

A special meeting of the Town Board of the Town of Moreau was held on July 9, 2013 in the Town of Moreau Office Building, 61 Hudson Street, South Glens Falls, New York, for the purpose of discussing casinos.

Supervisor Jenkins called the meeting to order at 6:34 p.m.

The Town Clerk called the roll.

Town Board Members Present

Robert J. Vittengl, Jr.	Councilman
Bob Prendergast	Councilman
Gina LeClair	Councilwoman
Todd Kusnierz	Councilman
Preston L. Jenkins, Jr.	Supervisor

Town Board Members Absent

None

Also Present: Jeanne Fleury, Town Clerk; Karla Buettner, Attorney for the Town

Supervisor Jenkins stated that the meeting was called for the purpose of discussing the possibility of casinos coming to the area. He said the only comments that he has heard is either 100% for casinos or 100% against. He noted that there wasn't anybody present from the public. He said he could think of pluses and minuses. Primarily how much it would change our community and historically our community has been hesitant to make changes so it will be difficult for us to deal with it. He stated that he read some things about the casinos in CT and about how there has been a change in crime, but the statistics for that were based on population differences, which are hard to measure. The positive things don't ever seem to be as good as they are portrayed. He doesn't think that if Moreau became a host community for a casino that there would be any money to be made by Moreau. They might be able to put in some infrastructure for us.

Councilwoman LeClair asked if this could be put on the ballot at election time and Councilman Kusnierz stated that it was going to be a state-wide referendum.

Councilwoman LeClair asked if they could put it on the ballot for the residents of Moreau to vote on, whether or not they want a casino in the Town of Moreau. Yes or no.

Attorney Buettner and Supervisor Jenkins said that type of question could be put on the ballot. Supervisor Jenkins said it would give them an idea where people stood. However, he thought the decision was going to be made before that at the state level.

Supervisor Jenkins said his question would be how would it change our community? He referred to an article in the newspaper today about casinos and how people use their welfare credit cards at the casinos. One negative thing about casinos involves social issues. The positive thing would be the creation of jobs in the community.

Councilman Kusnierz stated that the people putting this through the legislature know what kind of impact it will have on the community from a job standpoint, revenue standpoint and social impact. He hasn't personally seen those numbers, figures and facts and without that information it is hard for him to give an opinion.

Supervisor Jenkins said he has seen the estimates on how the two casinos in Connecticut affected the area. The casinos there are in rural areas and the statistics are skewed, because a population of 30,000 vs. 5,000 skews the statistics.

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Councilman Kusnierz stated that he has strong reservations as to the impact it would have on our community, because our community unlike other communities is unique in that $\frac{3}{4}$ of our Town is surrounded by the river and $\frac{1}{2}$ of our land mass is utilized for agriculture, which are factors that probably don't come into play in most other sitings. So it would certainly have an impact on recreational potential opportunities or activities along the river or on the Ag District. So those are things that would have to be taken into consideration.

Councilman Vittengl said his only experience with casinos was with the Mohegan Sun and if it was a facility like that where there are concerts or shows then it wouldn't be a bad facility. He mentioned the casinos at the Lake Tahoe area and how there hasn't seemed to be any issues with them. He stated it is more about out-of-town dollars coming into Town for entertainment for two nights, three nights or a week. What would the real impact be on the Town if it was based around Exit 17? He doesn't think it would have a huge spur on the rest of the Town. He thinks it would be more on the outlying regions of Saratoga or Lake George, up and down the interstate. He said he talked to people and as Supervisor Jenkins said it is a 50-50 mix. 50% of the people he talked to said they would like it and the other 50% said no way will it be here, because it is going to be in Saratoga and it is a done deal so why would they even consider the Town of Moreau. He said he was in Saratoga two or three times this week and last week and already there is a gridlock of traffic and the track hasn't even started up yet for the season. That might be one thing that prevents the casino from being sited there. If it would create a tax base and revenue without affecting the quality of life then it would be worth looking at.

Supervisor Jenkins stated that he thought they needed some data. He said a representative for this area from the Governor's Office indicated to him that they would like some kind of letter of intent from the Town Board or resolution from the Town Board expressing interest. He stated that if one Board Member doesn't want it then the rest of the Board should listen. There needs to be a total commitment from the whole Town Board.

Councilman Prendergast stated that he hasn't had one person talk to him about this. He isn't sure why. He said that he mentioned to a few people that the Board was going to discuss it and they really didn't have anything to say. He has had a lot of people ask him what he wants to see in the Town, because he does sit on the Town Board. As long as he can remember they have discussed the need for commercial growth along the Route 9 corridor and the need to change the whole environment down there. He said everybody is in line with that, but they have also always coupled that with their fear of losing the quiet Town, family feel. He has also heard people say in a negative way that it is a quiet Town and nothing ever happens here.

Supervisor Jenkins said he has heard the same thing particularly when they talked about the Buck Group Project. He said that one of the good things about the Route 9 corridor is that we have quite a bit of land out there and he doesn't see any tremendous impact to the Village. The Village has a different structure height limitation than the Town does. A four or five story building could be built in the Village in certain areas and that can't be done in the Town. If we don't do something in the next decade to change the ratio of residential to commercial then there is going to be an increase in taxes. It is happening everywhere and we have been fortunate that we have been able to keep taxes from going up.

Councilwoman LeClair asked Supervisor Jenkins if he has spoken with Mayors and/or Supervisor from other communities where there are casinos and Supervisor Jenkins replied no he hasn't.

Supervisor Jenkins mentioned how he has seen a study that compares the two casinos in Connecticut and impact before and after and the positives and negatives. What he has heard is that the casinos have done nothing for them. He said he would get copies for the Board Members.

Councilwoman LeClair asked Supervisor Jenkins to contact a couple of the communities where there are casinos and see how they feel about them.

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Councilwoman LeClair said she thought she read or heard in the news that a host community gets 10% of the profits.

Councilman Kusnierz said that they had to be careful with that. When the Racino was located in Saratoga there was an agreement that was adopted by the previous Governor and Legislature where they would get a percentage and then when new administration came in they took out that percentage, which left the local government holding the bag for costs involved with increased law enforcement and safety and security, all the additional services that went along with that. Then another Legislature came in after that and started increasing the percentage back up from zero. You can have it statute, but it can change. The state is in a tough financial position and they are going to take care of themselves first.

Councilman Prendergast asked when a decision is going to be made.

Supervisor Jenkins said that in November the public is going to be able to vote on whether or not they want a casino. It will be on the ballot.

Councilman Kusnierz stated that it is a high stakes gamble on the part of the state, because they are building those numbers in under the assumption that the public is going to support it at the referendum in the fall and in the state's five year financial plan they are counting on that money. If it goes down there are going to be a lot of issues all the way around.

Supervisor Jenkins said he would try to find the Town Board some more data. He said it was going to be difficult, because it is based on the size of the community.

Councilman Kusnierz said they can't put one in Warren County under an agreement. It is essentially no man's land.

Supervisor Jenkins said he would try to get more data and then the Town Board could decide if they wanted to put it on the ballot or not.

A motion was made by Councilwoman LeClair and seconded by Councilman Vittengl to adjourn the meeting 6:57 p.m.

Roll call vote resulted as follows:

Councilman Vittengl	Yes
Councilman Prendergast	Yes
Councilwoman LeClair	Yes
Councilman Kusnierz	Yes
Supervisor Jenkins	Yes

Meeting adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,

Jeanne Fleury
Town Clerk