



Meeting Date/Time: September 14, 2021 at 10:00 a.m.

Via Conference Call Number: (646) 741-5292 Participant Code: 111 223 4862

Present: Jennifer Bonfiglio, Agawam
Samuel Darkwa, West Springfield
Louis Kornet, Longmeadow
Karen Korpinen, East Longmeadow
Peter Gagliardi, Springfield
Terry Murphy, Holyoke
Ellen Patashnick, Human Service Provider
Michael Pise, Chicopee
Richard Sullivan, Reg. Eco. Deve. Organization
Lori Tanner, Regional Planning Agency
Gus Kim, MGM Springfield
Joseph Delaney, MGC Community Affairs Division Chief
Mary Thurlow, MGC Senior Program Manager

Call to Order

10:10 a.m. Chair Darkwa called the Region B Local Community Mitigation Advisory Committee (“Committee”) meeting to order. Joe Delaney read the public disclosure.

Approval of Minutes

Chair Darkwa called for a motion to approve the minutes from the previous meeting of November 17, 2020. Ms. Bonfiglio moved to approve the minutes. Mr. Sullivan seconded the motion. Upon a roll call vote seven members assented and three abstained: Karen Korpinen, Louis Kornet and Terry Murphy (new members and were not at that meeting).

Election of Chair and Representative of the Subcommittee on Community Mitigation

Next, the Chair opened the floor to members interested in chairing this Committee. The chair felt that someone else may appreciate the experience. Richard Sullivan volunteered to take on the position. Sam Darkwa nominated Rick Sullivan. Ms. Bonfiglio seconded the nominations and after a rollcall vote, Richard Sullivan was unanimously elected to be the chair of this committee.

Mr. Delaney asked for volunteers for membership on the Subcommittee on Community Mitigation. Ms. Bonfiglio was last year’s representative. Ms. Bonfiglio agreed to continue in her position. Upon a nomination seconded by Mr. Murphy, and a rollcall vote, Jennifer Bonfiglio was elected to be the Region B representative on the Subcommittee on Community Mitigation.



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The Chair then turned the meeting over to Joe Delaney for an update on the 2021 Community Mitigation Fund. Mr. Delaney explained how last year's CMF had authorized \$12.5M for Community Mitigation Fund - \$6M in Region A, \$6M Region B and \$500,000 for the Category II. The Commission received 28 applications for \$5.6M. Mr. Delaney expressed concern over lack of applications and low dollar values. He noted that the Commission awarded 25 applications for \$4.8M. Mr. Delaney explained that the remainder of funds would be carried forward into this coming year. He noted that this year MGC is estimating \$20M available for 2022 CMF. He emphasized the need for good projects to use those funds; and that communities have difficulty finding the nexus to casino. He then asked if members had any questions regarding last year's applications.

Presentation of 2022 Policy Questions and Draft Guidelines

Mr. Delaney then asked members for their input on the questions presented in the Discussion Draft of Policy Questions.

1. Should limitations on grant amounts be increased?

Mr. Delaney discussed increasing the Workforce Grants to \$500,000 and the Transportation Construction Grants to \$1.5M. The Workforce Grants are essential for covering backfill and to provide a GED to persons wanting to work at the casino which is a requirement. He noted that the Transportation Construction Grants are for large projects and that this increase would cover rising construction costs. Mr. Sullivan had concern with funds remaining in the region in which the dollars were produced and supported the increase for the both grants especially the Transportation Construction grants due to the increase in construction costs. Several members voiced their opinion that it made sense to increase the workforce and transportation construction grants.

Further clarification was requested regarding Specific Impact Grants. Mr. Delaney noted that very few items are being submitted under the Specific Impact other than public safety but initially they covered a wide variety of impacts.

2. Should target spending caps be raised or eliminated?

Mr. Delaney explained that the category spending caps were instituted in the early days of the CMF when the availability of funding was very limited. With the current availability of funding, he noted that we could eliminate these caps without an impact on the programs.

It was noted that there really was no need for caps as there is the waiver process and funding distributions have never been close to the caps.

Ms. Patashnick had a question regarding the type of grants that were not funded in 2021. Mr. Delaney noted Lynn's Transportation Construction Grant application was not approved because Lynn could not make a connection to a casino impact. Malden's Community Planning application was for an Art Center in a building that Malden did not currently own. Ms. Patashnick mentioned that for those two applications, it didn't sound like tweaking those applications would have mattered.



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3. Should number of grants be limited?

Mr. Delaney explained that the Workforce grants work well as one per region with the focus being on the consortium approach. He suggested that we may want to keep these limits. He did recommend allowing more than one Specific Impact Grant with the total value of Specific Impact Grants limited to \$500,000.

