



Region B - Local Community Mitigation Advisory Committee Minutes

Date/Time: September 25, 2017 – 2:00 p.m. – 3:30 p.m.

Place: Pioneer Valley Planning Commission, 60 State Street, 2nd Fl., Springfield

Members Present:	Jill Payne, Chair Timothy Brennan Stephen N. Foley Kate Kane	Andrew Smith Marc Strange Rick Sullivan	Attendees: John Ziemba Joseph Delaney Mary Thurlow
Members Absent:	Representatives from Chicopee, East Longmeadow, Ludlow, Wilbraham, West Springfield and Ellen Patashnick		

Call to Order

Jill McCarthy Payne, the chair, called the meeting to order and introduced herself. She then asked each member to introduce themselves. The chair then requested for an approval of minutes from the November 7, 2016 meeting. With corrections noted, the minutes were unanimously approved. The chair then turned the meeting to John Ziemba.

Mr. Ziemba gave a brief overview of the roles and membership of the committees under the Gaming Policy Advisory Committee as shown on a highlighted in a multi-level chart. Mr. Ziemba discussed the calendar and the annual series of meetings held for the discussion of the Community Mitigation Fund. He noted the different concerns as the casinos go from the construction state to the operational state and how that impacts the needs of the communities. He noted that some questions linger from last year regarding use of the fund and asked the members to consider whether those questions should be taken up this year or next year.

Mr. Ziemba introduced Joe Delaney, the Commission Construction Project Oversight Manager. Mr. Ziemba noted that Mr. Delaney is the member of the Commission who is on-site at the construction sites. Mr. Delaney then gave an informative PowerPoint presentation on the progress of construction of the two casinos.

Rick Sullivan asked if any work was being done regarding the Amelia Earhart pumping station. Mr. Delaney indicated that the pumping station was not part of this project.

Mr. Delaney then discussed the proposed pedestrian bridge and the complexity of building a bridge over water and the cost of permitting required. He noted that the proposed pedestrian bridge could conceivably connect to the T station. However, a large amount of funding would be required from many parties. Wynn is currently doing a study on the pedestrian bridge.

Mr. Sullivan asked about the use of Sullivan Square.

Mr. Delaney noted that this project is specifically not using Sullivan Square in its transportation plans and that the focus is on the Malden and Wellington transit areas.

Mr. Foley mentioned the DEP, Coast Guard and Army Corp of Engineers would need to be a part of the pedestrian bridge, just to name a few.

Mr. Ziemba then directed members to the memorandum on policy questions.

Mr. Ziemba noted that the Guidelines for 2017 placed a proposed maximum limit on the use of funds to \$3.4 million dollars. The Commission authorized the use of approximately \$2.2M in 2017. Mr. Ziemba explained that the Western MA Alcohol and Addiction Center through the Hampden County Sheriff's Department had been authorized for lease reimbursement for fiscal 2017; however, HCSD was required to reapply every year. Due to the transitions at the time the applications were due (February 1), the Sheriff's department did not make the deadline. Because the deadline is a regulatory requirement, there is no flexibility for late applications. The Sheriff's department can apply this year and the funding can be made available as it is still in the same fiscal year.

Mr. Sullivan asked whether the Sheriff's department can back spend the funds. Mr. Ziemba said that was allowed.

Mr. Ziemba noted that there had not been any significant impacts concerning crime as a result of the Plainridge Park Casino opening. Traffic impacts are one of the major concerns. Transportation in general is the first and foremost concern overall.

Mr. Ziemba noted that the casinos will not be operational until September 2018. There would not be significant new funds for the 2018 Community Mitigation Fund until that time. Last year communities recommended that a conservative approach be taken to insure that funds would be available. Mr. Ziemba asked members to consider this and whether the committee recommends continuing with the same limits. He noted that some communities have expended their planning dollars that were set aside in the reserve funds and that more robust planning may be necessary when the casinos are operational.

He noted that there was still difficulty in evaluating grants against each other and that the guidelines for the specific and general evaluation questions needed more clarification and the elimination of redundancy.

Question 5. How and when should the CMF guidelines reflect the work of the Lower Mystic Regional Working Group?

Mr. Ziemba noted that the focus of this group was the strain on transportation. The LMRWG meetings regarding concerning transportation issues end this year. A determination needs to be discuss as to how the Commission uses the recommendations made by the LMRWG.

6. Should the Commission revisit its guideline regarding grants involving private parties?

Under the statute, private parties are not allowed to directly receive funds for mitigation. Springfield structured the mitigation for Main Street by making the transportation a regional benefit which is managed by the City of Springfield.

7. How should the 2018 CMF Guidelines treat multi-year grant requests?

Mr. Ziemba mentioned that the treatment of multi-year grant requests would be similar to that of the Sheriff's department, which was already discussed.

