



that is to be sent to the legislators and noted that there were also versions of this letter from Mr. Mazik and Kathleen Norbut which were distributed to Task Force Members. Mr. Mazik stated that in his version he had inserted the mission statement, the three objectives of the Task Force and incorporated the points of concern discussed at the previous meeting. The group agreed to work from Mr. Mazik's version since it had incorporated Ms. Norbut's edits as well.

A Task Force member expressed concern regarding the second to last bullet of the Task Force's list of concerns, namely, "the cost of impact studies should not be paid by the town." He thought that the group had agreed on the need for an independent study that would be financed by the casino or gaming commission. He stated that there should be a specific bullet addressing this issue and that the casinos should be specified as funding such a study. However, the casinos should have no oversight of this study. Mr. Mazik noted that perhaps the bullet point should state that the costs of site-specific studies should not be paid by the town but be funded by the casinos.

A Task Force member suggested that item number 2 of the mission statement and the second to last bullet point on the list of concerns should be combined into one bullet point asking for a localized study as well as a broader regional study. He further noted that ideally a study should be done prior to the passing of legislation. However, recognizing that this may not happen, the Task Force should suggest that this be completed prior to the licensing process. After further discussion regarding the preferred timing of the state study relative to the passage of legislation, it was agreed that the study should be completed either before the legislation passes or prior to the acceptance of any bids from casinos.

Mr. Harrison noted that bullet points in the final Task Force letter should be put in terms of positive action statements. Additionally, he asked the group if the letter should be actually two letters. Perhaps the first letter should request the study, and the second letter should list the Task Force's specific comments on the legislation. The group then agreed that the draft letter should be two letters. Letter #1 would contain the mission statement. Letter #2 would open with the following text that was revised by Mr. John Flynn at the meeting: "We as a group are neither pro-casino nor anti-casino. However, as duly elected representatives of our respective communities we feel it is our duty just like it is yours as the elected representatives of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts to examine all side of the issue." Then it would list the bullet points of suggestions and concerns.

Mr. Harrison then asked if the group wanted to discuss the bullet points listed in what will now be the second letter. One Task Force member noted that one of the bullet points should be to ask for representation on the advisory committee as well as on the board of directors. It was also suggested that the second and third bullets be combined to read as follows:

- *There have been no independent studies to determine impact on the region and to confirm or refute the Administration's revenue projections or the sufficiency of the 2.5% mitigation fund.*

It was also stated that perhaps the more specific information noted above should be inserted into the first letter and should be reiterated in the second letter.

One member noted that the first letter should be more neutral than it is currently worded. He also observed that the second letter concedes that the casinos are coming, and here's what needs to be done. Another member noted that perhaps the second letter can state that the Task Force is neither for nor against casino legislation. However, should the legislation pass, here are some points that

should be considered. Mr. Brennan suggested that the Task Force think of the second letter as recommendations in the event the legislators decide to proceed with the casino legislation. In this way, you keep the letter more positive and respectful of the legislators' roles.

Diane Panaccione made a motion to amend the opening paragraph of the mission statement to include the word "potential", so that it reads, "to assure that the economic, social and quality of life interests of communities within the Western Massachusetts Region are protected and all impacts resulting from the *potential* development of Class III casino gambling within the region are recognized." The motion was approved unanimously. After this vote, another member noted that "that" should be inserted in the mission statement as well so that it reads, "...are protected and *that* all interests..." The group then agreed that the mission statement should be included as amended in the first letter.

Another member observed that the mission statement should be reviewed by the Task Force first before it is posted on the web site since the one cited in the first letter has been redacted. She suggested that this should be an agenda item for the next meeting. David Whitney asked that any comments regarding the mission statement be emailed to him by March 14<sup>th</sup> as this would give him time to incorporate the group's comments before the next meeting which is scheduled for March 19<sup>th</sup> at the Monson Municipal Office Building.

Mr. Harrison asked the group to whom the first letter should be targeted. After an extensive discussion, it was agreed that the letter should go to the attention of Representative Daniel Bosley, Chairman of the Emerging Technologies Committee, and individually addressed letters should be sent to the regional legislators, the Speaker of the House, the Senate President, and the letter should ask for the courtesy of a reply. Governor Patrick will be cc'd. Mr. Brennan said that the Commission will handle this mailing. After the minutes were approved, Mr. Harrison adjourned the meeting.