A member had a question regarding whether the Community Mitigation Fund applications were on a rolling admission. The concern was the danger of a community applying for many grants, and not giving other communities a chance. Mr. Delaney explained that all applications were due January 31st.

Mr. Kornet asked if the Workforce Development Grants were for specific jobs for the casino. Mr. Delaney explained that these trainings were primarily to prepare people to get jobs at the casinos and backfill for jobs lost to the casinos. Mr. Kornet asked if courses had to be directly related to hospitality; he felt that young people were being pulled away from STEM as a result of the casino training. He asked if balancing off could be mitigation. Mr. Delaney noted that if the connection can be made to a casino it would be eligible.

4. Should the Commission pursue an expansion of CMF eligibility via either a statute change or within the current framework?

Mr. Delaney explained to membership that the Legislature is reluctant to reopen the Gaming Act due to the potential of large volume of changes that may occur. He proposed that the Commission could make a determination that there are impacts associated with the presence of a casino and that certain things would be eligible for funding without having to quantify the connection to the casino. That would relieve the host and surrounding communities from the burden of proving the connection to the casino.

Mr. Kim, the General Counsel for MGM offered that expanding the scope of eligibility makes sense as making negative impact determinations will become more difficult in the future.

Mr. Delaney made it clear that we are not proposing any changes to east/west distribution after 3 years into a statewide fund that can be used by either east or west.

5. Should the Commission authorize the use of funds for large transportation projects or economic development projects? If so, what would be the limit per application and per region? Should such grants require a particular match (waivable by the Commission)?

Mr. Delaney gave some examples of projects that are happening in the City of Springfield. Springfield recently purchases several buildings which are directly adjacent to casino. These are also historic buildings which are very expensive to renovate. He discussed other projects that are under the TIP in the eastern part of the state. He then asked members if the CMF should be used to fund some of these large projects? If so, what kinds of limitations? In order to determine the extent of these projects as well as gauge interest in using mitigation funds for these projects, he is recommending asking for statements of interest from communities. The intent is not to create a new category of funding for this year, but to identify the universe of projects for a potential new category in the future.



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Mr. Sullivan was concerned with funding projects through this fund that could have previously been done with other federal or state dollars. He was not in favor of a “second bite of an apple” change and does not want the projects to be funded by money generated by MGM. Mr. Sullivan would like to expand the eligibility so that money earned in the west stays in the west.

Mr. Delaney discussed the opportunity for some communities to look forward 3-5 years for projects. Members were in favor of this.

Mr. Gagliardi noted the importance of the rehabilitation of the buildings in Springfield adjacent to MGM.

Mr. Pise noted that there would still need to be some restrictions on the money to keep it equitable among the two regions. Mr. Delaney mentioned that there would certainly be limitation on those funds, that is why we are taking the statement of interest so we can better craft the program.

6. **Should a separate category be added for public safety grants, and should any new limits be placed on these grants?** Mr. Delaney noted Public Safety Grants are a sub-set of the specific impact grants. There is no particular need to create a separate category except that 9 of the 11 Specific Impact Grants were for Public Safety. Members felt that it was not particularly necessary.
7. **Should local match provisions be reconsidered?** Mr. Delaney noted that the local match usually consists of in kind services. The only specific match requirement is in the Transportation Construction Grant category where Commission funds can only make up 1/3 of the total project cost. No changes are being proposed for that category.
8. **Should the CMF use a fiscal year rather than a calendar year?** Mr. Delaney asked if all the communities worked on a July 1-June 30 fiscal year. Most of the communities indicated that they do. Mr. Delaney recommended to table this idea until the new CMF database is in place. Ms. Bonfiglio say a fiscal year makes a lot more sense.
9. **Reserves – Should any Reserves be allowed to carry over to 2022?** Mr. Delaney explained that last year the Commission voted to rescind reserves if they were not committed by December 31, 2021. The money would then roll back into the CMF. He asked whether any of these reserves should be allowed to carry forward. Mr. Kornet was in support of the Reserve funds being rolled over another year. Ms. Patashnick felt that very generous timeline was given and for consistency follow the guidelines.

Mr. Delaney then briefly reviewed the regularly appearing policy questions. Mr. Delaney asked for any other comments he thanked members for their attendance. He then detailed events coming up. The next meeting will be a review the draft guidelines. In December a workshop for all the communities with guest speakers from people who were successful in the applications.



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Mr. Sullivan requested a motion to adjourn, such motion as made by Mr. Pise and seconded by Ms. Tanner.

With no further business, the meeting adjourned.

List of Documents and Other Items Used

1. Notice of meeting and agenda
2. Meeting Minutes from the meeting of November 20, 2020
3. Draft Policy Questions
4. Draft 2021 Community Mitigation Fund DRAFT Guidelines

/s/ Mary S. Thurlow
Secretary



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