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## Local Community Mitigation Advisory Committee Region A Meeting

**Date/Time:** October 14, 2020 at 1:30 p.m.

**Place:** VIA CONFERENCE CALL NUMBER: 1 646 741 5292  
PARTICIPANT CODE: 111 260 6324

**Members Present:**

David Bancroft  
Eric Bourassa  
Richard Caraviello, Chair  
John DePriest

Ron Hogan  
Mayra Negron-Roche  
Paul Sheehan  
Keith Slattery

**Others Present:**

Joseph Delaney, MGC  
Tania Perez, MGC

Bruce Stebbins  
Mary Thurlow

**Call to Order**

Mr. Delaney called the Local Community Mitigation Advisory Committee (“Committee”) meeting to order.

*Given the unprecedented circumstances resulting from the global Coronavirus pandemic, Governor Charles Baker issued an order to provide limited relief from certain provisions of the Open Meeting Law to protect the health and safety of individuals interested in attending public meetings. In keeping with the guidance provided, the Local Community Mitigation Advisory Committee will conduct a public meeting utilizing remote collaboration technology.*

**Election of Chair and Representative to the Subcommittee**

Chair Caraviello called for volunteers to serve as the next Chair and the representative to the Subcommittee on Community Mitigation (“ Subcommittee”). Mr. DePriest nominated Mr. Caraviello and Mr. Hogan, who expressed interest previously. Mr. Sheehan seconded the motion. All members voted to approve the motion and motion passed 8:0.

## Discussion of Policy Questions

Mr. Delaney began discussion about the 2021 policy questions, which had been discussed in detail at the previous Committee meeting. He focused on the question of whether the Community Mitigation Fund (“CMF”) should go to work readiness training programs for residents of communities hosting casinos. Mr. Slattery commented that in Everett, programs like these have been very helpful so he is supportive of continuing to fund them. Mr. DePriest and Mr. Bancroft agreed.

Next were the issues of increasing the transportation construction category fund allocation, and whether there should be a cap on the portion of construction costs funded by the CMF, as some of the applications last received in this category proposed no fund match. Mr. Delaney pointed out that some construction projects’ benefits reach beyond mitigating effects of the gaming establishment so having no local match isn’t necessarily a dealbreaker if the proposed project is good, citing last grant season’s Beacham St. project for Everett. Mr. Bourassa commented that he would increase the transportation construction category amount, and suggested that the CMF Committee just give preferential consideration to projects with fund matches instead of making a match a requirement. Mr. Bancroft pointed out that for some communities, securing a local match may be difficult, and a match requirement may disqualify otherwise good projects from communities that can demonstrate their need. Mr. Hogan agreed. Chair Caraviello opined that in the current difficult and uncertain times, securing a local match may prove more difficult than usual. Mr. Hogan stated that the less a project has to do with mitigating effects of a casino, the more it should be expected that they propose a local match, but that an application should not be disqualified if it does not. Mr. Delaney read the section of the CMF guidelines that states the Massachusetts Gaming Commission (“MGC”) expects the CMF to pay for only a portion of any project. Mr. Delaney proposed leaving the language as is. Ms. Thurlow asked Mr. Bourassa to suggest how much of an increase to the transportation construction target amount he considered appropriate, to which Mr. Bourassa replied that they should increase it from \$3M to \$5M. Mr. Delaney pointed out that they could do possibly do that. Mr. Hogan asked if they had had difficulty with a percentage cap that was too low, or with applications that have very little to do with effects of a casino. Mr. Delaney answered that in Chelsea’s case, they waived the \$1M limit in order to give them more because it was a necessary and good project, but in other cases it seemed that communities just asked for the maximum amount of money. Mr. Bourassa pointed out that transportation projects are very expensive, so asking for \$1M is not out of the question. Mr. Hogan reminded the Committee that the CMF is meant to cover unanticipated effects of the casino that are not covered in their host/surrounding community agreement. Mr. Delaney remarked that MassDOT environmental impact reports used to write those agreements sometimes minimize traffic issues, thus forcing the community to seek assistance outside of the agreement.

The next issue was one of creating an emergency reserve for unexpected events that occur after the CMF application deadline. Mr. Hogan asked whether the application process would be the same. Mr. Delaney clarified that the emergency fund would not be used as a way of circumventing the CMF application process, but for an unexpected and immediate need. He added that he would need to verify whether a situation is truly an unanticipated emergency before giving a community funds. Mr. Hogan stated that it was a good idea. Mr. Bancroft asked

if it could be used by communities that have already been awarded. Mr. Delaney explained that it could. Mr. Bancroft shared that at his job, if a project runs into an unexpected issue, they can simply give the project team more money without them having to apply for it, and that he agreed with having a CMF emergency fund. Commissioner Stebbins asked for members' similar experiences with having to fund an emergency effort. Mr. Bancroft described projects in his line of work where there may more contamination found than initially expected and more money is needed to complete a cleanup project, and the award guidelines allow for that without necessitating another competitive grant application round. Mr. Delaney offered an experience from his previous job in which an emergency reserve for water and sewer projects was used towards a sewer emergency. Ms. Negron-Roche opined that it was a good idea to have an emergency reserve but wondered what an appropriate amount may be. Mr. Delaney explained that it would hold a small percentage of the CMF and reminded everyone that the Commission can waive the money amount limit if it were truly necessary. Mr. Bancroft and Mr. Hogan agreed that it was a good idea.

