

## **Local Development Council (LDC) for Ocean Downs Video Lottery Facility Meeting Minutes**

**Meeting Date:** September 20, 2023

**Time:** 10:00 a.m.

**Location:** Worcester County Government Center, Training Room B

### **Attendance:**

#### **Local Development Council**

Cam Bunting, Chair  
Matt Gordon, Vice Chair  
Steve Ashcraft  
Kerrie Bunting  
Michael Donnelly  
Bob Gilmore (Absent)  
Delegate Wayne Hartman  
David Massey (term expired)  
Mayor Richard Meehan  
Delegate Charles Otto  
Roxane Rounds  
Ivy Wells  
Bobbi Sample  
Senator Mary Beth Carozza, with Pat Schrawder  
Mark Wittmyer (term expired)

#### **Staff**

County Attorney Roscoe Leslie  
Public Information Officer Kim Moses  
Tourism and Economic Development Director  
Melanie Pursel

Chair Cam Bunting called the meeting of the Local Development Council (LDC) for the Ocean Downs Video Lottery Facility to order.

The LDC members reviewed and approved their January 18, 2023 meeting minutes as presented.

Senator Carozza asked when new individuals will be appointed to replace expired spots. Appointments are made by the commissioners based on community interest. Those interested in serving on the LDC are encouraged to send a letter of interest, along with a resume or cover letter to [khammer@co.worcester.md.us](mailto:khammer@co.worcester.md.us). In response to a comment by Ms. Bunting, Ms. Moses agreed to advise the commissioners of the need to fill vacant seats on the LDC.

LDC members met with County Attorney Roscoe Leslie to discuss the need for Worcester County and the Town of Berlin to develop and submit new multi-year plans for the expenditure of Local Impact Grant (LIG) funds. In response to questions by Ms. Bunting regarding the Town of Berlin's interest in allocating future LIG funds toward implementation of LEOPS (Law Enforcement Officers' Pension System), Mr. Leslie advised that after the town submits an updated plan, the LDC members may require the town to conduct a hearing to receive public comment on said plan. Then following the hearing, that jurisdiction should try to accommodate the recommendations of the LDC and the public.

Senator Mary Beth Carozza advised that LEOPS overall is a powerful tool for the recruitment and retention of public safety officials. Delegate Wayne Hartman concurred, noting that public safety is one of the allowable uses of LIG funds. Ms. Bunting agreed, but noted that using said funds for LEOPS would be a stretch and would set a bad precedent. Mr. Gordon stated that public safety uses should be immediate, such as the purchasing of a car or adding new officers and not for an indefinite, future use, like funding a pension program.

Following further discussion and upon a motion by Delegate Otto, with Ms. Wells abstaining, the LDC members agreed to request the Town of Berlin submit an updated multi-year plan for the expenditure of LIG funds.

Upon a motion by Commissioner Meehan, the LDC members voted unanimously to request the County submit an updated multi-year plan for the expenditure of LIG funds.

LDC members welcomed Casino at Ocean Downs General Manager Bobbi Jones who then discussed casino operations and the state and nationwide decline overall in gaming.

LDC members agreed to schedule a special meeting upon receipt of the new multi-year plan from the Town of Berlin and if needed one to review the County's updated plan.

Upon a motion by Delegate Hartman, the LDC voted unanimously to require both the County and Town to submit updated plans within the next sixty days. Mr. Leslie advised that the jurisdictions receiving LIG funds are not constrained by a time limit to develop new plans, but rather they are limited from expending future funding until they submit new plans to the LDC. He noted that the LDC has 45 days to review, comment, and make recommendations on each new plan they receive<sup>1</sup>.

Ms. Purcel discussed the video lottery terminal loan program and advised that Rick Liebowitz of the Small Business Development Center will meet with would be entrepreneurs and small business owners at the Worcester County Tourism and Economic Development Office one day per week.

Following general discussion, the LDC adjourned to meet again on Wednesday, April 24, 2024, at 10 a.m. in the first-floor board room at the Worcester County Government Center.

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<sup>1</sup> Worcester County submitted an updated plan on March 27, 2024.