 years that I've been here, and
16 they haven't done nothing to change it. But,
17 all of a sudden, they come into town and our
18 hands are out. They voted out a casino in
19 West Springfield, but they came across the
20 river to get their money.

21 You've had a problem on Memorial
22 Avenue, but you never solved it. You had a
23 problem on Route 5, you never solved it. Just
24 on the border, between -- between Longmeadow

1 and Enfield, is MassMutual. My daughter works
2 there. She comes through Route 5. They
3 didn't go to MassMutual and ask for any
4 assistance. You go there between eight in the
5 morning and 10 at night, three at night --
6 three in the afternoon and five at night you
7 got a bottleneck. They need two lanes. They
8 didn't fix it, but they're over here looking
9 for money. And, unfortunately, they -- MGM
10 went to your arbitrators with a stacked deck,
11 as far as I'm concerned, because they lost,
12 they appealed to you people and they lost
13 again.

14 We want to bring industry into this
15 city, not lose it. Everything is moving out.
16 Nobody wants to come here. And if they leave,
17 you better get that old Gene Autry song,
18 Tumbling Weeds, because that's what's going to
19 be running down the city of Springfield in a
20 few years.

21 So think this over very carefully.
22 Think it over. All the people who are against
23 this have yet to come up with a solution to
24 rectify it. Unfortunately, there's also old

1 buildings that may have to come down. I
2 understand we want to keep some of this stuff,
3 but we can't keep everything. This is the
4 21st Century. I don't care what happened in
5 1863. I didn't live then. I live now, in the
6 21st Century. Let's move on. Let's move on,
7 folks. It's a new time. It's a new era.
8 This is our last chance. And if we drop the
9 ball on this one, I'm seriously thinking of
10 getting out of Dodge, because there ain't
11 going to be nothing for me to stay here
12 anymore for.

13 So think it over carefully, ladies
14 and gentleman. Please give this
15 consideration. Be careful on how much money
16 you're giving people who didn't want
17 something, but because there's an opportunity
18 to get something, they got their hands out
19 with their so-called problems.

20 Well, you had your problems, fix
21 your problems. Because the one question I got
22 to these communities, if they lose, how you
23 going to fix your problem now? Now you're
24 getting nothing. And nothing from nothing, in

1 my world, means nothing. Thank you for your
2 time. We'll see you later.

3 CHAIRMAN CROSBY: Thank you.
4 Stephen Wicrowski (phonetically) Wichrowski.

5 MR. WICHROWSKI: Steve Wichrowski,
6 lifetime Longmeadow resident, 71 years and
7 counting. I live on one of the streets that's
8 affected. We're going to have money to repair
9 it. Thank you the arbitration department.
10 But I'm not here to talk about Longmeadow.
11 I'm talking about a town that I go to, to film
12 convention every year, that's the Memphis Film
13 Convention, but we hold it in Tunica,
14 Mississippi.

15 Tunica, Mississippi, back in 1985,
16 on a 60 Minutes report, was one of the worst,
17 if not the worst county in the whole country.
18 How would you like to have that? Then, in the
19 90s the casinos came in. There are currently
20 eight of them. They're use the to be up to
21 12, but that's what happens with competition.
22 And the Cadillac of them all is the
23 Gold Strike casino, which is run by MGM. The
24 Gold Strike has more rooms, 1300, than there

1 are residents of Tunica. And, but all it is,
2 is a standing, basically, casino. There's
3 restaurants. There's a place where they have
4 musical acts. Dolly Parton's -- not
5 Dolly Parton, I'm sorry. Loretta Lynn is
6 coming, and so is Kenny Rogers in the future.
7 But that's enough about that.

8 According to the tour book, and I --
9 I've been there. If it wasn't for the casinos
10 they wouldn't have what they have now in
11 Tunica. And what does Tunica have? They have
12 a convention bureau, shopping areas, a museum,
13 a river park, and on the river park there's a
14 river boat, there's a river park museum,
15 there's an interpretive center, and what ahs
16 been -- there's a lot of infrastructure for
17 the roads. In order to get there you have to
18 fly into Memphis and then rent a car and go
19 down into Tunica. The quality of life has
20 really changed there.

21 The hotel we stayed at with Sam's, I
22 would say, of the employees that were working
23 there, 75 percent were people of color. And
24 the interesting part is, the gamblers I saw

1 were all people -- Caucasians like myself.
2 But people of color were there. They were
3 there for the Wednesday night food -- food
4 buffets for \$5 in the restaurant.

5 So if you ask anybody down there,
6 they've seen the changes. There are also
7 community centers, a lot of schools that were
8 all wonderful schools, but nobody's
9 complaining anymore about what used to be in
10 Tunica.

11 And we were there and we -- we went
12 from Memphis to Olive Branch, Mississippi and
13 then to Tunica. Why? Because at our previous
14 hotels, we had car break -- break-ins in the
15 parking lot. In another case, in Olive Branch
16 a guy got robbed in broad daylight. You go
17 down there, there's plenty of security. We
18 saw no -- didn't see any prostitutes, or ever
19 hear of anybody trying to sell drugs or any of
20 the other crimes that you would hear on the
21 streets.

22 The town has also benefited -- right
23 next to the casinos you see cotton fields,
24 which go back to way back when. And there's

1 also new manufacturing jobs at a steel pipe
2 plant, a power trans -- trans -- transmission
3 factory, and they've got a new green tech
4 facility coming in.

5 So before anybody says no to
6 casinos, you got to go down to Tunica and see
7 how it's -- what it's like. And they have the
8 big -- the tallest building in Mississippi is
9 Gold Strike Casino, MGM's. But MGM outdid
10 itself, and they've also got one that's even
11 taller on the gulf coast at their casino
12 there. That's it. That's all I want to say.

13 CHAIRMAN CROSBY: Thank you. Thank
14 you. Vera O'Connor. Vera O'Connor. Pull
15 that mic down to your face.

16 MS. O'CONNOR: Are you saying I'm
17 short, Commissioner?

18 CHAIRMAN CROSBY: That's fine.

19 MS. O'CONNOR: Good evening,
20 Commissioners, elected officials and the
21 audience. My name is Vera O'Connor, and a
22 resident of the Springfield for 50 years or
23 so. I would say the people who are most
24 opposed to a casino in Springfield are people

1 who did do not live in Springfield. Most of
2 them work in Springfield, get their paychecks
3 and scurry on up to the suburbs, but they have
4 a lot to say. As I stated before, when they
5 says, and those who are opposed to the casino,
6 do not want a casino, but, yet, they want
7 benefits. They have their hands out. They
8 want to be compensated at a high price to they
9 do get compensated.

10 I hope the repeal of the casino in
11 July -- no. They will make a decision in
12 July, and it will be on the ballot in
13 November. I hope it will not get to that
14 point, where it has to be repealed. And I'd
15 say to the people who are still him-hawing and
16 talking about it, to get a life and stop
17 beating a dead horse. Thank you so much.

