

NORTHAMPTON COUNTY
GAMBLING IMPACT STUDY COMMITTEE

Meeting Minutes
Monday, October 8, 2007

The scheduled meeting of Northampton County Gambling Impact Study Committee was held at 6:35 p.m., October 8, 2007.

ROLL CALL

The following committee members were present:

Robert P. Balum - Hellertown
John Conklin - County Administrator
Ross Marcus - Human Services
John J. McGeehan - Prison
Phoebe L. Teichert - Bethlehem Township
Robert Pfenning - Chair of the Gambling Committee
Ann Terres - Retired Social Worker

The following media representative were present:

None

MINUTES

- Approval of minutes from September 10, 2007 Meeting as distributed by chair.

COURTESY OF THE FLOOR (for the Public on Agenda items)

- No members of the public are present.

OLD BUSINESS

A. Report on meeting with State Representative, Joseph Brennen.

- i) Rep. Brennen agreed that the Borough of Fountain Hill is not eligible for Northampton County grants.
- ii) Rep. Brennen is e-mailing information to Bob and Ross.

B. Determination of which Authority will be making the Act 71 Municipal Grants.

- Solicitor's office to make a final decision.

- Discussion to date leans towards the General Purpose Authority
- This committee should not spend any more time on criteria for Municipal Grants until when and if the granting authority requests it.

C. November 5 Meeting with Municipalities

- i.) Meeting will be held in the Third Floor Training Room.
Letter will go out to the City of Bethlehem, the five contiguous municipalities and the COG's inviting them to attend.
- ii) Bob to send a draft of letter to Annette to mail out
- iii) Agenda for the Meeting
Welcome and ground rules - no negativity or criticizing individuals
Review the "Questions Regarding...." Handout.
 - Solicitor, Jill Mancini needs to review the handout by 10/12/07.
- c) Solicitation of concerns from the municipal representatives and then the public.
- d) Discussion of the formation of a "working group", to meet on a quarterly basis, including representatives from the contiguous municipalities and this committee for progress reports and to express concerns.

NEW BUSINESS

Luzerne and Eric County articles passed out to the group.

- Each casino has to have a gambling addiction prevention discovery program.

GUEST SPEAKER

Introduction of Committee members to guest speaker, David Sanko, Chief Operating Officer/Managing Director Bucks County.

A.) Interaction of group with David Sanko regarding impact of gambling.

- For the grant process, they waited two full quarters to determine what revenue was available.
- Money was rolled into the general fund for the first year.
- Redevelopment Authority governs the grant process.
- Host municipality gets \$10 million a year.
- Crime rate has not gone up but the number of incidents has increased.
- Unprojected impact was an exponential increase in EMS calls.

- There was an increase in police calls primarily due to traffic accidents in the parking lot due to poor signage.
- Traffic impact mostly occurring on evenings and weekends - now about same as daytime volume.
- Human services have not had an impact as of yet - may see two years out.
- Homeless count has dropped according to the system they use (HMIS).
- Economic impact
- A lot of people who work at the facility are not County residents, requiring some new mass transit service.
- No drop-off in surrounding business activity, but project not yet built out.
- Pa State Supreme court did some projections on increased caseload, population growth, etc. Supreme court issued an unfunded mandate requiring a new District Justice facility to be opened this coming January.
- Some caseload needed to be reassigned.
- Some increase in commercial property values, nothing in the residential properties.
- Street Road in front of project had been upgraded previously due to commercial demand.
- { Please DELETE Black Jack comment }

B.) David Sanko - Grant Process in Bucks County

- Redevelopment Authority oversees grant.
- Modeled after the Community Economic Development grant application process.
- Payments are received each quarter.
- County, contiguous municipalities and host municipality can be applicants.
- Each application must be sponsored by the municipality.
- Local governments were asked to rank their applications as to importance to them.
- Based on a point system - set up so that no application got 0 points.
- Application period starts in August 45 days before the deadline.
- Applications are submitted by September 30th each year.
- Staff goes through applications and makes recommendations in October and awards are done by end of October after municipalities have made a public presentation to the Redevelopment Authority.
- County portion - waiting to see the impact through department budget process.
- Might use some grant money on debt service for longer term projects.
- Can change grant priorities over time.
- Redevelopment Authority got guideline from County Commissioners.
- County already had relationship with racetrack prior to the additions of the slots operation - much infrastructure was also in place.

COURTESY OF THE FLOOR (for public comment of the impact of gambling)

- No members of the public are present.

ADJOURNMENT

Motion to adjourn

ADOPTED THIS DATE:

Chairperson