
Massachusetts Gaming Commission

Meeting Minutes



Date/Time: April 3, 2024, 1:00 p.m.
Place: Massachusetts Gaming Commission

VIA CONFERENCE CALL NUMBER: 1-646-741-5292
PARTICIPANT CODE: 111 226 7549

The Commission conducted this public meeting remotely utilizing collaboration technology. The use of this technology was intended to ensure an adequate, alternative means of public access to the Commission's deliberations for any interested member of the public.

Commissioners Present:

Interim Chair Jordan Maynard
Commissioner Eileen O'Brien
Commissioner Bradford Hill
Commissioner Nakisha Skinner

1. [Call to Order](#) (0:00)

Interim Chair Jordan Maynard called to order the 512th Public Meeting of the Massachusetts Gaming Commission ("Commission"). Roll call attendance was conducted, and all four commissioners were present for the meeting.

2. [Investigations and Enforcement Bureau](#) (0:52)

Director of the Investigations and Enforcement Bureau ("IEB"), Caitlin Monahan, began by stating that there is a request for an amendment to the Beverage License at Encore Boston Harbor ("EBH").

Licensing Manager David MacKay stated that the amendment to the Beverage License would add a new leased outlet venue, Seamark Seafood & Cocktails ("Seamark"), replacing the space formerly held by the Sinatra Restaurant. *A memo and a copy of EBH's amendment application can be found in the Commissioners' Packet on pages 3 through 8.* The application was reviewed by the Division of Licensing and included verification pertaining to the license area manager, Chelsea Brewster, and the designee for the Jointly Responsible Person for Seamark, Ricardo

Soto, to ensure that they both held proper certification and are properly licensed by the Commission. Additionally, an inspection confirmed that the licensed area's surveillance and security were in compliance and provided adequate coverage.

Manager MacKay noted that Commissioner Skinner had previously posed a question in regard to the language on page three of the application on "Jointly Responsible Person." He stated that the Division of Licensing had obtained a copy of the lease agreement between Encore and Seamark, reiterating that Chelsea Brewster would act as the licensed area manager responsible for the outlet on behalf of EBH, while Seamark has appointed their own designee, Ricardo Soto, as the Jointly Responsible Person. Lastly, he remarked that the Division of Licensing worked with Juliana Catanzariti and Jacqui Krum on behalf of EBH in relation to this request. He recommended that the Commission approve this request.

Chief of the IEB Gaming Agent Division Burke Cain stated that he had inspected the CCTV cameras and security of the alcohol in the bar area, and both met expectations.

Commissioner Hill moved that the Commission approve the amendment to Encore Boston Harbor's beverage license as included in the Commissioners' packet and discussed here today. Commissioner O'Brien seconded the motion.

Roll call vote:

Commissioner O'Brien: Aye.

Commissioner Hill: Aye.

Commissioner Skinner: Aye.

Interim Chair Maynard: Aye.

The motion passed unanimously, 4-0.

3. Presentation of "Gambling and Problem Gambling in Massachusetts: Results of a Follow Up Population Survey" (6:13)

Interim Chair Maynard introduced Dr. Rachel Volberg, stating that she is well known and respected by the Commission. She is a professor at the School of Public Health and Health Sciences at the University of Massachusetts at Amherst. He stated that she has been involved in research on gambling and problem gambling since 1985 and has been recognized by the National Institute of Health. He stated that the Commission was extremely fortunate to have her expertise and that future initiatives will be shaped by the study presented during this meeting. Finally, he added that the Commission will continue to meet patrons where they are, especially those who are the most vulnerable.