18 CHAIRMAN CROSBY: Thank you.
19 Stan Dombrowski and Richard Theroux. Yes,
20 sir.

21 MR. DOMBROWSKI: Afternoon, folks.
22 I was here at the last meeting we had. And I
23 don't know if you remember, but I commented on
24 the excessive amount of coffee grounds.

1 CHAIRMAN CROSBY: Don't remember.

2 MR. DOMBROWSKI: You don't remember.

3 Okay. It was something just to lighten the
4 moment at the time. But I talked away with --
5 with the thought of what would the -- a casino
6 have on my -- on my mind, as far as my spirit
7 would be.

8 I looked in the Bible, and there are
9 no direct references in the Bible to anything
10 negative about gambling. There are -- there
11 are references about, you know, what you do
12 with the money, but that's on the individual.
13 That's not on the people that are -- are
14 gambling, that are creating the gambling.
15 That's on the individual. And that -- that
16 was my concern. I've alleviated that concern.

17 And, again, I would like to ask you
18 guys to award these fine folks the opportunity
19 to bring us some opportunity to Springfield.
20 Springfield needs it. And like other folks
21 have said, if we don't have this there won't
22 be anything. And those tumbling weeds,
23 they'll be coming down Main Street. So that's
24 all I had to say.

1 CHAIRMAN CROSBY: Thank you very
2 much.

3 MR. THEROUX: Ladies and gentlemen,
4 of the commission, I'm Richard Theroux. I was
5 the chairman of the community agreement for
6 the Town of Agawam, and I am the town clerk.
7 Just for a quick moment, let me address the
8 individual that spoke concerning the
9 strong-arm tactics and how Agawam was unhappy
10 with our agreement.

11 I don't know him. I've never met
12 him. He never went to our meetings, and he is
13 not telling the whole story, or any story,
14 because I don't know even where he got that
15 comment, or even his thoughts on that.

16 Now, is the Town of Agawam totally,
17 completely and happy with our agreement, now
18 that we've seen some others that have gone to
19 arbitration? Well, all I can tell you is,
20 I've been married 38 years. I'm not happy all
21 the time at the way things go.

22 With that said, after Longmeadow and
23 West Springfield negotiated their agreement
24 through arbitration, through this commission,

1 certainly there were thoughts that we had in
2 looking back, like you do in any decision that
3 you make. But one of the most interesting
4 issues that I want to bring forward to the
5 commission is the first conversation I had
6 after that happened. And that was with
7 Mr. Mike Mathis, who told me, or assured me,
8 that Agawam or no community would be left
9 behind as this process went forward.

10 Now, I'm in a community, and have
11 been involved in that community for over 40
12 years, where we have a very large amusement
13 park and abut another facility in the town of
14 West Springfield. We have a good rapport with
15 Six Flags. But for three weeks, during that
16 other operation, let's call it, we never hear
17 from them, and have never heard from them.
18 And the legislature has never addressed the
19 fact that our community is greatly impacted,
20 not only with traffic, but noise, crime, et
21 cetera. We don't hear from them. Now, that's
22 not a bad remark. It's just the way it is.

23 So when someone takes time to
24 contact me and say, you will not be left

1 behind, there's other avenues. When we move
2 forward we will be in contact with you. What
3 that says to me is, this is an operation --
4 MGM Springfield is going to not only care
5 about Springfield, but care about those of us
6 surrounding it.

7 And, like I said, I'm not always
8 happy with everything. I might not be happy
9 with what we got sometimes, but we negotiated
10 in good faith. No one strong-armed anyone.
11 Every one was courteous. Every one came to
12 the table, armed, protecting themselves, and
13 we felt we had a good agreement. And I still
14 feel that.

15 So in closing, again, from my
16 community, from my mayor, for the effort that
17 I put in, I believe that this application
18 should go forward. Not only for the city of
19 Springfield where I, at one time, I worked and
20 I cared greatly about and still do because it
21 surrounds my community. And this is, as
22 Mayor Sarno has said, a game-changer. I think
23 it's going to change the game for the city of
24 Springfield. And, as it's been said, what

1 happens in the city of Springfield moves to
2 the surrounding communities.

3 So, again, without taking up more of
4 your time, I'm in favor of this proposal. I
5 think it should move forward. And our
6 agreement may be different from Longmeadow,
7 may be different from West Springfield,
8 Holyoke's, but it was an agreement that was
9 done in good faith. And when Mr. Mathis
10 assures me, right after, we will not be going
11 away, we will work with you, that's one of the
12 few times that I've ever heard that after
13 someone got what they wanted. And it was very
14 well received by myself and by our community.
15 Thank you for your time and your attention.

16 CHAIRMAN CROSBY: Thank you.
17 Attorney Silverstein. That was
18 representing --

19 MR. SILVERSTEIN: We're all set,
20 Mr. Commissioner.

21 CHAIRMAN CROSBY: Only if there were
22 questions. Okay. Carol Kerr.

23 MS. KERR: Just the right height.

24 CHAIRMAN CROSBY: Yep.

1 MS. KERR: Good afternoon. This is
2 the second time I'm standing before you. The
3 first was to speak of the great opportunity we
4 have for jobs, for people, for business and
5 for the Pioneer Valley. I talked about all
6 the tools that MGM has given us and to caution
7 that what we do with them is entirely up to
8 us. Now, I am before you again.

9 I'm saddened by the surrounding
10 community agreements. These community
11 agreements have been divisive, rather than
12 unifying. Instead of moving forward as a
13 region working to do best for all, we now have
14 a cluster of rancorous communities, with the
15 exception of the fine gentleman who just
16 spoke.

17 The commission's failure to provide
18 standard and consistent guidelines for the
19 agreements from the very beginning, created
20 an environment in which each town was left to
21 do the best they could relative to their
22 money, political savvy, business acumen and
23 hubris.

24 There may, in fact, be valid reasons

1 for both Longmeadow and West Springfield to
2 receive special payments, such as the one-time
3 payment to upgrade Memorial Avenue, or more
4 money than other communities up to a point for
5 various reasons. But the amounts demanded by
6 Longmeadow and West Springfield are excessive
7 in the extreme, especially related to the
8 other communities. I place responsibility for
9 this debacle squarely in the hands of whoever
10 wrote the guidelines for arbitration. What is
11 the point for arbitration, if you can't
12 actually arbitrate?

13 The Massachusetts Gaming Commission
14 arbitration guidelines require that only one
15 be accepted, either MGM or the town's. The
16 intent of arbitration cannot, in good
17 conscience nor good business sense, be win or
18 take all. Arbitration should be about what is
19 the best compromise between two parties who
20 cannot agree. Good arbitration would have
21 found some middle ground that would be fair,
22 if not satisfactory to both parties, as well
23 as their neighboring communities.

