

May 10, 2023

OPPOSITION TO CASINO AT NASSAU HUB

On Monday, May 8, I attended the Nassau County Legislature Rules Committee Meeting and addressed the Committee:

“I am speaking as the Mayor of Garden City on behalf of our residents who are adamantly opposed to a Mega Casino at the Nassau Hub. Since the minute I heard about this plan, I thought it was a bad idea. As I have educated myself about the impact of casinos on local communities, I have come to realize that it is much worse than a bad idea. If you vote to approve the lease transfer, you are putting us on a path to a project that will forever change our county and bring financial and emotional heartache to our communities. It is important not to lose sight during your analysis of the fact that casino revenue comes from gambling losses.

“The GC Board of Trustees unanimously passed a resolution adamantly opposing a casino that would be only a mile from our Village boarder on February 21, 2023 and again on April 20, 2023 after we added three new members to our Board of Trustees in the March election. During a contested election in our Village, every candidate ran on a platform that opposed the casino because we knew from talking to residents that this is not something that our residents want. As a Village Board, we met with County Executive Bruce Blakeman to let him know the lack of community support in our Village for this project, and we have shared our unequivocal opposition with you by phone and email, and today as I am standing before you.

“I ask you to all to remember why you moved to Long Island or decided to stay here, if, like me, you grew up on the island. Maybe it was the great schools, the quality of life residents enjoy here, the tree-lined streets, the close-knit communities, the sports and recreation programs, the faith communities, the proximity to NYC, the beauty of the area, the beaches.... Like all areas, we have our struggles and challenges, but as leaders we work hard to address and minimize those while preserving all that is great about Nassau County. We work to reduce crime, address quality of life issues, keep residents safe, provide safe drinking water, and connect residents struggling with addiction to services. In many areas in Nassau County, traffic is the biggest complaint heard by elected officials, and in Garden City, like other areas, we are working to find ways to calm traffic, improve safety for pedestrians and motorists, and preserve the quality of life residents value. Why do I mention all this?

“Transferring this lease for the development of a mega casino will have a severe negative impact on our communities and make the job of keeping Long Island a great place to live much more difficult.

“With estimates of over 20,000 visitors to this casino every day, it is clear to residents in surrounding communities that our roadways, already overburdened with traffic, could not handle this. You can look up the accident numbers and safety ratings of Hempstead Turnpike, Clinton Road, and the intersection of Clinton Road and Stewart Avenue. We have not been shown any plans on how this traffic disaster could be mitigated, and I suggest to you that this is because there is no way that it could be. The traffic will be terrible.

“Crime will increase. In counties with Class III casinos, 9 percent of total crime is gambling-related. No one will tell you that casinos do not bring crime, and it is not just the property crime we can all expect with a nearby casino. Along with a casino, for reasons law enforcement experts can explain, will come drug trafficking, prostitution and human trafficking. No one is even arguing this, as the lease transfer agreement includes building a police precinct on the site. Studies document increases in DWI fatalities in areas surrounding casinos. With liquor being served around the clock, the absence of windows to know the time of day, and gambling losses guaranteed, that should not be a surprise to anyone.

“Addiction issues in our communities will increase. Every community has residents who struggle with addiction, and the addition of a casino will increase those numbers. Living within a 10-mile radius of a casino doubles your risk of becoming a problem gambler. Young people who are college age are most susceptible to gambling addiction. How can anyone think it would be a good idea to place this casino between Hofstra University and Nassau Community College where so many county residents are students?”

“The money seems to be the only reason anyone is defending this proposal. The financial reality is not what you will be told by the LV Sands Casino. A \$54 million payment sounds excellent, and the future payment being contemplated may as well, but who has studied what the long term impact of this development would be on our county? Where is that report? Who has calculated the total decline in property value for surrounding homeowners and commercial property owners? NAR studies show residential property values could decline by up to 10 percent as a result of a casino. Who has calculated the cost of increased law enforcement needed not just at the casino site but in the surrounding communities? Who has calculated the cost of the roadwork that will be needed in the surrounding communities as a result of the increase in traffic sure to come with over 20,000 expected visitors daily? And don’t forget that the money being promised by LV Sands is money from gambling losses. Who has calculated how much of the expected gambling losses – estimated to be over \$2 billion a year - will be from residents of Nassau County and how that would impact the county’s finances? Who has studied the impact a mega casino would have on the small businesses in the surrounding communities and the reduction in the commercial tax base? It’s no secret that LV Sands has been spending lots of money to silence opposition to this project from those most likely to be negatively impacted, such as local businesses and young families.

