

NORTHAMPTON COUNTY
GAMBLING IMPACT COMMITTEE

Meeting Minutes
Monday, November 10, 2008

The scheduled meeting of the Northampton County Gambling Impact Committee was held at 6:35 PM, November 10, 2008 in the third floor County Council Meeting Room.

ROLL CALL

The following Committee members were present:

Robert Ballum	John McGeehan
Peg Ferraro	Robert Pfenning, Chair
Ross Marcus, Vice-chair	Ann Terres

The following media representatives were present:

No media representatives were present.

The following municipalities were represented:

Freemansburg Borough	Hellertown Borough
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APPROVAL OF MINUTES

After soliciting input from the municipality representatives, the Committee approved the September 8, 2008 minutes as distributed.

COURTESY OF THE FLOOR (regarding agenda items)

No comments were made by those present.

OLD BUSINESS

Municipal Grants

The Chair reported that he attended the October 15, 2008 meeting of County Council's Finance Committee. At the meeting he discussed with the members the law regarding the distribution of gambling revenues found in Act 71 as amended by Act 135, and also the ruling of the Erie County judge which provided the first judicial interpretation of the law. He stressed the need for a County economic development or redevelopment authority to award the grants for covering the municipalities' costs associated with the operation of a licensed facility -- the Bethlehem Sands. He also mentioned that no funding for the authority is provided for in Act 71, and also that the authority probably needs some guidelines for the awarding of uncommitted funds (those funds left over from the "50 %" share after municipal grants have been made) at the end of the year.

On October 16, the Chair attended the regular County Council meeting and told the Council that the Borough of Freemansburg is insisting that the grant making authority be an economic development or redevelopment authority, and is growing more frustrated with not knowing what the procedures will be for obtaining municipal grants.

The Chair went on to forecast that County Council won't address the issue until after the 2009 budget is approved. This will mean that it will be January 2009 at the earliest before the municipal grant making authority is designated. If County Council decides not to designate the General Purpose Authority as the authority (which it currently appears it will not), then a new

authority must be created. Then, volunteer members must be found by the Administration and approved by County Council. Once formed, the authority members will need to get up to speed on its function, and develop procedures for awarding the municipal grants. Thus, it may be late Spring of 2009 before the procedures are in place.

Other Old Business

The Chair brought up the need for a County policy for dealing with section 1512 of Act 71. This section deals with the required divestiture of financial interests in licensed entities by elected officials, certain Administration members, and members of County authorities, commissions, committees, etc. The need for this policy was discussed at prior meetings of this Committee. Ross Marcus agreed to follow up on this matter.

NEW BUSINESS

Plan for December 8, 2008 Meeting

At the last meeting, Constance Nelson volunteered to contact the Bucks County DA's office for information regarding the impact of Philadelphia Park's operation on that office. She also indicated she would talk with the District Justice on Bethlehem's Southside to see what the impact of the casino might be on the current workload.

Constance's volunteer task gave the Chair an idea for the December 8 Committee meeting. He requested that John McGeehan contact the Bucks County prison regarding impacts, Bob Balum contact the Ben Salem Township police chief (for police, fire and EMS impacts) and Ross Marcus contact the Bucks County Human Services department. All four Committee members will then report back to the whole Committee at the December 8 meeting. In this manner the Committee can obtain information regarding the impact of the operation of Philadelphia Park which opened in December 2006.

Recent News Regarding Las Vegas Sands, Inc.

The Chair updated the Committee on the current financial problems of the Las Vegas Sands as revealed in their Form 8-K SEC filing on November 6, 2008.

The Chair also noted that gambling revenues are down in Macau, Las Vegas and Atlantic City.

Other New Business

The Chair continued the discussion regarding the future of the Committee begun at the last meeting. A few Committee members expressed their frustration about the lack of progress on the municipal grants issue which in turn raises questions about the future purpose of this Committee. The municipality representatives also expressed their frustration. Some Committee members suggested that the municipal representatives attend a County Council meeting to put their concerns on the public record.

COURTESY OF THE FLOOR (regarding any aspect of gambling's impact on the County)

The Freemansburg Borough Solicitor again raised the issue of whether the language of section 1403(c)(3)(xiv) of Act 71 regarding intergovernmental agreements would permit the contiguous municipalities to work around the stalled grant making process.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 7:50 PM.

Note that the next meeting will be Monday, December 8, 2008 at 6:30 PM.