24 This entire situation could have

1 been avoided if a template for surrounding
2 communities that was the same for all, based
3 on relevant criteria, traffic, crime, housing
4 prices, jobs, et cetera. It would have been
5 data driven, rather than emotion or even greed
6 driven, with a look-back process in place to
7 correct and mitigate in the future.

8 If the intent is to mitigate
9 possible negative effects, doesn't it also
10 stand to reason that if those things do not
11 happen, then the money need not be paid, or
12 reduced accordingly? What is the oversight
13 plan to ensure that the money is spent on
14 mitigation-related activities? What
15 allowances have been made to offset the
16 benefits received by these communities? They
17 want to be paid to offset the negatives. Are
18 they willing to give back any revenues gained
19 on the positive side to MGM?

20 MGM has, through community outreach
21 over the last year-and-a-half, made themselves
22 part of our local fabric. Through sports,
23 charities, social events that they've
24 participated or sponsored, they have touched

1 almost everyone in our region. They will be
2 here for many years to come. We are missing
3 an opportunity to unite and move forward as
4 one.

5 Finally, the repeal effort needs to
6 be defeated. They fall far short in their
7 rationale for attempting to prohibit this
8 project from moving forward. And their
9 arguments fall into five categories.

10 One, gambling is bad, and potential
11 addicts need to be protected. I don't see the
12 good in denying millions a source of
13 responsible entertainment for the few who
14 abuse. If you're concerned, help them. Don't
15 attempt to eliminate the object of this abuse
16 altogether.

17 Two, crime will increase. There's
18 no hard data to support the idea that a resort
19 embedded in downtown will increase crime.
20 It's just as likely that crime will decrease.
21 History has proven time and again that
22 increased affluence in the growth of a middle
23 class decreases crime in an area.

24 Three, local businesses will be

1 hurt. An influx of hundreds of thousands of
2 nonresidents each year can only mean more
3 people to visit, not less. There will be more
4 residents that will have disposable income to
5 spend in their local area.

6 Four, housing prices will go down.
7 There is equally compelling data that supports
8 the exact opposite for the Pioneer Valley.
9 Demand will go up. While some may go down due
10 to construction location, I believe the demand
11 overall will offset the few that will decline.

12 And, lastly, the money can't be
13 spent twice argument. Absolutely true. But
14 right now, I'm spending my money in
15 Connecticut. I'd much rather spend it here,
16 and I'd rather other people come here to spend
17 it too.

18 There is no direct data to determine
19 what effects the project will have, since it
20 is such a unique business model. Any
21 enterprise that puts over 2000 jobs and
22 millions of dollars into local communities, as
23 well as drawing thousands of people, who, by
24 definition, are here to spend money, is a net

1 win no matter how you slice it. Throughout
2 history, every business, large and small,
3 cities, towns, and even entire empires have
4 succeeded or --

5 CHAIRMAN CROSBY: Thank you,
6 Mrs. Kerr.

7 MS. KERR: -- failed on how well
8 they attempt to take advantage of changing
9 environments. Let's do it right. Thank you.

10 CHAIRMAN CROSBY: Thank you.
11 John Simpson.

12 MR. SIMPSON: Hi, everybody. Glad
13 to have an opportunity to speak today. I'd
14 like to say that I'm really impressed with the
15 city of Agawam -- or Town of Agawam, and how
16 they comported themselves with dignity and
17 integrity in their negotiations with MGM. And
18 I feel like, maybe, the City of Springfield
19 should be build a Big E for the last 40 years
20 of impact on traffic and other things in the
21 downtown, and the loss of business and revenue
22 over to West Springfield.

23 I'm -- myself and Evan Plotkin have
24 spoken with MGM about creating a program

1 called MGM Springfield Massachusetts Public
2 Art Program, where MGM had agreed to
3 commission students to make paintings that can
4 go into their resorts, especially the
5 destination resort of Springfield. And
6 they've already been giving money to all these
7 different things that have been happening in
8 the downtown, including a jazz festival later
9 this summer, and a lot of the different Spirit
10 of Springfield events that have been
11 happening. And I've been hearing people,
12 like, raving on the street how happy they are
13 this is happening, and how proud they are that
14 it will happen, and how fearful they are that
15 something of a -- politics could ruin this and
16 bring us back to a status quo of a city that's
17 been dying for a long time.

18 I'm going read something I wrote
19 that's about me and my opinion a little bit,
20 and then I'll read you something by one of my
21 students up at UMass from this class called
22 Art in the City, where we studied the
23 monuments in the downtown of Springfield, in
24 the Fountains, and how their deterioration has

1 had an a negative impact on the perception of
2 the city by its residents and the surrounding
3 communities.

4 I've worked and spent almost all of
5 my leisure time in Springfield for over the
6 last 21 years, working and volunteering in a
7 wide variety of capacities for the Springfield
8 museums, University of Massachusetts, the
9 Springfield schools, including
10 Putnam Vocational, Rebecca Johnson,
11 Central High School, and other downtown arts
12 projects.

13 For my first volunteer, educational
14 exhibit 21 years ago called, In the Land of
15 Castles and Kings, to Katmandu, ancient Egypt
16 and the permanent art discovery center, to
17 their yearly holiday gingerbread experience,
18 which I do as a volunteer, and it takes about
19 three months, I've grown to appreciate the
20 things that downtown Springfield has to offer.
21 The museums, the symphony, the historic
22 places, excellent restaurants, the very strong
23 and diverse cultures.

24 There is an obvious need in our

1 community for people to interact with artists,
2 artworks, and performances of the highest
3 quality. The positive response that we get
4 from the public is truly overwhelming when we
5 invest a little time, thought and effort into
6 making something memorable and positively
7 helpful toward raising the quality of a life
8 for everybody. They do appreciate it.

9 Great things have been done in and
10 come from Springfield. And this should be our
11 time to do something creative by making this
12 massive Springfield revitalization happen for
13 this history of the city and the state. Using
14 MGM's Springfield's focus on the history of
15 our city, and its importance to the nation, we
16 can connect with a much larger audience that
17 has had us confined to the ashcan of history
18 for the foreseeable future.

19 The professional and economic
20 development opportunities, the cosmic
21 spectacle and fabulous artistry of
22 performances, entertainment and exhibitions
23 that MGM Springfield will provide to
24 Springfield and our surrounding communities

1 will be an investment in making all of our
2 communities more colorful, hopeful and proud.
3 Maybe, instead of holding MGM Springfield
4 constant hostage to the unsatisfied needs of
5 surrounding communities is a little off-base,
6 assuming that these surrounding communities
7 have no imagination or willpower to capitalize
8 on MGM's investment in a way that is more
9 entrepreneurial instead of parasitic.