Mr. Delaney brought up the question of requiring a match only for specific categories of grants. Mr. Caraviello, Mr. DePriest, and Mr. Slattery agreed that no change was necessary for that policy. The next item was what to do with communities with unused reserves from years their casinos opened. Mr. Delaney suggested giving these communities a year to commit the funds, and that some of them are not aware of their unused funds. Mr. Caraviello asked for a list of communities that have unused reserves. Mr. DePriest asked if communities could apply their reserves to anything they chose. Mr. Delaney explained that as long as it's a casino impact that needs to be mitigated it is acceptable. Mr. Bancroft commented that it made sense to give communities a year limit and agreed that they should talk to communities to make sure they're aware of their unused funds.

Next was the issue of continuing to help the Hampden County's sheriff's office with the lease for their alcohol correctional facility or requiring them to apply every year. Mr. Hogan opined that requiring them to apply for funding every year was appropriate. Mr. Slattery agreed with Mr. Hogan. Mr. Delaney suggested phasing their lease assistance out over time. Mr. Bancroft asked if the sheriff's office would be told beforehand that their assistance was being phased out. Mr. Delaney answered that whatever decision the Commission makes regarding this issue, the sheriff's office will be informed about it. Ms. Thurlow showed the Committee her list of communities with unused or partially unused reserves. She explained that if a community requests a CMF grant, part of its reserve would go towards that project.

### **Discussion of the 2021 Community Mitigation Fund Guidelines**

Mr. Delaney began presenting the 2021 CMF guidelines. He went over the target amounts available for each region, explaining that the pandemic affected these amounts and that 2018 was the first year there was revenue from the casino in region B. He then moved on to the items of joint applications, how many categories can be applied to for the same project, communities with unused reserves, workforce grants, tribal gaming technical assistance, and emergency funds. Mr. Delaney noted that he was still working on the wording of the emergency grant guideline and Commissioner Stebbins suggested that the language should be consistent with that of the specific impact category. Mr. Delaney agreed, since an emergency is a particular type of specific impact.

He informed the Committee that there are communities with unused award money, and that they need to figure out how to rescind those grants. Mr. Delaney welcomed comments. Mr. Bancroft asked if CMF award contracts contain any time requirements for using them. Mr. Delaney clarified that the state contract does contain a requirement of expending awards within four years.

### Next Steps

Ms. Thurlow reminded the Committee that the next meeting is November 16 and that the guidelines will have been out for public comments. She asked the Committee if they had any questions about current Commission activities, such as the SEIGMA research project. She offered to ask the MGC director of research and responsible gaming to talk to them at the next meeting. Mr. Bancroft opined it sounded interesting. Mr. Delaney updated the Committee about how the gaming establishments are dealing with the pandemic. He shared that the casinos were not completely open yet and they had to open their gaming floors at reduced capacity. At Plainridge Park Casino, horse racing was operational, their restaurants were closed, but their food court was open. The MGM hotel was open for exclusive guests only, some of their restaurants were open during limited hours, and their Regal cinema was closed. The Encore hotel was open on weekends, most of their restaurants were open at reduced hours, their nightclub was closed, but they were holding small weddings outside. Mr. Delaney then shared current employment and revenue numbers compared to the same time last year, which have declined. Commissioner Stebbins announced that at the next Commission meeting, they would be addressing these CMF guidelines. Chair Caraviello asked to confirm the date of the next meeting.

Mr. Bancroft made a motion to adjourn. Mr. DePriest seconded.

*Roll Call Vote:*

*Mr. Slattery: Aye.*

*Mr. Sheehan: Aye.*

*Mr. DePriest: Aye.*

*Mr. Hogan: Aye.*

*Mr. Caraviello: Aye.*

*Mr. Bourassa: Aye.*

*Mr. Bancroft: Aye.*

*Ms. Negron-Roche: Aye.*

*The motion passed 8:0.*

With no further topics for discussion, the Chair adjourned the meeting.

### List of Documents and Other Items Used

1. 2021 Community Mitigation Fund Policy Questions
2. 2021 Community Mitigation Fund Guidelines
3. Minutes from 9/23/2020 LCMAC region A meeting
4. LCMAC region A 10/14/20 notice of meeting and agenda

/s/ Tania J. Perez, Secretary