“Community support is named as a requirement for the granting of a gambling license for a reason and Executive Blakeman has stated again and again that it is a prerequisite for his support of building a casino at the Nassau Hub. Let there be no mistake that this community does not support a mega casino.”

The Nassau County Legislature is meeting on Monday, May 22, beginning at 1:00 p.m. (time to subject to change, visit the county website to confirm) when they could vote on the Casino. I urge residents to attend the meeting to let their voices be heard.

MEET AND. GREET MAY 24

There will be a Meet and Greet on Wednesday, May 24th at the Village Senior Center on Golf Club Lane at 7:30 p.m. The Meet and Greet is a great opportunity for residents to engage directly with members of the Board of Trustees. We will continue to have a maximum of 3-4 Trustees at each meeting to avoid any violations of the Open Meetings Law. These meetings do not have an agenda; Trustees are available to discuss multiple issues and concerns.

WESTERMAN QUESTIONS

The Board of Trustees has worked together to compile a list of questions we have presented to Westerman Construction to clarify what we know now about options the Village has, and what they will cost. Any resident interested in obtaining a copy of the questions this Board sent to Westerman can contact me via email.

SPEED REDUCTION SURVEY

The Garden City Board of Trustees has engaged Creighton Manning Engineering, LLP to provide a speed limit reduction survey to help Village officials evaluate a reduction to speed limits from 30 mph to 25 mph in the Village. The closest Village with a 25mph speed limit is Great Neck Estates, according to Police Commissioner Kenneth Jackson.

Speed is a top priority for the Garden City Police Department and an equally important topic for the Traffic Commission, which has been working on a number of different traffic calming initiatives. Under the

leadership of Trustee Charles Kelly, the Commission regularly hears resident concerns about speed.

Creighton Manning has already performed a road diet traffic study of Cathedral Avenue, and a traffic calming study of the Numbered Streets. The Board welcomed community input before finalizing the recommendations, which include speed humps, traffic circles, raised crosswalks and bump outs. Temporary speed humps are ready for installation on Fourth Street.

Further, the Village Engineering Department has created a bid package for the Seventh Street Crosswalk Improvement Project. The project will be put out to bid as soon as possible, according to Public Works Superintendent John Borroni. The speed hump will run south from Dunkin' Donuts (approximately 25 feet wide) with bump outs of the adjoining curbs to meet the speed hump and extend east at a reasonable distance. The crosswalk and its entrances will be designed to be handicapped accessible. This recommendation was presented in Creighton Manning's Traffic Study on Numbered Streets. The Village engaged Nelson and Pope Engineering, Architecture and Land Surveying, PLLC, of Melville, to provide design development and the construction documents needed to bid, construct and execute the improvement.

Attention is also focused on the Village's main roadways, including both Washington Avenue and Clinton Road. In fact, a temporary ban on overnight trucks southbound on both roads was recently approved.

COMMUNITY PARK RETAINING WALL

The Village will be replacing the wooden railroad tie retaining wall located at the southeast corner of Community Park. This wall separates the Park from both Garden City Nursery School and the Garden City School District Bus Garage. The wall was originally built in approximately 1984, and in recent years, has begun to show signs that it is in need of replacement. The wall is bowed in several places, indicating that the wood is nearing the end of its useful life. Plans and specifications have been drawn up by Village Engineers, and the project was bid out in April. Six bids were received. Galvin Brothers/Madhue JV was the lowest bid at \$478,000. The proposed retaining wall will be a steel sheet pile wall with a concrete cap, which should have a longer lifespan than a wooden wall. The project was awarded at the May 4 Board of Trustees meeting, with construction expected to begin in early summer.