10 By working with, instead of against
11 MGM, the communities may help it to happen in
12 a way that will benefit many, instead of
13 trying to make it very undesirable for MGM to
14 commit to our region. People are excited
15 about something new happening in the valley,
16 seeing our this city and MGM will work
17 together to create the new Springfield.

18 And this is a paper by one of my
19 students, who's a -- a history major, and a
20 devout Christian and a Commonwealth College
21 top honors senior. And he said, it's called
22 A City Reborn. It's very short. "Previous to
23 the insights I have gained through this class,
24 my view of Springfield was generally negative.

1 It was shaped by a childhood and life lived in
2 the city's long, dark shadow. I had almost no
3 idea regarding Springfield's illustrious
4 cultural and political traditions. The only
5 things I associated with the city in my mind
6 were corrupt politics and frequent homicides.

7 Of personal experience, I had
8 little. And that, which had I had seen was
9 positive. The Springfield Falcons, along with
10 the occasional Harlem Globetrotters' game were
11 very enjoyable experiences in my youth, and my
12 trips to Springfield for high school and AAU
13 basketball games were generally positive. But
14 nearly all I had heard of Springfield for my
15 first 21 years was negative. Springfield was
16 a place to drink in shady bars, or perhaps get
17 stabbed, if in the right places.

18 Springfield, in recent years, has
19 had the family schools, poverty, violence and
20 racial makeup, which, often in the United
21 States become connected in the public
22 imagination with urban areas. This negative
23 reputation has accompanied the trend since the
24 1970s of businesses and residents moving away

1 from the city. Rather than being a
2 destination city and regional capitol, as it
3 was earlier in the 20th Century, Springfield
4 has become a perpetually-depressed urban area,
5 which lacked the economic incentives for
6 investment and the civic structure for growth.
7 These negative changes for the city came
8 despite a storied history --

9 CHAIRMAN CROSBY: Thank -- thank
10 you, Mr. Simpson. We'll we'd be interested in
11 seeing the rest of that. You can -- you'd can
12 leave the rest of that. We'd be interested in
13 having it. Just leave it with us.

14 MR. SIMPSON: Okay. Just my summary
15 is, that -- the only thing that gets the
16 students' attentions up in Amherst and
17 Northampton is the name of MGM, otherwise,
18 they really don't want to come to Springfield.
19 Thank you.

20 CHAIRMAN CROSBY: Thank you. We're
21 going to take a brief break. Our -- yeah,
22 we've just got to a -- a few more, although we
23 have said we will be here until six, so I
24 think we need to stay until six.

1 We're going to take a brief break
2 and our communications director is going to
3 make arrangements for the press, and then
4 we'll be back for the rest of the speakers.

5

6 (A recess was taken)

7

8 CHAIRMAN CROSBY: We are ready to
9 reconvene. Thank you all for taking a break.
10 I understand that a Mr. Michael Thomes, who
11 was actually the first name on the original
12 list is here now, and I -- we will start with
13 him.

14 MR. THOMES: I do have some
15 handouts.

16 CHAIRMAN CROSBY: All right, please.

17 COMMISSIONER CAMERON: Thank you,
18 sir.

19 COMMISSIONER MCHUGH: Thank you sir.

20 CHAIRMAN CROSBY: Thank you very
21 much.

22 COMMISSIONER ZUNIGA: Thank you.

23 MR. THOMES: First of all, thank you
24 for taking me out of order, so to speak.

1 CHAIRMAN CROSBY: No problem.

2 MR. THOMES: Unfortunately, I was at
3 work with an emergency. I'd like to also
4 thank the board, the gaming commission board,
5 for the opportunity for the residents to
6 speak, specifically concerning the surrounding
7 community agreements.

8 Just a little bit of perspective as
9 far as who I am. First of all, I am the
10 proud, and I repeat, proud resident of metro
11 downtown Springfield, and have been for the
12 past 14 years. Thank you. And Springfield is
13 very proud, on a sidenote, to welcome the
14 University of Massachusetts as a new satellite
15 campus in Tower Square opening up very
16 shortly, in a few short months. We all should
17 feel very, very proud of that fact as well.

18 My comments are going to be very
19 brief. First of all, I'm looking at the time.
20 I realize I only have five minutes. My
21 comments are focused on, really, three
22 concepts for the surrounding communities. Not
23 MGM. The surrounding communities of
24 Longmeadow, as well as West Springfield or

1 Agawam, East Longmeadow, et cetera.
2 Accountability, transparency, as well as
3 governance. Those three concepts.

4 Actually, have a little visual from
5 the Springfield Republican, a deal is a deal.
6 You can remember that, Mr. Chairman. A deal
7 is a deal. That was the feedback that you
8 gave to MGM. Well, a deal is a deal involves
9 two parties. We need to hold the surrounding
10 communities accountable for how they're going
11 to spend in their funding of the supposed,
12 projected impact.

13 As an example, focusing on traffic
14 was one of the really primary focuses in the
15 community agreement with the Town of
16 Longmeadow, as well as other surrounding
17 communities. As a former Longmeadow resident,
18 as well as, I'm going to say approximately --
19 you lose track of time, over the 30-plus years
20 I have been commuting back and forth from
21 western Massachusetts to the greater Hartford,
22 Connecticut area for employment. And it
23 doesn't take an MBA, doesn't take an
24 engineering degree, doesn't take a legal

1 degree to realize traffic has been an ongoing
2 issue in the greater Longmeadow area for quite
3 some time. And that's one of the main reasons
4 I gave you that presentation in those black
5 binders. We don't have the time to go into
6 the detail about previous traffic studies, but
7 in there is a reference.

8 Way back, in 2004, a study was
9 commissioned by the Pioneer Valley planning
10 commission, two separate occasions. For one,
11 a long-range master plan for the town of
12 Longmeadow, as well as a Route 5 traffic
13 study. And for those of you, who, in the
14 room, may not be familiar with Route 5, that
15 is the main parallel access to Route 91, which
16 experiences traffic delays during certain
17 portions of the season, as well as the week.

18 As an example, typically, in the
19 wintertime the Route 95 -- new right --
20 Route 91 northbound traffic is backed up all
21 the way to the Enfield exits during peak rush
22 hour due to a variety of reasons. Could be
23 skiing, could be people coming home from work.
24 It's a known traffic issue.

1 My point is very simple. MGM has
2 agreed, through arbitration, to, I believe,
3 fund, approximately, \$4.4 million over an
4 extended period of time. where's the
5 oversight? Where's the governance? Where's
6 the transparency? How is that money going to
7 be spent? Potentially, that the money could
8 be spent on additional traffic studies. That
9 is a complete waste of money. Everybody knows
10 traffic is an issue. My point is very simple.
11 How are the community agreements going to
12 benefit the public, such as myself? We have a
13 lot of projected issues that the communities
14 have raised to MGM forecasted well out into
15 the future.

