



The Town of East Greenbush

225 Columbia Turnpike, Rensselaer, NY 12144

SPECIAL TOWN BOARD MEETING AGENDA

Tuesday, June 12, 2014

Call to Order 4:30 PM
Pledge to the Flag
Town Board Meeting: **Members of Town Board**

Present	Absent	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Supervisor Langley
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Councilperson Mangold
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Councilperson Malone
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Councilperson DiMartino
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Councilperson Matters

Pledge to the Flag
Call to Order: 4:30 PM
Special Meeting: **To consider a site specific resolution for a casino in the Town of East Greenbush.**

Linda Kennedy, Town Clerk read the following notice and stated that it was on the website, legal board and the media notified:

Notice: The Town Board of the Town of East Greenbush has scheduled a Special Meeting to be held on Thursday, June 12, 2014 at 4:30 p.m. at the East Greenbush Town, 225 Columbia Turnpike, to consider a site specific resolution for a casino in the Town of East Greenbush.

Supervisor Langley opened the public portion at 4:32pm. The supervisor stated that residents are limited to two minutes each and remarks will end at 5:30 pm.

There were 32 residents that spoke against with the same concerns, children, too close to schools and in a residential neighborhood.

There were 10 residents that spoke for stating the tax on the land alone will help the town financially.

Be this duly noted that the Town Clerk as received written complaints from the following and are on file in the Clerk's Office: Jennifer Delgrosse, Lorraine Wiese, Christine Tierney and Community Gospel Church.

Open portion closed at 5:40pm

TOWN OF EAST GREENBUSH RESOLUTION 85-2014

Supporting the Location of a Gaming Facility in the Town of East Greenbush

WHEREAS, an application will be filed with the New York Gaming Commission by a joint venture of Saratoga Casino and Raceway and Churchill Downs, Inc., for the location of a casino facility on Thompson Hill Road in the Town of East Greenbush; and

WHEREAS, the law governing the establishment of casinos under the recent constitutional amendment mandates a casino operator to make a substantial annual payment to the host community; and

WHEREAS, in addition to a substantial host community fee, the casino facility will be required to pay all of the required property taxes, school taxes and other real property tax levies, based upon the assessed value of the property; and

WHEREAS, in addition to a sizable revenue source to the Town, a new casino facility would create new jobs in the Town of East Greenbush, both in the construction of the facility, and in the operation of the facility; and

WHEREAS, any such facility, if approved by the Commission, must still go through the SEQRA process, with the Town being the lead agency; and

WHEREAS, the Commission has required the applicant to provide a resolution from the Town Board in support of the location of a casino facility; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED, the Town Comptroller has certified that there is no adverse impact to the Town finances; now, therefore

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that in furtherance of the above goals, the Town of East Greenbush hereby agrees to the location of the gaming facility on Thompson Hill Road in the Town of East Greenbush.

The foregoing Resolution was duly moved by Supervisor Langley seconded by Councilperson Malone and brought to a vote resulting as follows:

Supervisor Langley	VOTED	YES
Councilperson Malone	VOTED	YES
Councilperson Mangold	VOTED	YES
Councilperson DiMartino	VOTED	YES
Councilperson Matters	VOTED	YES

**** the following statements were read prior to the vote.**

Councilperson Mangold prior to her vote Sue statedö we as a board are in a difficult position. Had we had time to go through the normal channels for a development proposal; things would have moved along differently. The fact is NYS voters approved Casinoö, they are legal. The Casino operators have a timetable that they need to adhere to for licensing.

As I listen to the public I am hearing many of the same concerns both for and against. Many in the Town are angry, frustrated and fearful of what a Casino will bring in to the area. That is understood. Many others are excited at the potential of having a major business coming in to Town that will provide entertainment option, restaurants and shops.

It is our responsibility as a board to do all we can to continue to provide services and act in a financially sound manner.

When I think about what I love about East Greenbush, I take a look at the activities going on just this past month: In our schools we had PTO meetings, Field days for elementary students, High Honor Awards for students, graduations, proms, concerts and many sporting events.

In Town we had a Spotlight on Youth Ceremony. We have day camp registration, Bocce ball leagues, and music in the park will begin shortly.

I have attended the Memorial Day Parade to honor our Veterans, a golf outing for our EG PBA, a run for life to help bring awareness to Domestic Violence and a torch run from the East Greenbush police station to Albany city hall to raise money for NY Special Olympics.

All of these activities are what makes our community the wonderful place we know. All of these events are going to continue whether or not we have a Casino.

We are a growing Community and have many challenges ahead. It has been difficult to attract any business to East Greenbush over the past decade. Our taxes are high, our impact fees are high which Prevent many small businesses to make a profit. We have an opportunity to give East Greenbush the shot in the arm it needs for economic growth.

