

Sent: Tuesday, July 16, 2019 2:28 PM
To: Lysynski, Heather <hlysynsk@London.ca>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] GATEWAY CASINO REZONING

Good afternoon Heather.....further to the subject Gateway Casino rezoning and projected development on Wonderland Road, I have some additional comments that I am requesting be added to the file along with my original e-mail of December 19th 2018. I consent to the comments, my name and mailing address appearing as part of the added PEC agenda which is available to the general public

COMMENTS:

1) Having received no response from Councillor Van Meerbergen to my e-mail of Dec.19/18, I followed up with City Hall to obtain information about the potential Casino relocation. I spoke with Melonie Carson in May/19 and with her help was connected with Melissa Campbell who has provided excellent support/information to me about this project. Information provided permitted me to attend the June 24/19 meeting at the Chamber of Commerce to where Gateway promoted the project; and a Tri-Ward meeting (9; 10; 12) at the Bostwick Community Centre on July 8/19, where the 3 Councillors attended along with representatives from Gateway and OLG.

2) "Public input" is an interesting term where Municipal Politics is concerned. I attempted to provide my personal input in Dec/18 after watching the CTV news commentary, and while not being naive about priorities of Councillors and Staff, "the Public" did not get access to Gateway or Councillors until June 24/19 & July 8/19. With the potential recommendation of this project being given the rezoning recommendation it needs on July 22/19.

3) With 2) above in mind I learned from the Gateway Reps. on June 24/19 that the renegotiations with Western Fair District were not viable with Gateway plans for a new Casino. I also learned that entertainment was the key driver and that "the public" was demanding it. What I didn't learn was why that particular location. No one from Gateway that I spoke with seemed to know or were willing to divulge an answer to that question. The spin was that the gambling aspect of the project was not the main sell; the 3 – 4 restaurants and the future hotel were the key focus. Only one of the Gateway reps. that I spoke with knew the residential neighbourhoods that back onto the proposed site, however, there was an appreciation of the Wonderland Road traffic issues and my depiction of "the Wonderland Road car park" becoming more congested with out-of-town buses & cars was not discarded.

4) The July 8/19 meeting hosted by the 3 councillors in my opinion was not well planned. I did not do an actual count however, I believe there were as many, if not more, City/Gateway attendees than residents.

I reiterate, the CTV coverage was in Dec./18; this meeting is convened on July 8/19. Based on the public attendance (20 residents at most) this was a perfect time to have minimal

attendance. Vacations are in full swing and who really wants to attend a Ward meeting on a pleasant summer evening? Well the 20 or so residents that did attend, and I spoke with 4 prior to the proceedings getting underway, did have some points they wanted to raise. The commonality with these points appeared to be directed at the Councillors and not the attending Gateway/OLG Reps. Unfortunately, the Councillors were not interested in acting as a panel and field questions; after inviting a Gateway Rep. to give an overview of the new Casino project, the attendees were invited to mingle with one and all to discuss the new Casino and/or write down specific questions/concerns for City Staff to compile and submit for the July 22nd meeting.

I managed to get Councillor VanMeerbergen and a resident from Lambeth to have a mini forum with a Gateway Rep. (who lives in Byron) and a couple of Reps. from OLG. Our (residents) common concerns were why this location? & anticipated increase in traffic volumes to the "Wonderland Road parking lot" The former was not answered the latter acknowledged with the Councillor pointing out that turn lanes off Wonderland into the Casino were part of the plan. The focus of Gateway was again to push the entertainment factor; that gambling was not the only attraction (restaurants) and that the general public was demanding it. I suggested to the Gateway Rep. that if gambling was not the focus then drop the gambling aspect altogether and promote the eating facilities; the projected hotel and acts that either one would attract. Needless to say this received the anticipated chuckles from the OLG Reps. I pressed as to how Gateway surveyed "the public" in order to conclude there was/is a demand for Casino type entertainment. The response alluded to a Province wide survey; to which I asked if there was a follow-up survey to specific residential areas where these Casino entertainment complexes would be situated. The answer was of course "no"; I suggested that those demanding this type of entertainment potentially come 24/7 from anywhere in the Province/U.S.A. by car/bus into a neighbourhood that, if surveyed, may not want it.

5) I read out to Councillor VanMeerbergen that the Andover Trails area of Ward 10 that I reside in (formerly in Ward 9 before last election) has been subject to consistent residential/commercial growth & development since 2013. We were not naive when deciding to build in a new neighbourhood that residential growth would continue. However, the residual effect of other projects from 2013 thru today brings about what I call "construction fatigue" not only on week days, but on weekends and even statutory holidays.

Local developers Tri-Car; Siftons & East Forest Homes; Wonderland/Wharncliffe/Exeter Road construction; Bradley Road extension phase 1 with phase 2 pending; Southdale Road sewer construction are just some of the projects completed, underway or pending that have directly impacted this neighbourhood. The approval of rezoning the recommended sites for the Casino will exacerbate commercial traffic directly and indirectly in the neighbourhood. To be followed by additional volumes of cars/buses to Wonderland Road from inside and outside the City once the Casino is built.

To conclude, I do not know why this specific location has been selected. I have my suspicions, however, they are not relevant. I have looked at a map from the London Plan which specifies

“place types” by colour code. As a layperson when it comes to Municipal Planning and rezoning and having looked at this map, it seems apparent to me that locations further south on Wonderland and closer to the 401/402 would be more appropriate for an entertainment project of this type. Admittedly, they are designated residential, however, applying for rezoning does not appear to be a problem; an environmental assessment would still have to be done; and most importantly, the surrounding areas designated “neighbourhoods” could remain the same with potential buyers knowing in advance a Casino is or will be built in your neighbourhood.

Thank you for reading the aforementioned.

Derek Speller: 3225 Singleton Avenue N6L 0B5 London.