16 If you look back in time, 2004-2005
17 time frame, there was plenty of guidance in
18 those reports as far as what should be done.
19 One specific example is to widen Route 5. To
20 the best of my knowledge, last time I checked,
21 that hasn't been done.

22 So the question for the board -- and
23 I think that young -- young lady had it right
24 when it came to the arbitration process.

1 Let's do it right. Let's have some oversight
2 process in place so we can ensure that the
3 money that the casino developer, such as MGM,
4 gives to the communities is spent wisely and
5 efficiently for the benefit of the public.
6 And I'd be the first to raise my hand. If you
7 want a volunteer on the oversight board, I'm
8 your guy. Thank you very much.

9 CHAIRMAN CROSBY: All right. Thank
10 you. Mark Checkwicz. Good evening.

11 MR. CHECKWICZ: Good evening. Thank
12 you, commissioners. I am Mark Checkwicz,
13 resident of Springfield. I have been here 25
14 years. I am an expert in exterior house
15 painting and light construction, carpentry --
16 superficial carpentry repair. 90 percent of
17 my customers, I have one crew, are based in
18 Longmeadow. So every morning I am going in
19 the opposite direction of what I see is an
20 influx of people into my city. Every night, I
21 go home and I see the mass exodus from the
22 city I live in.

23 So my observation is, first, that
24 Springfield is a gateway city. With its

1 towers, with its medical centers, with its
2 hospital and various other businesses,
3 provides opportunity to the residents of the
4 surrounding communities to come, to make their
5 living, to earn substantial amount of money,
6 enough to live in a community where I work
7 where their property taxes exceed what I pay
8 for my mortgage.

9 There is plenty of money in
10 Longmeadow. I am well aware of it. They have
11 enough to take care of the needs of their
12 children, enough to build an incredibly,
13 beautiful new school, to maintain their
14 arteries as they are needed.

15 These professionals, as they descend
16 into our city, use our roads every day. There
17 is no mitigation for Springfield for the use
18 of those roads. I pay excise tax for the use
19 of the roads in Springfield. There is no
20 excise tax on the people who work in
21 Springfield to pay for the use of those roads.

22 So it is slightly hypocritical to
23 presume that a business, willing to set up a
24 \$800 million investment in our humble city,

1 should pay more to the surrounding communities
2 than what can be shown by actual comparison
3 impact studies. One done pre-MGM, one done
4 post-MGM. I believe, in my heart, that they
5 would do what is fair, given those impact
6 studies.

7 Rather, maybe, the professionals,
8 the doctors and lawyers who come to
9 Springfield, if they cared about this city,
10 could find a way to maybe lower their fees,
11 maybe to lower the price of the co-pays, I
12 don't know. That might help. There has never
13 been mitigation for Springfield from the
14 West Springfield for The Big E and the impact
15 that it has on our community that has already
16 been spoken to by the -- by the person from
17 Agawam.

18 We are a community based around the
19 city that I live in, this gateway city. We
20 should work in concert. We are a team that
21 should pull together for the betterment of
22 all, not grab.

23 MGM is, in my opinion, a part of
24 what we know to be a capitalistic society.

1 They are here to make money. They should be.
2 They have to pay their shareholders. They are
3 accountable. They're built -- these casinos
4 are built for adults who decide to spend their
5 entertainment budget there. And I suspect
6 that while Ted Steger's heart may be in the
7 right place, I do not need him to be my
8 babysitter and to tell me what to do with my
9 expendable cash.

10 I suggest, the better fight would be
11 to address the way that the lottery operates,
12 in a predatory manner, with keno in family
13 restaurants, with lottery right in the face of
14 children buying milk and bread for their
15 families at a neighborhood convenient store.

16 Last of all, I recently just
17 received, from the Springfield school system
18 and the Springfield school superintendent, an
19 award for being an inspirer of hope. I am
20 humbled by the award, but I can tell you that
21 the advent of a potential casino and MGM's
22 arrival inspired me to become more involved in
23 my community. I became president of
24 Central High School's PTO, where my daughter

1 attends. I joined the arts community in it
2 quest to have a recognized cultural district
3 designation for Springfield, and ended up
4 being asked to be on its board of directors
5 when we finally receive the designation.

6 I intend to be a strong voice,
7 Michael Mathis, in making sure that you and
8 MGM fulfill all of the promises that you have
9 made. I ask all of you not to put your hand
10 out to grab money from Springfield, but to put
11 your hands out and help us. Help us lift us
12 up to be better. We are truly the Phoenix
13 raising -- waiting to raise -- rise from the
14 ashes. Thank you very much.

15 CHAIRMAN CROSBY: Thank you. Chris
16 Benoit. Mr. Benoit.

17 MR. BENOIT: Good afternoon, members
18 of the commission. I am but one voice, and
19 just a citizen in this area. I'm a
20 third-generation resident of Springfield. My
21 family has been here for over 60 years.
22 They've seen ups, they've seen downs. They've
23 also had a chance to be able to be part of
24 this community. This community is looking for

1 stimulus. This community is looking for an
2 uplift. MGM Springfield is that uplift.

3 Anything that's been done prior to
4 this has had failing failures, and otherwise
5 less-than-successful movements. It should not
6 be stopped. It should go forward.

7 As our -- at one time before I
8 expressed how income, revenue and taxes are
9 going to be significantly improved and
10 increased with the MGM Springfield project.
11 Local vendors, they will see their influx of
12 expendable, disposable income from people
13 coming in to visit.

14 Taxes. There are many of them
15 there. Meals taxes, those go to the city.
16 There are sales tax, state-imposed. There's
17 also resident -- resort and room occupancy
18 taxes, also a city- and state-funded tax.
19 These items need to be made available.

20 Not only is this project going to
21 succeed and should be allowed to go forward,
22 it also provides state-funded money.

23 We know that there's licensing fees
24 in the multiple millions of dollars. Why stop

1 that? The budget's been announced for the
2 state, that it's \$36 billion. Four licenses
3 alone cover a quarter of a billion dollars.
4 Infrastructure needed in many different areas
5 can be spent with what quarter of a billion
6 dollars. This needs to be provided to
7 Springfield.

8 Yes. There are naysayers. There
9 are people in fear that want to repeal this
10 gaming vote. It should not go forward on the
11 repeal. It's already been proven once before
12 it's been found unconstitutional. That
13 unconstitutionality is now trying to be
14 defended in the state judiciary committee. It
15 should not be allowed. As the commission, you
16 have the right to say, no it's not,
17 regardless. It's already been voted on.

18 In another concept, basic
19 Business Law 101, the state's made an offer to
20 MGM, MGM's written a contract, they've both
21 signed it, the city has signed it, residents
22 have voted. Why turn around and let a vote
23 and a ballot question repeal basic business
24 law? There's no need, it's unright, and it

1 should not be allowed.