Mark Vander Linden, Director of Research and Responsible Gaming, thanked the Commissioners and stated that under the Expanded Gaming Act, the Commission established an annual research agenda, which included a baseline study of problem gaming and existing prevention and treatment programs. In 2013, the Commission selected a research team from the University of Massachusetts Amherst School of Public Health and Health Sciences to implement a comprehensive research agenda, including this baseline study. Director Vander Linden stated that the same team has carried out a follow-up general population survey to determine if and how

gambling attitudes, gambling behavior, and problem gambling prevalence had changed in Massachusetts following the introduction of the three casinos. He added that the results are directly comparable to the results found in the baseline survey conducted over ten years ago. In addition to an overall assessment, the report addressed whether the demographic and behavioral patterns of gambling and problem gambling prevalence changed in Massachusetts between 2013 and 2021.

Dr. Volberg presented an overview of the follow-up survey, including the following topics: Research Methods, Attitudes About Gambling, Gambling Behavior, Problem Gambling, Comparing Gambling Groups, Awareness of Services in Massachusetts, Changes since 2013, and Future Directions. *A memo regarding the Follow-up General Population Survey, a research snapshot on gambling behavior, the final report and Dr. Volberg's presentation were included in the Commissioners' Packet on pages 9 through 260.*

Dr. Volberg reviewed some survey data from Connecticut and noted that those who sought help most often accessed non-state funded options. Commissioner O'Brien asked what non-state services were accessed. Dr. Volberg responded that the most frequently accessed resources were Gamblers Anonymous and informal support from friends and family.

Commissioner Hill asked for clarification on the exact year the survey was conducted to better understand the timeframe in which participants were giving their responses regarding awareness of media campaigns. Dr. Volberg responded that the survey was conducted from September 2021 through April 2022. She noted that upcoming research will have further information about awareness of services.

Interim Chair Maynard commented that this data presented an opportunity for the Commission to promote problem gambling services. Dr. Volberg agreed, stating that there is an opportunity to consider concentrating resources in a targeted manner. She addressed the stigma around gambling problems and a lack of awareness around where to find help.

Commissioner O'Brien agreed that increased awareness in the form of public service announcement campaigns presents a promising opportunity. She asked if upcoming research would explore how 14% of survey participants moved from the 'recreational gambling' category to the 'at-risk gambling' category and how 3% moved from 'problem' to 'recreational' gambling. Finally, she asked about the possibility of obtaining Chinese translators based on reports regarding the impact on that community in particular. Dr. Volberg responded that the multivariate analysis currently being considered by the research team would contribute somewhat to the understanding of factors causing movement between different gambling categories. However, this type of analysis is not the most reliable way to understand those transitions. Instead, a cohort study following the same individuals and how they transition in and out of gambling would better identify the predictors of such transitions. She stated that, based on her experience, a standard survey is effective for most of the population, but it does not capture accurate information from certain specific communities. She advocated for community-based participatory research.

Director Vander Linden added that the annual and ongoing research agenda allows the researchers to pivot from year to year. He added that community driven research is extremely unique and addresses specific challenges within a community.

Commissioner Hill thanked Dr. Volberg for a great report that will help the Commission moving forward. He noted that many Massachusetts residents travel to other states, particularly New Hampshire, to gamble and engage in sports wagering. Director Vander Linden added that in 2013, 21% of respondents reported that they are gambling out of state which was cut in half by 2021 to 10%.

Interim Chair Maynard stated that the research presents many opportunities for action moving forward.

Transcribers Note: At approximately 2:11 P.M., Interim Chair Maynard noted that Commissioner Skinner left the meeting.

4. [Commissioner Updates](#) (1:11:16)

Upon inquiry by Interim Chair Maynard, no commissioner updates were noted.

5. [Other Business](#) (1:11:22)

Hearing no other business, Interim Chair Maynard requested a motion to adjourn.

Commissioner Hill moved to adjourn. The motion was seconded by Commissioner O'Brien.

Roll call vote:

Commissioner O'Brien: Aye.

Commissioner Hill: Aye.

Interim Chair Maynard: Aye.

The motion passed unanimously, 3-0.

List of Documents and Other Items Used

1. [Notice of Meeting and Agenda](#) dated April 1, 2024
2. [Commissioner's Packet from the April 3, 2024](#) meeting (posted on massgaming.com)