8. How should the status of Region C and current litigation involving the potential tribal casino impact the 2018 CMF Guidelines?

The tribe has made no progress in resolving issues concerning their development of a casino in Region C. The courts found that the development was not in accordance with Federal law.

11. Should the 2018 CMF be used to support and help leverage resources to help residents of the Springfield or Everett areas obtain their high school or work readiness credentials to be eligible for employment? If so, at what level?

The Commission this past year authorized almost \$400,000 in Region B although the guidelines had \$200,000 per region.

12. Should the Commission place a limit on grants in each gaming region based on the projected tax revenues generated for the CMF by the gaming facility in that region? If so, should such limit be instituted during the construction period or when the Category 1 facilities are operational?

Mr. Ziemba reminded the members that the Category 2 facility does not pay into the community mitigation fund. Mr. Sullivan asked what the taxes paid by a tribal casino; Mr. Ziemba noted that the tribe would pay 17.5% taxes on the gross gaming revenue and 6.5% tribal taxes to the Community Mitigation Fund; he reminded the committee that the surrounding communities for the Tribal facility do not have surrounding community agreements like the Category 1 communities.

Mr. Foley asked if the Aquinnah were moving forward. Mr. Ziemba said that they are moving forward.

1. Should the Commission expressly authorize joint applications by communities?

The Commission authorized a joint application this past year. The two communities where required to spend down their reserve and notify the Commission the breakdown of what each community is spending from their reserves.

2. Should the Commission allow funding to pay for a portion of the construction costs of transportation projects?

To date the CMF has funded planning and design. Mr. Ziemba mentioned that to pay for some of the bigger projects, if all the funds available from the CMF were spent in Region A on transportation, it still wouldn't be enough for the amount of work that needs to be done. How do we take into consideration other sources of money such as TIP Funding? The bulk if transportation funding would have to come from DOT.

4. Should communities be limited to only one (1) Specific Impact Grant?

There needs to be a greater demonstration of the relationship between the community and the casino.

Mr. Smith mentioned that communities shouldn't become hooked on casino money; you don't want transportation projects dependent on those funds. Perhaps we should think of an alternative to gas taxes. He would like to see ways to creatively work on climate change and its relation to transportation.

Mr. Ziemba mentioned the commission assistance in funding bike lanes and its focus on alternative modes of transportation. The difficult part in funding some projects is to make direct correlation to the casino. A concern mentioned was that sometimes statistics aren't there so correlating the relationship to the casino facility cannot always easily be made.

Mr. Foley asked whether there was increased rail traffic and asked the Chair if she had heard anything. Mr. Brennan mentioned that MGM is connecting up to the local facilities including Union Station through trolley services.

Mr. Delaney mentioned that there are some great ideas regarding transportation projects but sometimes there is no correlation to the casinos.

3. How should the Commission approach issues that may arise in 2018 resulting from the operations of the first Category 1 casino (public safety, hiring, education, business issues)?

Mr. Ziemba discussed how there will be new issues arising when the casinos are operational. Some of these issues relate to housing, gentrification, etc. He noted hearing a question that if the casino results in 1 person moving into the area with a family how should the community deal with the additional schooling costs?

6. How can the applications been amended to require applicants to more clearly demonstrate the nexus between the request and casino related impacts?

7. What language needs to be included to ensure that all entities and departments (e.g. redevelopment authorities/agencies) apply through a community itself?

He noted that governmental agencies can apply only if it is for a regional purpose. In regard to application involving one community, the community would be responsible for managing the grant.

8. Should the Commission extend the previously authorized reserves for the 2018 Community Mitigation Fund program and allow communities to continue to access whatever portion of the original \$100,000 that remains unexpended.

Mr. Sullivan mentioned the Longmeadow curve. He stated he was cautiously optimistic and that it was a long range via duct project.

Mr. Ziemba then focused the meeting on the next month's agenda. One of the items will be the annual election of the chair and members to the Subcommittee on community Mitigation.

The Chair is considering running for another year and will present at the next meeting.

Members were asked to email the chair or Mr. Ziemba of their interest and to find out more about the positions and their time commitments. Mr. Ziemba echoed that the subcommittee representative has to be a member from a surrounding community.

Mr. Ziemba asked that members contact Jill or him via email with any questions.

Mr. Smith asked a question about National Grid.

The Chair asked if there was any further discussion. There being none, the Chair motioned to adjourn the meeting and Mr. Sullivan seconded the adjournment at 3:30 p.m.

/s/ Mary S. Thurlow
Mary S. Thurlow, Secretary

List of Documents and Other Items Used on September 25, 2017

1. Notice of meeting and agenda
2. Membership list
3. Draft minutes from the November 7, 2016 meeting
4. M.G.L. c. 23K, Section 68
5. 2018 Memorandum on Policy Questions