2 I've seen many things in this town
3 go up, I've seen many things come down.
4 Matter of fact, when that tornado came through
5 a couple years ago, I was probably about a
6 half mile from this -- the pathway. I saw how
7 dark it got. That darkness is resembled, now,
8 with what's left in Springfield. MGM is going
9 to provide the opportunity to clear that
10 darkness, put a shining light back in
11 Springfield, and this region on a whole. It
12 should not be prevented. It should be given
13 its full blessing.

14 The people of MGM are also talking
15 about jobs, construction jobs. 2500 to 3000
16 over the course of two years. 3000 permanent
17 jobs, both on a part-time and full-time basis.
18 Not only that, they're also looking at
19 expanding and improving existing structures in
20 this building outside of the 14-and-a-half
21 acres that they are using for the resort
22 itself.

23 Another positive. Transportation,
24 they're talking about mitigations. The Union

1 Station Street I drive by every night when I
2 come downtown to go to work, I've seen what
3 that looks like. With MGM's help, they're
4 going to make that back into a shining
5 structure that it once was 60-plus years ago.
6 Trains will be coming through more. More
7 people, more revenue, more taxes.

8 Please, do not let's this project
9 go. To the blinded, to the fearful, please
10 let it go forward and approve the license.
11 Thank you.

12 CHAIRMAN CROSBY: Thank you. Nathan
13 Beck or Bech.

14 MR. BECH: Bech.

15 CHAIRMAN CROSBY: Bech.

16 MR. BECH: Yes. It's spelled with
17 an H. Hi. Good afternoon.

18 CHAIRMAN CROSBY: Good afternoon.

19 MR. BECH: Thank you for letting me
20 speak this afternoon. I've heard a lot of
21 citizens come up and speak about the
22 importance of economic development in this
23 area, and I believe, strongly that we need
24 that, and that's -- that's important. But I

1 -- I think it's unfortunate that they are not
2 aware of the facts of what casinos bring and
3 what casinos cause.

4 I -- I want to take issue with your
5 poster that you have up there, introducing the
6 commonwealth to the successful and ethical
7 development of expanded gaming. Well, first
8 of all, I want to take issue with that word
9 successful.

10 Atlantic City was a slum. They
11 brought casinos in to revive it, and now
12 it's -- it's a slum with casinos. It did
13 nothing to help the city. They have high
14 crime rates and -- and lots of problems. You
15 go one block away from the casinos and there's
16 poverty and blight, there's -- there's pawn
17 shops with bulletproof glass and bars on their
18 windows. And just all kinds of things that
19 indicate that the level of high crime and
20 problems in that city.

21 You look in Connecticut. That was
22 supposed to bring in tax revenue to the state
23 of Connecticut, and the result, now, we're
24 seeing they're laying off people left and

1 right, and they're -- they're going back on
2 the deal that they promised to the -- to the
3 citizens of Connecticut to -- to, you know,
4 bring a tax break to the citizens of
5 Connecticut and so on. It's not working.
6 Casinos are failing in Atlantic City, in
7 Connecticut, and everywhere they're going up.
8 Now there's new casinos slated for Upstate
9 New York, which is going to create more
10 competition for a casino that would be in
11 Springfield.

12 So the idea -- I appreciate the
13 sentiment that people say they want to see
14 economic improvement in this area, but the
15 fact is, that where casinos go, they suck the
16 jobs out of the -- all the local businesses,
17 all the small businesses in the area.

18 Atlantic City had many restaurants
19 that -- about half of their restaurants shut
20 down when casinos began opening in their city.
21 People drive to the casino, they spend all
22 their money at the casino and they leave, and
23 they don't -- they don't visit local
24 businesses. The problems that casinos cause

1 with traffic and crime and so on are -- are
2 well-known.

3 And so, again, I want to go to your
4 poster again, take your second point, the
5 ethical expansion of gaming. Gambling is the
6 only addiction promoted by government. You
7 know, the Massachusetts state government is
8 not promoting drugs -- drug addiction, it's
9 not promoting alcohol addiction. If anything,
10 it's -- it's -- we worked against that. You
11 know, put labels on cigarette packets and so
12 on. This is the only addiction that we're
13 trying to promote as a partnership. A public,
14 private partnership to promote addiction, and
15 to promote the problems that come with it.

16 So I would just -- I -- again,
17 people think that casinos are going to improve
18 the area. Of course, we want to improve the
19 area. Of course, we want to improve the
20 economy. But the problem is that casinos --
21 when -- when people spend money at the
22 casinos, they're not spending them on a new
23 pair of shoes, on a new stove, on a new
24 refrigerator. They're spending them at the

1 casinos. 25 percent goes to Boston, the
2 profits go to the owners of the casino out of
3 state, and what's left with us is a bunch of
4 small businesses that have shut down.

5 And the problems that -- I've heard
6 a couple people comments about protecting
7 addicts. It's not just about protecting the
8 addicts. It's about protecting the family
9 members of those addicts. It's about
10 protecting the neighbors of those addicts.

11 The facts show that where casinos
12 move in, crime goes up. This -- this is --
13 studies have been done. A nationwide study,
14 in every single county in the states, showing
15 where casinos have come, versus counties which
16 have not adopted casinos. And not right away,
17 not in the first year or two, but after about
18 three to five years, crime goes way up. we're
19 talk about assaults. We're talking about
20 robberies. We're talking about break-ins.
21 We're talking about the things that go along
22 with foreclosures and bankruptcies. And these
23 are the problems that we're going to bring to
24 Springfield, making Springfield not a better

1 city, but bringing it into a worse condition
2 than it already is. And nobody here wants
3 that.

4 Whether you're for a casino or
5 against a casino, nobody wants to see the
6 Springfield economy or the state of our -- our
7 neighborhoods and our streets go down. But
8 the fact is, that casinos, that's what follows
9 casinos. And that's what studies have shown
10 across the country where casinos have been
11 implemented.

12 So for the -- just to protect, not
13 only the addicts, but the children of addicts.
14 Incidentally, there are casinos where they
15 have to patrol the parking lots because
16 children get left in the cars while mom or dad
17 goes in to gamble and -- and make sure that
18 there aren't children abandoned in cars and so
19 on. Not only to protect the addicts, but
20 their family members and all -- and all of our
21 neighborhoods, as well as, it was brought up
22 about housing prices.

23 The Pioneer Valley Association of
24 Realtors did a study that, whichever city,

1 when it was still open to Springfield, West
2 Springfield or Palmer, gets a casino. Those
3 housing values will go down. These are people
4 who are not pro or anti-casino. They're
5 realtors who were asked to do a study.
6 Housing values will go down, local businesses
7 will be hurt crime will increase and gambling,
8 as an addiction, will be promoted by the
9 government.

10 For these reasons, you know, the
11 payments that are made to the -- to
12 Springfield and the surrounding communities
13 are -- can't possibly be enough.