We have an opportunity to collect substantial impact fees, sales tax revenues, water/sewer fees. There will be an opportunity to reduce our taxes. It will be the responsibility of this and future boards to act responsible with the income. We have a community amenities plan which outlines many of the opportunities we will be able to afford.

There is a quote by Charles Kettering that seems appropriate ö The world hates change, yet it is the only thing that has brought progressö, I hope we can move forward together in the fashion that continues to make East Greenbush a wonderful place to liveö.

Councilperson DeMartino stated "I want everyone to know that I voted against the proposition in November to allow gambling in New York State. I lost, so like it or not the casino is a reality.

For the past six months, since taking the oath of office, I have gathered information based on the Town's needs. As an elected official it is my responsibility to do what's in the best interest for East Greenbush and the residents.

We have inherited millions in debt

Our property and school taxes are incredibly high

Our infrastructure, roads, buildings and equipment are in dire need of fixing or replacing.

The 9 & 20 corridor is still a work in progress

I considered both the positives and negatives on how the casino would impact our community. I've attended meetings, gathered and researched information on casinos and read endless e-mails on a daily basis. I also realize there are moral & ethical issues surrounding this casino and I want to make certain there are safeguards put in place both financially and ethically to protect the residents of East Greenbush.

The casino is a revenue driving force. They are a private industry using their own capital and it is not financed by the taxpayers. With the prospect of financial independence, we then have the opportunity to reinvest in our community. The casino is also a source of revenue for people seeking full time employment with benefits or those looking to supplement their incomes as part time employees. There will be entertainment, restaurants, and shops built inside the casino. I also think this might bring in some much needed business throughout the area. I feel the positives far outweigh the negatives and I am voting yes on this resolution. The bottom line is "It's up to the State Gaming where these casinos are being placed."

Councilperson Matters stated for the record "The proposed casino has unfolded two very critical, yet competing issues: 1. Its social propriety within the town and 2, its financial impact on the town.

While a town-wide referendum on the proposed casino and its location would have been ideal for the residents, the state did not give municipalities adequate time to conduct one. Legislation enacted by the state last year, and subsequently approved by NYS voters last fall, set in motion a fast-tracked process in which municipal boards, such as this one, were given a very tight window of opportunity in which to make a very important decision. As vocal as opponents of the proposal have been, my observation of sentiment in East Greenbush has been that residents are about split on the proposal, with each side staking its position based essentially on one of the two issues previously noted. Therefore, the only objective basis on which to gauge public opinion on the proposal has been last fall's statewide referendum which resulted in 52% of East Greenbush voters supporting casinos in New York. This is not to suggest that the statewide referendum adequately captured an accurate opinion of East Greenbush residents on a site-specific casino in East Greenbush or even a casino generally located in East Greenbush. Instead, it is, at best, only marginally reliable; however, it is essentially the only tool that the state opted to give to localities as they wrestle with this decision.

As for the proposal's financial impact to the town, my assessment of this issue, and the weight that I place on it, is heavily affected by the current state of the town's finances, which are improving day by day but, still, six months into the new year, are in a precarious state. As I campaigned last fall, it became woefully apparent that East Greenbush residents have been heavily burdened with taxes for too many years now. Door after door, residents complained about the "sky-high" taxes they pay for virtually nothing in return and about the depressed appearance of the town, particularly the "run-down" look of Columbia Turnpike. Unfortunately, the fiscal mismanagement of prior administration, which led to millions of dollars of inter-fund borrowing debt, an embarrassing and worrisome junk-bond rating for the town, underfunded budgets for essential infrastructure upgrades and expensive equipment purchases that are necessary to maintain the town, the mysterious disappearance of funds due to illegitimate stipend payouts worth hundreds of thousands of taxpayer dollars, and even the threat of bankruptcy as predicted by financial analysts nationally, has made it virtually impossible to predict how long residents may have to wait for the tax relief that is desperately needed for many and long overdue. Therefore, I am compelled to rely on, minimally, a conservative interpretation of the revenue enhancement that has been represented to the town, and view it as a much needed and positive impact to the town's finances and, in turn, a benefit to the residents. I, therefore, support the resolution moved this afternoon.

ADJOURNMENT

Motion to adjourn by Councilperson Malone seconded by Supervisor Langley and brought to a vote as follows:

Councilperson Malone	VOTED	YES
Supervisor Langley	VOTED	YES
Councilperson Mangold	VOTED	YES
Councilperson DiMartino	VOTED	YES
Councilperson Matters	VOTED	YES

Respectfully submitted,

Linda Kennedy
Town Clerk

Meeting closed at 6:30 pm