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## Section 68: Gaming Policy Advisory Committee Region B Meeting

**Date/Time:** November 17, 2020 at 1:30 p.m.  
**Place:** VIA CONFERENCE CALL NUMBER: 1 646 741 5292  
**PARTICIPANT CODE:** 111 081 9414

**Present:**

Jennifer Bonfiglio- Agawam  
Samuel Darkwa, Chair- West Springfield  
Alison Ebner- Chamber of Commerce  
Peter Gagliardi- Springfield  
Ellen Patashnick- Human Service Provider  
Michael Pise- Chicopee  
Bellamy Schmidt- Holyoke  
Lori Tanner- Regional Planning Agency

Joseph Delaney, MGC Community Affairs Division Chief  
José Delgado, MGM Director of Governmental Affairs  
Tania Perez, MGC Administrative/Project Assistant  
Mark Vander Linden, MGC Director of Research and Responsible Gaming

*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.*

**Call to Order**

1:30 p.m. Chair Darkwa called the Local Community Mitigation Advisory Committee (“Committee”) meeting to order.

## Approval of Minutes

1:31 p.m.

Chair Darkwa called for a motion to approve the minutes from the previous meeting of October 13, 2020. Ms. Bonfiglio moved to approve the minutes. Mr. Schmidt seconded the motion. Due to their absences from the last meeting, Mr. Gagliardi, Ms. Bonfiglio, and Ms. Tanner opted to abstain.

*Roll call vote:*

*Mr. Gagliardi: Abstained.*

*Ms. Bonfiglio: Aye.*

*Mr. Pise: Abstained.*

*Mr. Schmidt: Aye.*

*Mr. Darkwa: Aye.*

*Ms. Tanner: Abstained.*

*Ms. Ebner: Aye.*

*Ms. Patashnick: Aye.*

*The motion passed 5:0:3.*

## Discussion of 2021 Community Mitigation Fund Guidelines

1:32 p.m.

Mr. Delaney began updating the Committee on the latest Community Mitigation Fund (“CMF”) guideline news. He asked the new members of the Committee, Mr. Gagliardi and Mr. Pise, to introduce themselves beforehand. Mr. Delaney also updated the Committee on the new regulations surrounding businesses including casinos. Mr. Delgado concurred.

Mr. Delaney shared with the Committee a public comment on the 2021 CMF guidelines from the Metropolitan Area Planning Council (“MAPC”). The comment proposed a new grant category for regional business development. Mr. Delaney explained that business planning is already covered under the CMF community planning grant category. The comment requested the possibility of a grant covering career training for newly unemployed casino staff; however, this type of work is already eligible under the workforce grant category. The third request in the public comment called for English language and adult basic education training, which are covered under the workforce grant category already. The fourth item in the comment mentions digital literacy training, which had been covered by CMF funds in past projects. The fifth item touches on food and housing insecurity, which is outside the scope of CMF.

Mr. Delaney stated that at the next meeting of the Massachusetts Gaming Commission (“MGC”), the commissioners would vote on whether to approve the latest draft of the CMF guidelines, after which, if approved, the request for proposals for the 2021 CMF grant year will be posted on the official state procurement platform. Mr. Schmidt opined that the guidelines should be more

explicit and detailed so people understand what's covered under the grants better. Mr. Delaney mentioned that they had done that already for some guideline items.

### **Discussion of the MGC Research Agenda and Responsible Gaming**

[1:46 p.m.](#)

Mr. Vander Linden began his presentation about how MGC-sponsored research on the social and economic impacts of gaming facilities on the Commonwealth is used to inform policy decisions about gaming. He touched upon the responsible gaming framework developed by MGC that gaming facilities operate within. He also explained Massachusetts Open Data Exchange where gaming data is kept for researchers to use.

Mr. Vander Linden informed the Committee of the GameSense program, which was developed in order to mitigate possible negative effects of casinos on residents. He informed members that the MGC is required to provide on-site services to help mitigate possible negative effects of gambling. GameSense service centers at casinos are there for patrons for this reason, in addition to providing problem gambling training to casino employees. Mr. Vander Linden also explained the Play My Way program for casino patrons to set a budget for themselves and be notified when they are approaching or exceeding that limit. He also reviewed the voluntary self-exclusion program for people to pledge not to visit any gaming floors for a predetermined amount of time. Mr. Delaney asked if there were any important findings from the commission's research. Mr. Vander Linden noted that he found very few public safety impacts, and relatively low rates of problem gambling even among high-risk groups, in addition to positive economic impacts on the area.

Chair Darkwa asked Mr. Vander Linden to quantify the economic impact. Mr. Vander Linden referred him to MGM's first operational report, which could be found in links provided in his presentation. Mr. Vander Linden thanked Mr. Delgado for cooperating with research efforts. Mr. Delgado clarified that MGM opened with over 3,000 jobs, that there was \$900 million worth of economic development in the area, and that the study also found that 40% of MGM's revenue was "recovered" money from Massachusetts residents who were previously patronizing nearby casinos in other states.

### **Discussion of Next Steps**

[2:23 p.m.](#)

Mr. Delaney reminded the Committee that this was their last meeting of the year and that the Commission would vote on whether to approve the CMF guidelines next Thursday. He also noted that in the next few months he was planning on holding workshops for community applicants where they would discuss how to use any remaining reserve grant money, and for helping communities develop better applications. He suggested a meeting in April for both region's committees

to discuss Encore Boston Harbor’s public safety report and be updated on other Commission operations and projects.

Mr. Pise requested an update on sports betting in April. Mr. Delaney informed him that a bill that would have made MGC the sports betting authority did not go through. Mr. Delgado commented that the state House and Senate were still deciding on sports betting legislation.

Hearing no other business, Chair Darkwa asked for a motion to adjourn the meeting. Mr. Gagliardi moved to adjourn. Ms. Bonfiglio seconded.

*Roll call vote:*

*Mr. Gagliardi: Aye.*

*Ms. Bonfiglio: Aye.*

*Mr. Pise: Aye.*

*Mr. Schmidt: Aye.*

*Mr. Darkwa: Aye.*

*Ms. Tanner: Aye.*

*Ms. Ebner: (no response)*

*Ms. Patashnick: Aye.*

*The motion passed 7:0. Ms. Ebner had already left the meeting.*

[2:33 p.m.](#) The Chair adjourned the meeting.

#### **List of Documents and Other Items Used**

1. 11/17/2020 Local Community Mitigation Advisory Committee region B meeting public notice and agenda
2. 10/13/2020 Local Community Mitigation Advisory Committee region B meeting minutes
3. “Understanding the Impact of Casinos on Massachusetts Communities”, Mark Vander Linden
4. GameSense brochure

/s/ Tania J. Perez  
Secretary