

**The Commonwealth of Massachusetts**  
**Massachusetts Gaming Commission**

**Meeting Minutes**

**Date:** June 18, 2012

**Time:** 12:00 p.m.

**Place:** Sheraton Framingham Hotel and Conference Center  
Grand North Ballroom  
1657 Worcester Road  
Framingham, Massachusetts

**Present:** Commissioner Stephen P. Crosby, Chairman  
Commissioner Gayle Cameron  
Commissioner James F. McHugh  
Commissioner Bruce Stebbins  
Commissioner Enrique Zuniga

**Absent:** None

**Call to Order:**

Chairman Crosby opened the meeting.

He stated that this is a public meeting to discuss the material covered at the just-concluded Community Mitigation Public Education Forum.

**Discussion of Materials/Content from the Community Mitigation Forum**

See transcript pages 3-33.

Chairman Crosby stated that the forum underscored the importance of community outreach and support by the Commission as the planning process moves forward. The Commission has been wrestling for some time with the question of the kinds of support it can provide. He asked whether the Commission should consider issuing a statement to the communities so they do not have to rush decisions, stating that there is time for planning, and the Commission will help with resources in due course.

Commissioner McHugh stated that it would be extremely helpful to provide a broad timeline to the communities. He also recommended posting a process chart on the Commission website. He stated that the Commission could draw on the expertise of the regional planning groups to provide support to cities and towns. Commissioner Zuniga agreed with providing a timeline and he also stated that he would like to address technical support. He agreed that the regional planning groups would be a valuable resource because they have experience in dealing with regional matters and have already begun to consider some regional issues that will arise after casinos are constructed. He stated that the Commission should consider providing funding to assist cities and towns in the planning process. Chairman Crosby stated that the legislation does provide for funding through the developers, but the Commission may have to consider fronting

the money and being reimbursed. Commissioner McHugh stated that funding is a portion of the problem, but the Commission also should consider providing a gateway to expertise.

Commissioner Cameron stated that she liked the idea of providing a checklist so that the Commission is providing consistent information and there is a level playing field. Commissioner Stebbins stated that comments during the forum emphasized that when negotiating a host community agreement it is important to include mitigation issues. He stated that in providing outside assistance, the Commission should help communities understand the size and scope of the project and assist in mitigating the impact on local services such as the schools and fire departments. He agreed with the idea of creating a checklist to provide basic information to the communities. Commissioner Zuniga stated that he also likes the idea of an Owner's Project Manager, similar to the formula used by the Massachusetts School Building Authority, which would provide a third party who could ask the questions that need to be asked early on.

Chairman Crosby asked the audience members if the Commission's comments reflected community concerns correctly, and if providing a checklist would be helpful to the communities. From the audience, Vera Koliass stated that checklists and timelines would be important and the communities and regional planning agencies would benefit greatly from their existence. Tim Brennan, Pioneer Valley, stated that a Commission guidance document would be extremely helpful because many communities are afraid of being overwhelmed, even if they are in favor of a project. He stated that rather than have communities sit back, the sooner they start to deal with these issues the better. Another audience member stated that he agrees that guidance from the Commission is important. Brian Giovanoni, Middleborough School Committee, stated that a general timeline would be great, but a second timeline for Region C would be necessary if the tribal compact comes from the Governor's office soon, unless the Commission could ask the Governor's office to slow the process down.

Chairman Crosby clarified it is not the Commission's intent to slow the process down but to make the process more efficient. An audience member stated that the host communities should be encouraged to consider the surrounding communities and ensure they work cooperatively at this stage of the process so that they can pool resources and save money. Commissioner McHugh stated that this is an important point because the Commission will have to consider the regional impact of the development. City Councilor James Ferrera, from Springfield, thanked the Commission for having this forum, which has helped his community understand the legislation better. He recommended creating a flow chart, or roadmap of where the communities need to go and where to start the process. He also stated that such a roadmap would take the politics out of the process. A selectman from Berkley stated that he liked Chairman Crosby's statement that the Commission wants to get this process right. He recommended that the Commission seek legislative changes if it sees a provision in the existing legislation with which it disagrees. He stated that he agrees with Commissioner Cameron that there should be a level playing field, as the developers have financial resources that small communities do not have. He recommended that the surrounding communities get involved in the process now. An audience member from Monson stated that in the discussion of mitigation, she has not heard any mention of the two nuclear evacuation zones in Massachusetts. She stated that consideration should be given to whether casinos will serve as refuge in such an emergency, or will they have to be evacuated. Ruth Geoffroy, Planning Director for Middleborough, stated that communities need to

understand the potential demands on water supply, demands on sewer capacity and demands on public services, including emergency responses, when planning for a casino project. Consultants have to be hired to study all of these elements and there will be a need for outside counsel. Accordingly, the planning process is time consuming and expensive. She stated that, based on the experience she has had in Middleborough, the process will likely cost a community at least \$100,000.

Chairman Crosby asked if the Commission should consider a staff person or ombudsman to help with coordination of the planning process. Commissioner Zuniga stated that one position or the other would be important to consider. Commissioner Stebbins stated that the Commission will be forming a Policy Advisory Group, and some of these issues could be tackled by an informal taskforce. Commissioner Zuniga stated that perhaps the ombudsman or other staff person could assist community planners with the process at the local level. Commissioner McHugh stated that he looks forward to discussing these staffing issues at the Commission's weekly meeting tomorrow.

Chairman Crosby stated that it appears there is a consensus that the Commission should create a document with a timeline to help the communities and should consider moving forward with a staff person or ombudsman, as well as the Policy Advisory Committee.

*Meeting adjourned.*

/s/ James F. McHugh  
James F. McHugh  
Secretary