

Axford, Sarah

From: Mark Rogers
Sent: Monday, April 15, 2013 10:40 AM
To: Axford, Sarah
Subject: Re: E- Bingo - OLG

Morning Sarah,

First off, I wanted to apologize for not having a chance to get back to yet.

Dave Thomson and I have regular contact so it sounds like you, he and Rick touched on many of the charity concerns about the eBingo concept.

From the bingo operator side, I have a few concerns as well. I would be happy to drop in to chat with you as well if you'd prefer, but will cover a few of them by email.

My first concern is the capital costs being asked from the operator to convert to a eBingo site. In London, we've spent 30 years teaching people bingo is a 'once a day' '7pm' kind of event. For the eBingo site to operate successfully, the model really requires a multiple session centre to recover those costs in any timely fashion. Because this isn't happening in London right now, I'm not so sure we would/could attract the customers necessary. Over the years, both of the London operators have tried new sessions without much success. To have to rely on the idea that bingo players will magically appear at multiples sessions to recover the capital is of concern to me.

I am also concerned with the London market as a whole: the current London bingo model and the impact of the OLG slots at Western Fair.

As I mentioned in my concerns about recovering our capital costs, bingo players in London have been conditioned that bingo in London is an evening event. Over the last 30 years through licensing procedures and municipal bylaws, we've handcuffed the London market and sent people to St. Thomas and Delaware-Munsee to play bingo where the halls have had much more flexibility. Recapturing those players has been both expensive and unsuccessful so far. Again - having to rely on some of these players returning to London for multiple sessions through the day is a big concern.

I am also concerned that we have an OLG slot centre in London to compete against - a Centre that has openly admitted its interest in becoming a casino site. One of the goals of the eBingo model was to modernize bingo centres and add new games to interest the younger players that bingo has not been able to attract. With a casino site in the same market, I am concerned that regardless of the quality of the new games, we'd still be competing against a larger, established site.

All that being said, I am not against the new eBingo model - in fact, I wish we could be participating. I do believe its the only solution for bingo to survive. But I think London is a bit of a unique market and as it stands now, I just don't think we are willing to take the chance investing the \$300,000 - \$500,000 required to convert our hall.

Hope that gives you some insight from the operator perspective. I'd be happy to chat in person if you'd like as well, Sarah.

Mark

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On Wed, 27 Mar 2013 14:46:13 +0000, "Axford, Sarah" <saxford@London.ca> wrote:

Hi Dave and Mark,

I wanted to touch base with you in regards to the e bingo initiative with the OLG. I understand they may have been in contact with you.

We are in the midst of preparing a report regarding the initiative for Council's consideration. With that report, I would like to include input from all stakeholders and their decision to participate or not in the initiative and their concerns moving forward.

Would you be willing and able to prepare something from your association and from the operator perspective in writing for us to include with the report? If you would like to meet regarding this or any other issues or changes that are occurring, please let me know and we will set up a time to discuss.

Thanks,

Sarah Axford · City Clerk's Office · Manager, Licensing & Elections
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