

Marilyn Toft - Casinos in Toronto

CITY CLERK'S OFFICE
SECRETARIAT SECTION

2012 APR 11 P 5: 52

From: Councillor Crisanti
To: Clerk; Councillors and Mayor
Date: 4/11/2012 3:21 PM
Subject: Casinos in Toronto

Dear Mayor Ford and Members of Council,

The past several weeks have seen a renewed debate over casinos in the City of Toronto. Members of the Provincial Government, the Chair of the Ontario Lottery and Gaming Corporation and some Members of Council have made their views known. Public debate on the issue has also been re-ignited.

I have unfortunately had to take a few days off on account of illness but would like to share my thoughts with you. I understand Council today referred this item to Executive Committee..

I believe Toronto can and should be home to a casino and that with proper planning and community consultation, a casino is feasible.

Presently, the Woodbine Racetrack in North Etobicoke is the closest thing Toronto has to a casino. The facility is home to 2,000 slot machines, is one of Toronto's premiere event venues and is home to the Queen's Plate, Canada's oldest thoroughbred horse race. It is a beautiful, well manicured facility and a good neighbour. My office has received no complaints from residents regarding this site.

I encourage the Province, the OLG and Council to consider Woodbine as a site for a future casino in Toronto. It is located near major transit infrastructure including two major highways, the Toronto Pearson International Airport and the Air Rail Link. I expect discussions on this matter would take into consideration revenue sharing between the Province and City of Toronto, infrastructure expansion and funding for any requisite traffic and law enforcement.

In terms of a City-wide referendum on a casino, I would urge careful consideration on how the question is posed and how the results would be applied. If, for example, a certain part of Toronto opposed a casino and other parts supported one, would we still consider a casino in those parts? If a majority opposed a casino and North Etobicoke residents supported one, would we consider building a casino in North Etobicoke?

Torontonians' voices are important in this debate and I believe a referendum can be a good mechanism to gauge support. However, I believe our municipal elections are also an opportunity for candidates to make their views known on major issues like casinos and public transportation, and for voters to have their say based on candidates' platforms.

Thank you for your consideration and I look forward to engaging with you on this issue in the coming months.

Best regards,

Vince

Councillor Vincent Crisanti
Ward 1, Etobicoke North
Toronto City Hall
100 Queen St. W.
2nd Floor, Suite C54
Toronto, ON M5H 2N2
P: 416-392-0205
F: 416-696-4207
councillor_crisanti@toronto.ca