14 CHAIRMAN CROSBY: Thank you,
15 Mr. Bech. And Paul Christ.

16 MR. CHRIST: Good evening,
17 gentleman.

18 CHAIRMAN CROSBY: Good evening.

19 MR. CHRIST: I want to thank you
20 for coming out to Springfield. It's not easy.
21 I spent about 28 years watching my father run
22 Hampden County. I've been to every kind of
23 public meeting. It's not easy when the
24 messenger often gets treated. You're very

1 professional, your astute observation and
2 clear interest is self-evident. I want to
3 thank you. It restores faith in our belief
4 that we actually have an opinion.

5 I want to address two things, the
6 morality and ethics, and the crime. A lot of
7 times people get emotional. And when they get
8 emotional, they don't think rationally. A lot
9 of people, like myself, have been a sobriety
10 consultant. I've helped people turn their
11 lives around for 20 years. And we've all
12 known someone who had a problem with gambling.
13 The problem is this, sir, we live in a
14 republic. And in a republic, we're supposed
15 to design and dictate and mandate our laws by
16 the majority. And what we've proven, is that
17 the majority responsible adults in most major
18 casinos and major cities that are good when
19 they begin, and stay good, can handle it.

20 So in a republic, when the majority
21 of the laws are based upon the majority of
22 good people, we have what's called an
23 effective democracy. When we allow emotional
24 chaos, short-sighted and narrow-mindedness

1 overcome our rational thought, we get into
2 what's called a bad situation. For example,
3 prohibition. We thought we'd make alcohol
4 legal, and what did that do, it created
5 violence and crime, Kennedy and Al Capone.

6 We've been fighting the war on drugs
7 for 40 years. I'm not going to get into a
8 speech, but for 40 years it's gotten worse,
9 and we have the notion that we can step it out
10 and control it when, in fact, we can't. It's
11 a part of life. People are recreational users
12 and they seem to handle it. For example, 10
13 years ago, when they legalized gambling and
14 drugs in Portugal, 10 years later things are
15 extremely effective. The violence and the
16 crime are way down. So I want to share with
17 you some facts, not myths, based upon
18 emotional, disproportionate reasoning.

19 When an adult person develops a
20 gambling problem and their family falls,
21 that's a tragedy. I sympathize. I empathize.
22 But we're not going to make laws based upon
23 that. We're going to make laws based upon the
24 majority. When you bring this bill, and

1 hopefully you approve it, what you're doing is
2 you're bringing an economic engine. Okay.

3 Now, one more quick point on crime.
4 I was in Orlando, back and forth for 17 years.
5 I don't think I ever remember a criminal going
6 into a high-security, high-video-monitored,
7 family-orientated area and saying, hey,
8 there's a good place to do a robbery. Let's
9 go do some crime. They run the other way and
10 look for a dark corner where no one's looking.

11 Something that seems to be failed to
12 mention that people are forgetting, the MGM
13 plan and project is 70-percent family
14 entertainment. That means mom and dad can
15 come here and relax and get away. Could have
16 a shuttle to Six Flags, to the Hall of Fame,
17 to -- you know, the museum, the parks. And
18 you could have a real integrated idea where
19 the one bad example that people try to use is
20 the model where I keep hearing where it was
21 Salt Lake City or whatever, that minority
22 exception to the rule, through proper
23 mandating, governorship, and implementation
24 can be an exception to the rule. Meaning,

1 this could be a successful project based upon
2 your control and what you've done.

3 This one here really boggles my
4 mind. We're paying out impact fees, half a
5 million here, 500,000 there to Longmeadow and
6 West Springfield, these other cities for
7 impact fees. We should be thanking MGM
8 because they're going to bring an economic
9 engine. \$17 an hour is a hell of a good
10 salary. We're not talking about minimum wage.
11 We're talking about real money. And when real
12 money is put in real people's pockets, they go
13 out to eat, they have disposable income. They
14 hire a landscaper. They get a babysitter.
15 It's called balanced and fair, and average
16 distribution of wealth. And this is a booming
17 opportunity that we have to base a rational
18 our decision on, and that's very important.

19 The other thing I want to bring up
20 is that, when -- when you have this type of
21 job creator, it's what you do with it. Okay.
22 People need to stop victimizing themselves and
23 saying because this went bad and because I had
24 a bad experience, the rest of us are supposed

1 to be punished. That's just not common sense.
2 And what these people are willing to do for
3 us, and what they're willing to bring to us is
4 a huge economic opportunity.

5 I spent 15 years in the south end
6 helping these kids do something they've ever
7 heard, hey good job. Let's fill out a job
8 application. I don't know if you're not from
9 around here, but that used to be the worst
10 section in town. Okay. So to say it's come
11 up with the new streets, the community
12 development, the policing, it's already been
13 prepared. We're paving the way for you. So
14 you have an area that's depressed in economic.
15 These kids are all excited. They've filled
16 the new -- the old Basketball Hall of Fame.
17 It's filled with gang kids. They have gym
18 memberships and jobs, and they can't wait to
19 work for MGM and get a real income, because
20 nobody wants to be a criminal. It's a
21 difficult job. It's not fun for anyone.

22 What we need is solid projects, real
23 investments and your balanced and fair,
24 educated opinion to approve this project and

1 put us forward on an economic path for
2 progress and success, not looking back at the
3 failed policies of the future. Thank you for
4 coming out, and I appreciate your time.

5 CHAIRMAN CROSBY: Those are all the
6 speakers that have signed up. We have said we
7 would stay here until six, and we don't want
8 to run the risk of having somebody come and
9 have us be gone. So we will just take a
10 temporary adjournment and see whether any
11 other speakers show up, and we will then
12 convene again a few minutes of six and be
13 done.

14

15 (A recess was taken)

16

17 CHAIRMAN CROSBY: All right. Ladies
18 and gentlemen, we are about -- we're
19 reconvening about seven minutes of six. We do
20 have at least one, and maybe two more
21 speakers. Excuse me. David Ciampi. Good
22 evening.

23

24 MR. CIAMPI: Good afternoon,
Commissioner, members of the commission,

1 ladies and gentlemen. My name's David Ciampi.
2 I feel profoundly -- I feel profoundly for
3 Springfield. Springfield is where I spent
4 most of my life. This city is, essentially,
5 in my blood.

6 I believe that Springfield is
7 clearly at the crossroads where it can take a
8 path towards urban renewal, economic and
9 social revitalization, or it can continue to
10 indefinitely struggle with relatively few
11 viable options to stimulate economic growth,
12 fight crime, address a variety of issues that
13 have plagued the city for a very long time.

14 In my humble opinion, the dream of
15 opportunity and the desire and will to strive
16 in order to obtain a better quality of life
17 should never be taken away from the majority
18 in order to appease the minority.