MEADOW STREET DRAINAGE IMPROVEMENTS

The Meadow Street Drainage Improvement Project involves multiple steps, with the final goal of reducing the flooding of water on Meadow Street, between College Place and Tremont Street. The Village hired LKMA Engineers to identify the flow of water on the streets in this area. LKMA also identified the upstream water source(s) that contribute to the Nassau County Culvert that passes underground through this section of Garden City before emptying downstream into Hempstead Lake. In addition, the Public Works and Water and Sewer Departments have used cameras to identify any potential issues that may have restricted the flow of water in our existing drainage system. None were found.

After all engineering reviews were completed, LKMA came up with four alternatives that would eliminate the flooding. These alternatives were numbered 1 through 4 and they were all subsequently reviewed by DPW to ascertain the preferred alternative. All solutions were equally successful, however there are cost implications and practical engineering considerations that drove the selection.

Alternative 2 is the preferred choice as it had the advantages of disconnecting from the Nassau County Culvert at its current location and reconnecting to the same culvert in the Village of Hempstead at a lower hydraulic point, which would facilitate drainage as well as keep unwanted upstream Nassau County Water from entering our streets.

Village of Hempstead officials did not find Alternative 2 acceptable so DPW is now focused on Alternative 3.

Alternative 3 will create a leaching field on the Village property, which is an open lot at the end of College Place, on the south side of Meadow Street.

While this work ramps up we cannot pave this section of Meadow Street. However, the Village will begin the repaving of Grove, Lindbergh, Commander and Meadow west of Washington Avenue while the drainage work is implemented on the eastern portion of Meadow Street. This portion of Meadow Street will be repaved upon completion of the drainage improvements. Paving of this remaining section of Meadow Street is anticipated to take place in the fall of 2023. The repaving of the streets mentioned above are the final step in the Meadow Street Water Main Capital Project. Meadow Street Drainage Improvements were added as a separate Capital Project when the flooding problem was identified in August 2021 following Tropical storm Ida.

APRIL GCFD ACTIVITY

Chief Matthew Pearn reported that during April the Department responded to 77 total calls:

- 68 “Signal 8” calls or non-emergency automatic alarms, 54 of which were false or unintentional automatic alarms
- 5 general alarms, including two working fires
- 1 extrication
- 3 mutual aid calls to assist neighboring Fire Departments

HAPPENING THIS WEEK IN GARDEN CITY

Here are some events and meetings taking place this week in Garden City:

- **SATURDAY, MAY 13** 10:00 a.m. Empire Safety Council Defensive Driving Course at the Garden City Public Library. Registration required.
- **MONDAY, MAY 15** 11:00 a.m. 3rd Annual A.T. Stewart Golf Classic at the Cherry Valley Club
- **MONDAY, MAY 15** 1:30 p.m. Monday Movie Matinée *Analyze This* at the Garden City Public Library
- **TUESDAY, MAY 16** 4:00 p.m. Teen Advisory Board Meeting at the Garden City Public Library. Registration required.
- **TUESDAY, MAY 16** 6:30 p.m. Zoning Board of Appeals Meeting at Village Hall
- **TUESDAY, MAY 16** 6:00 p.m. Narcan training at the Garden City Public Library, sponsored by the office of Councilman Thomas Muscarella. Register directly by calling 516-812-3179.
- **TUESDAY-THURSDAY, MAY 16-18** 10:00 a.m. [Senior Exercise with Felicia](#) at the Garden City Senior Center. Call 516-385-8006 for schedule
- **TUESDAY-FRIDAY MAY 16-19** [Pickleball](#) hours (Tuesday through Friday 9:30 a.m. to Noon; Thursdays 3 to 5:30 p.m.; and Fridays 5 to 8:30 p.m.) at the Field House
- **WEDNESDAY, MAY 17** 7:30 p.m. Environmental Advisory Board Meeting at Village Hall and via Zoom
- **THURSDAY, MAY 18** 7:30 p.m. Board of Trustees Meeting at Village Hall and via Zoom
- **THROUGH MAY 31** Enter your artwork into the Garden City Historical Society’s [Children’s Art Show](#)