



Local Community Mitigation Advisory Committee Region B Meeting Minutes

Date/Time: November 19, 2019 – 2:00 p.m.

Location: Pioneer Valley Planning Commission (PVPC)
60 Congress Street, Floor 2
Springfield, MA 01104

Members

Present: Carmina Fernandes
Allison Ebner
Lori Tanner
Jennifer Bonfiglio
John Beaulieu

Ellen Patashnick
Steven Marantz
Mary McNally
Judith Theocles
Bellamy Schmidt

Members

Absent: Phil Dromey

Attendees: John Ziemba
Joe Delaney
Jill Griffin

Mary Thurlow
Bruce Stebbins
Jose Delgado (MGM Springfield)

Call to Order

2:00 p.m. Ombudsman John Ziemba called the meeting to order. As there are now several new members and they all introduced themselves.

Next, Mr. Ziemba thanked Jill McCarthy Payne for her role on the Gaming Policy and Advisory Committee (GPAC) and as Chair to the Local Community Mitigation Advisory Committee (LCMAC) in Region B. He stated that the Commission plans to thank her at a future Commission meeting in Springfield properly.

Mr. Ziemba then thanked Tim Brennan for all his contributions to this Committee and stated that he hopes Mr. Brennan is enjoying his retirement. He also thanked Rick Sullivan for his representation as the Regional Economic Development representative on this Committee, as well as Kate Kane. She continued attending these meetings for two years during the search for a new representative. Mr. Ziemba then wished Andrew Smith of

Holyoke and Greg Chieko of Chicopee the best of luck in their new positions and thanked them for their communities' representation.

Mr. Ziemba then welcomed the Committee's new members John Beaulieu representing Chicopee; Mary McNally representing East Longmeadow; Bellamy Schmidt representing Holyoke. Also, Lori Tanner, who was an alternate representative for PVPC, is now representing Region B Regional Planning Agency replacing Tim Brennan who retired. Allison Ebner was also introduced representing the Chamber of Commerce position.

Approval of Minutes

2:03 p.m. *Ms. Bonfiglio moved to approve the minutes from the meeting of April 24th, 2019. Ms. Ebner seconded the motion. Mr. Schmidt noted an edit needed on time markers.
The motion was approved unanimously, pending edits.*

Election of Chair and Representative of the Subcommittee on Community Mitigation

2:04 p.m. Next, Mr. Ziemba opened the floor to members interested in chairing this Committee. Previously, Ms. Fernandes was elected as the Region B representative for the Subcommittee on Community Mitigation. Ms. Fernandes has agreed to enter herself for a nomination but she stated that she would welcome another nominee.

Mr. Ziemba asked for any other volunteers. He explained that the Subcommittee meets twice in the fall, and the LCMAC members' thoughts and feelings are taken to the Subcommittee. There should be one meeting in the spring as well. The LCMAC committees try to have three to four meetings per year. The Chair's responsibility is to lead these meetings and help work on the agenda.

Mr. Ziemba articulated for the new members that the Community Mitigation Fund (CMF) guidelines are reviewed as the application season approaches in the fall. The Subcommittee meeting takes place around March, and another meeting just before summer follows, with no summer meetings.

2:09 p.m. *Ms. Theocles moved that the Region B Local Community Mitigation Advisory Committee nominate Ms. Bonfiglio as Representative of the Subcommittee on Community Mitigation. Mr. Beaulieu seconded the motion.
The motion passed unanimously.*

Nominations for the Chair will be tabled until the next meeting.

Discussion of the 2020 Community Mitigation Fund Guidelines

2:11 p.m. Mr. Ziemba provided a brief overview of the annual process for CMF guideline development. Last year, the Committee received new revenues into the fund from MGM Springfield. With the opening of Encore Boston Harbor, there are more new revenues going into the fund. The Commission will now be using payments from the licensees. He explained how the Commission receives 6.5 percent of 25 percent of the Gross Gaming Revenue (G.G.R.) tax.

Mr. Schmidt asked about the fines that have gone into this fund. Mr. Beaulieu noted the Commission levied a \$35.5M fine on Wynn, where 6 percent went into the C.M.F. There was a \$100,000 fine for minors being identified on the gaming floor, among other less severe infractions.

Next, Mr. Ziemba explained the split of revenues under the system that separates the eastern and western regions.

Mr. Ziemba then explained the meeting schedule of all of the committees under GPAC to the members. He noted a public comment period on proposed guidelines that ends on November 25th, 2019, at 5:00 p.m. Commission staff will return to the Commission in December and review the comments received. The statutory deadline for all CMF applications is February 1st.

2:18 p.m. Construction Project Oversight Manager Joe Delaney provided the members with an overview of the process after the Commission receives the CMF applications. He explained that studies regarding all aspects of traffic (MassDOT requires that an annual analysis is conducted) commences for a period of seven years. Each of the surrounding communities performs a host of studies for the first year and then again in five years. This assigns a monetary value to the impacts of the project. Encore Boston Harbor must conduct these studies twice a year for ten years.