19 It is MGM that has offered the
20 people of Springfield, the surrounding
21 communities, and the region with a vision of
22 greater opportunities and alternatives for a
23 better quality of life by acquiring greater
24 educational vocational training opportunities,

1 as well as the potential for enjoying higher
2 incomes and realizing more social alternatives
3 for quality entertainment.

4 The City of Springfield's currently
5 in the process of witnessing public and
6 private investment of development projects
7 that total, approximately, \$2.6 billion. And
8 it is MGM Springfield that is the catalyst for
9 both the local and regional renaissance.

10 It is MGM Springfield that is front
11 and center, positive social change by offering
12 a variety of new world-class entertainment
13 alternatives, such as Boyz to Men, Pitts --
14 Pittsbull (phonetically), PBR, and forming
15 partnerships with MassMutual Center, Symphony
16 Hall, Six Flags add the Springfield Convention
17 and Visitors' Bureau. Enhanced dining,
18 quality retail offerings, expanded cultural
19 activities, bowling lanes, a state-of-art
20 movie theater and outdoor plaza with ice
21 skating and attractive markets.

22 Springfield will have a promising
23 future, if our youth have jobs to call their
24 own and feel a sense of pride and personal

1 empowerment to advance by their own
2 accomplishments. It is the dream of real
3 opportunities. The belief that a better life
4 is realistically attainable that will resinate
5 with young people. There is no doubt in my
6 mind that good jobs also curb violence, create
7 stability and foster responsibility.

8 It is MGM Springfield that clearly
9 offers economic development and opportunities
10 who seek a better quality of life, and the
11 benefits do not stop with the young.

12 There will be more services
13 available to the general public, opportunities
14 for businesses to increase their
15 profitability. For example, MGM Springfield
16 outreach initiatives have earned the support
17 of foundations of regional economy. It has
18 been endorsed by chambers of commerce that
19 represent 2500 businesses throughout western
20 Massachusetts, and MGM Springfield has offered
21 \$50 million in vendor spending for local
22 businesses of all kinds.

23 Moreover, there will be direct
24 funding for public safety, libraries, early

1 childhood development, small businesses and
2 park improvement. Taken as a whole, this
3 equates to economic sustainability and
4 positive social change.

5 We live in a city that has a history
6 of being progressive and innovative, and a
7 state that appreciates knowledge and values
8 wisdom. Today, I believe it is important to
9 take a stand to advocate for progressiveness,
10 innovation and openmindedness. Walt Disney
11 once said that, quote, in the discovery of
12 knowledge, there is great entertainment and,
13 conversely, in all good entertainment, there
14 is always some grain of wisdom, humanity or
15 enlightenment to being gained.

16 So, now, there is a shared hope for
17 a new beginning. A renaissance that will
18 restore the past grandeur of Springfield.
19 Please do not take our dreams for a better way
20 of life away from us, because the future
21 awaits us. Let us confront our challenges
22 with confidence. We shall be stronger and
23 more prosperous working together with a common
24 purpose. We now have a real opportunity to

1 have a stronger and more vibrant city that
2 will benefit residents and those who live in
3 our region. God bless Springfield, God bless
4 the commonwealth, and God bless our great
5 country. Thank you very much.

6 CHAIRMAN CROSBY: Thank you. Okay
7 anybody else out there? I know Mr. Mathis --
8 Janice we all set? Okay. Mr. Mathis from MGM
9 Springfield has asked for a chance to close
10 out the session.

11 MR. MATHIS: Thank you,
12 Mr. Chairman. I'm very pleased to be the last
13 speaker. I'm sure you are as well, to close
14 this very lengthy process. I just want to, in
15 closing, thank you personally, and thank the
16 fellow commissioners for what we view is a
17 very diligent process. We've never worked so
18 hard in a one-man race in our entire
19 experience. We have submitted thousands and
20 thousands of pages, and times that by the six
21 or seven other applicants that you received
22 those from, and we know you've read them. We
23 know you've read them closely. And the reason
24 we know that is because we've received pages

1 and pages of clarification questions.

2 So I want to -- I want to thank you.

3 And for our very passionate supporters,
4 recognize that we understood the rules going
5 into that arbitration. We made the best case
6 we could in front of the arbitrators. We
7 accepted those decisions, and you did provide
8 some relief and clarifications. Not as much
9 as we would have liked. Certainly, more than
10 what the surrounding communities wanted you to
11 provide, and we feel like we were treated very
12 fairly in that process.

13 So with that, I want to thank you.

14 And, in closing, say go Bruins.

15 CHAIRMAN CROSBY: Thank you. All
16 right. With that, do I have a motion to
17 adjourn?

18 COMMISSIONER CAMERON: So moved.

19 CHAIRMAN CROSBY: All in favor?

20 COMMISSIONER MCHUGH: Aye.

21 COMMISSIONER ZUNIGA: Aye.

22 COMMISSIONER CAMERON: Aye.

23 CHAIRMAN CROSBY: Aye.

24 COMMISSIONER STEBBINS: Aye.

1 CHAIRMAN CROSBY: We have it
2 unanimously. Thank you all for coming
3 multiple times. We will be back to
4 Springfield.

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6 (Meeting concluded at 6:00 p.m.)

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2 SPEAKERS:
3 Michael Mathis, MGM
4 Chuck Irving, Davenport Properties
5 Al Cabot, City of West Springfield
6 Michael Eagan, Town of Palmer
7 Ted Steger, Town of Longmeadow
8 Ellen Wallace, UNITE Here
9 William Devlin, City of Springfield
10 Rhonda Latney City of Springfield
11 Raymond Caporale, City of Springfield
12 Stephen Wichrowski, City of Springfield
13 Vera O'Connor, City of Springfield
14 Stan Dombrowski, City of Springfield
15 Richard Theroux Town of Agawam
16 Carol Kerr, City of Springfield
17 John Simpson, City of Springfield
18 Michael Thomes, City of Springfield
19 Mark Checkwicz, City of Springfield
20 Chris Benoit, City of Springfield
21 Nathan Bech, City of Springfield
22 Paul Christ, City of Springfield
23 David Ciampi, City of Springfield
24

1 C E R T I F I C A T E

2
3 I, Brenda M. Ginisi, Court Reporter, do
4 hereby certify that the foregoing is a true
5 and accurate transcript from the record of the
6 proceedings.

7 I, Brenda M. Ginisi, further certify
8 that the foregoing is in compliance with the
9 Administrative Office of the Trial Court
10 Directive of Transcript Format.

11 I, Brenda M. Ginisi, further certify
12 that I neither am counsel for, related to, nor
13 employed by any of the parties to the action
14 in which this hearing was taken and further
15 that I am not financially nor otherwise
16 interested in the outcome of this action.

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

19
20 WITNESS MY HAND THIS 16th of May
21 2014.

22
23 BRENDA M. GINISI My Commission expires:
24 Notary Public July 11, 2014