

HOST COMMUNITY ADVISORY COMMITTEE

MEETING MINUTES

**Thursday, May 31, 2012, 4 p.m.
Room 801, 8th Floor, City Hall, Boston Massachusetts 02201**

Meeting called to order on May 31, 2012 at: 4:04 pm

In Attendance:

Members Present: Brian G. Leary, Chairman, Sarah Barnat, Lisa Calise, David G. Fubini, Ronald L. Walker, II,

Elizabeth Dello Russo, Executive Director of the Committee
Allyson Holmes, City of Boston Law Department
Ernani DeArujo, Office of Neighborhood Services

Visitors:

Angela, East Boston resident
Sean, Charlestown resident
Mary, East Boston resident
David, East Boston resident
Brian, East Boston resident
Chris, East Boston resident
Paul, East Boston resident
Paul, Boston resident
Janet, East Boston resident
Richard, East Boston Times

Minutes:

Welcome – Meeting begins at 4:04 p.m.

Brian: They are charged by the Mayor to think big and be creative in the host community agreement. The process is that they are an advisory committee and will not actually be negotiating the agreement with a casino or developer. Their role is to advise the Mayor as to what important topics should be in the mitigation agreement other than those already enumerated in the law.

Although this Committee is not subject to the Open Meeting Law, the Committee will follow the spirit of it by posting the meeting agenda 48 hours in advance and by holding deliberative meetings in public

Opening Remarks of the Committee

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Ron: In his current position, he does a lot of work that focuses on growing and scaling small businesses. He has already met with members of the East Boston Main Streets program to begin learning about how they operate and the needs of local businesses.

Sarah: In her prior job she worked on the big private housing development in Maverick Square in East Boston. She has roots in East Boston – bought a house years ago, raising her kids there. Based on her experience in housing developments, she will look at the plans proposed to see whether or not they are feasible and meet the needs of East Boston residents.

David: His goal is to ensure that the financing of the project is sustainable in the marketplace and in the community.

Lisa: Former CFO for the City – brings 16 years of financial management experience. Has knowledge of City budgeting mechanisms and how they work within different City departments.

Brian: A lawyer at McCarter & English in Boston. He grew up West Roxbury, but also has East Boston roots. Both parents were raised in East Boston and he lived at 1072 Saratoga Street until a toddler. He describes himself as agnostic on gambling, but believes that if a host community agreement is to be presented to the voters of East Boston, it's the committee's role to help make sure it provides not only for mitigating the effects of a casino, but enhancing the community.

Overview of Goals and Authority

Brian: A casino will be a major economic driver for the City and the legislation is complicated. The statute calls for a variety of mitigation measures, some of which are yet to be defined by the State Gaming Commission. When a host community agreement is negotiated, it will go before the voters and, if it passes, will be part of the license application that will have to be approved by the State Gaming Commission. There is a minimum licensing fee and a minimum capital investment that are required by law for a casino to pay to a host community. The goal is to put forth a plan that is economically viable and that is a good deal for the City.

Discussion of Individual Expertise

Brian: As an attorney, he will certainly be looking at the various legal issues presented. In addition to that, he will acquaint himself with the transportation management and transportation mitigation that will be needed.

Ron: His focus will be job creation, job retention and small businesses in East Boston. He wants to help identify opportunities where small businesses can be leveraged to fulfill business and service needs of a casino

Sarah: Concerned about community needs and housing development opportunities. East Boston has had some prior mitigation work done in light of the Big Dig and the airport.

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Has concern about public safety and crime rates and the challenges that may be presented to BPD District D7 officers.

Wants to see whether this will have the effect of destabilizing home values and how it will impact the neighborhood.

For the community aspect, recognizes that the City services currently being delivered will be higher and they need to think creatively to structure ongoing resources for the community.

Lisa: Has a great understanding of the City of Boston's budgeting process. She will work with Dave to look at the financial impacts generally and specifically the financial impact on the City.

Dave: Will examine the flow of capital and the ongoing need for capital. Wants to understand the robustness of the proposal so that other businesses can take advantage and make their own investments in sustainability.

Discussion of Materials Needed

Brian: There are two big buckets of \$\$.

#1) is licensing revenue which has to be **at least** \$85 million.

- How much of that goes to the community mitigation fund?
- How much does the City get and how much does East Boston get?
 - there is a subcommittee of the State Gaming Commission that will work on some aspects of this

#2) 25% tax on gaming revenue.

- It's not apparent how much of that actually comes to the City

* Spreadsheet of what the City can actually expect from property meals and hotel taxes as well as the casino laws various distribution formulas

What have other urban casino developments done?

Ron: What types of casino businesses can the smaller local businesses leverage to be feeders to the casino? [e.g. flower shops, napkins, etc]

East Boston Main Streets, Chamber of Commerce

- need to know what businesses they work with

Sarah: What are the assessed home values in East Boston?

What are the crime rates?

Projections of kids in public schools

Actual population?

What has happened to property values in other urban areas that have casinos?

Brian: What is the tax rate among comparable casinos?

For other casinos in urban locations that have done pre-casino transportation studies, have they done post-casino transportation studies to see if it impacted as anticipated?

Sarah: MBTA ridership statistics? Need for additional blue line service?

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Discussion of Schedule of Future Meetings

June 27th, 6:30 p.m. at a location TBD in East Boston

July 25th, 4:00 p.m. in City Hall

August 22nd, 6:30p.m. at a location TBD in East Boston

Public Comment

Angela: East Boston resident

Some residents think this is a done deal and that a casino is coming.

Traffic concerns → there will be spill over not just in East Boston, Chelsea and Revere but also into Saugus, Malden

Public transit – the trains are already a burden to deal with

Noise concerns → can already hear the buzz of the City, concerned that there will be even more noise if a casino comes

General concerns for HCAC to consider → water, sewer, trash, cars, noise, lights

Sean: Charlestown resident

Casino needs to be its own epicenter

Think about possibly adding charter shuttles as a means of transportation.

Boston needs an opportunity to bid on this

The law requires it to be a resort casino, so it will be it's own 24 hour system and it should be sold as a resort casino and not merely a casino.

Mary: East Boston resident

Has previously sent recommendation to the HCAC email

Need to follow the legislation to get the vote.

Many East Boston residents will say no regardless of what the mitigation package looks like.

Wants to ensure there is more East Boston representation on the HCAC.

David: East Boston resident

Pay attention to the small businesses in East Boston.

Concerns about gambling addition and what will be done to address it.

Brian: East Boston resident

Wondering what the % of \$\$ that will go to East Boston versus the City as a whole.

Chris: East Boston resident

Will housing values increase, decrease, remain the same?

Paul: Pay attention to other costs that fluctuate around a casino like schools, city services

New Business

None

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Meeting Adjourned at approximately 4:55pm

Members Present: Brian G. Leary, Chairman, Sarah Barnat, Lisa Calise, David G. Fubini, Ronald L. Walker, II, Elizabeth Dello Russo, Executive Director of the Committee

Adjourned at: 4:55pm

Minutes submitted by: Allyson Holmes on June 26, 2012.