Project Manager Mary Thurlow stated that the community agreements can be found on the [Commission's website](#). Mr. Ziemba added that all the grants made and past guidelines and the Commission's research agenda can also be found on the website.

Mr. Ziemba stated that one-year lookback studies are expected to be completed within the next two months.

Next, Mr. Ziemba described all of the transportation planning that has been conducted to lessen traffic congestion around Encore Boston Harbor.

Next, Mr. Ziemba reviewed a memorandum in the Committee's packet entitled, "2020 Community Mitigation Fund Draft Guidelines" with the members that explained that monies are booked into the following year by spending the "old" money first. Hence, the three-year period referred to does not commence. He noted that if the "new" money in the fund is spent first, the three-year rule engages. Therefore, he opined that it is more advantageous to finish the "old" money first for this. He added that the method of spending "old" money first allows money to build more over time for a larger surplus.

There was a discussion around any reasons for an application to be rejected. The main reason to reject an application is that the applicant must demonstrate how costs are connected to the existence of a casino in their community. If this connection is not established, the application does not qualify.

Ms. Fernandes asked if affected communities need to apply or if someone reaches out to them. Mr. Delaney responded that MGM Springfield provides the studies to the city, which prompts them to apply for funds, should they determine to do so after seeing the results.

Mr. Ziemba stated that a significant recommendation for this year was that the CMF starts to pay for transportation construction projects. The Commission needs to decide on this recommendation. The approach of these guidelines is conservative because the projects are overburdensome and costly to the fund. The CMF team determined that they can provide one-year based grants for transportation projects.

Mr. Ziemba made note that the purpose of the guidelines is to set reasonable expectations.

Ms. Theocles asked for a timeline of traffic studies, to which Mr. Delaney provided to the members. It was determined that the communities would not have the results in time for the applications. Mr. Delaney stated that the team sets targets for reach region and always room for adjustments if the funds are available.

Mr. Ziemba directed the members to the last page the draft of guidelines for discussion purposes only. He described the CMF and the Gaming Economic Development Fund (GEDF). The Commission controls the CMF, and the legislature appropriates the GEDF. The Commission made a recommendation to the legislature that a portion of that fund be allocated to regionally-based projects near a casino. If a region prospers, it makes a better host community for the facility.

2:54 p.m. Commissioner Stebbins summarized the white paper. He stated that he spoke to many local stakeholders and solicited strategies for money to go back to regional areas. These Strategies would align with benefits to casinos. Strategies totaled almost \$1.5M. He stated that there was some positive feedback from several lawmakers. The Commission hopes to resubmit the white paper with a fresh new summary after determining if strategies are still valid. Should the Commission resubmit the white paper, it will be shared with everyone.

In eastern Massachusetts, the Commission funded grants to capture some local tourism revenue for local communities. Revere Beach would like to market to the casino patrons. Northampton is also attempting to market the downtown area to patrons. Commissioner Stebbins stated that Foxboro used their reserve allocations to develop a regional tourism plan and partner with PPC and the Wrentham outlets as well.

Mr. Ziemba then reviewed categories of existing grants via a chart on the memorandum. He noted that Impact Grants is a catch-all category.

3:09 p.m. Workforce, Supplier and Diversity Development Director, Jill Griffin, described the Workforce Development Pilot Program to the Committee members.

MGM Springfield has a significant amount of jobs on its website for Blackjack dealers. Mr. Delgado stated that MGM Springfield has trained and lost a couple of hundred dealers. Job openings such as this will be discussed at the upcoming Commission meeting as there remains a demand for dealers and culinary jobs.

Commissioner Stebbins explained further that there is a bonus for teaming up by applying for joint grants with the regional incentive.

Mr. Ziemba then explained reserve funds and how that is handled. Reserve grants do not have a deadline of February 1st.

Ethics Obligations - Reminder

3:20 p.m. Mr. Ziemba reminded the Committee members to please make sure that documentation of their acknowledgment of the Conflict of Interest is up to date. He requested that members kindly forward their state certifications to Ms. Thurlow at their earliest convenience.

Next Steps

3:20 p.m. Mr. Ziemba asked members for any general advice or information for the Commission. He set a timeframe to meet again in March or April and stated

that he would be in touch with the members regarding the Chair possibilities.
He will continue to notify members when this is brought to the Commission.

3:22 p.m. *With no further business, the meeting adjourned.*

List of Documents and Other Items Used

1. Notice of meeting and agenda, posted November 19th, 2019
2. Meeting Minutes from the meeting of April 24th, 2019
3. Memorandum re: 2020 Community Mitigation Fund Draft Guidelines, dated October 23rd, 2019
4. 2020 Community Mitigation Fund DRAFT Guidelines, dated October 21st, 2019

/s/ Shara N. Bedard
Secretary