

1) What East Ferris issued to Bay Today on December 3rd

The Municipality of East Ferris is pleased to learn of the potential \$31.3 million investment on Pinewood Park Drive by Gateway Casinos and Entertainment Limited. Pinewood Park is a good central location for such a development as it borders the City of North Bay, the Town of Callander and the Municipality of East Ferris. The site is easily accessed from Highway 11. It builds on the bylaw that was passed by the City of North Bay and work done by the Town of Callander refurbishing Callander Bay Drive connecting Corbeil's provincial Highway 94 to Highway 17.

Earlier this year, the East Ferris Council reviewed Callander's letter to the Ontario Lottery and Gaming Corporation touching on the financial benefits of our region hosting a casino along with the potential pitfalls. The Council discussion centered on the positive impacts of such a development on the local economy, for the City of North Bay and its surrounding communities, as the casino will attract people to our area. The job impacts were identified as was the fact that it will allow for adults and residents to have an alternate form of entertainment to enjoy without having to travel to other casinos. Of significant concern was the potential for an increase in social services costs which could impact our taxpayers if the Municipality's levy from the DNSSAB increases. It is in keeping with this discussion that the Municipality of East Ferris supports recent communiqués by the Town of Callander and Mayor Hector Lavigne, as Gateway Casino plans are subjected to OLG and necessary government approvals before being finalized.

2) What Mayor of Callander issued December 14th on Facebook including East Ferris

How pragmatic, If we don't build the Casino, **East Ferris or Callander will!** As suggested it was never on the table that either Municipality would have a chance. For Council to suggest that if we don't do this we will get the negative of a Casino without the benefits of the revenues is troublesome to me and certainly discounts the rest of us in the Region. My argument is simple. The revenues should be shared amongst the Region's Municipalities as the Casino would and will affect us all. Now building it in our backyard has other repercussions. Traffic for one, travelling through Nipissing Junction now is difficult. What are the plans to ease the traffic flow and the

additional wear and tear on the region's roads. The casino will have negative effect on the economic opportunities of growing our local economy as well. We are not just bedroom communities of North Bay regardless of what our friends to the North suggest.

3) What Councillor Bill Vrebosch stated on December 13th at City of North Bay Council meeting re East Ferris

It was a raucous ending to a lengthy meeting that included nearly 20 presentations warning of significant social costs and overestimated economic benefits associated with a casino. Some called for greater due diligence and urged council to hold off on a final decision.

But a majority of council wanted to put the issue to bed, suggesting the casino debate has hung over the community for far too long.

"It's time that we make a decision. We have enough information. To drag this out any further . . . I think the people who made presentations tonight deserve an answer. I think the majority of the citizens of North Bay that aren't here deserve an answer tonight," said Coun. Dave Mendicino, who noted gambling is already readily accessible in many forms throughout the province. "We can walk away from the 200 jobs, we can walk away from the \$31 million in commercial assessment, we can walk away from the construction of this facility, of the goods and services that are going to be bought here in the city, and it will go down the street."

Coun. Mark King and newcomers Marcus Tignanelli and Scott Robertson were the three dissenting votes. King, who wanted the matter to go to committee, gave notice of reconsideration, which means there will be another vote on the matter during the next council meeting. It's unlikely, however, that the outcome will change.

Robertson said he was struggling with the decision, agreeing with presenters that the costs associated with a casino outweigh the benefits. But he suggested refusing a casino only to see it go to a neighbouring community would be even worse.

Fear that a casino would go to another community has been a key argument in support of the city's willingness to be a host community.

But the Ontario Lottery and Gaming Corp. has never been clear about whether a nearby community would actually be in the running if North Bay were to say no.

Coun. Bill Vrebosch, however, used the same argument, suggesting East Ferris or Callander would “pick it off tomorrow” and that North Bay would be paying the bills.

He also suggested – much to the chagrin of the audience – that a casino will help change the city’s image for the better.

Coun. Mike Anthony said he didn’t disagree with the presenters, but noted the decision – for him – comes down to freedom of choice. He said he doesn’t feel comfortable limiting that for residents, especially when gambling is a legal activity.

Tignanelli called for the matter to go to committee, suggesting the city will suffer for acting on a lack of information if the “full economic story” isn’t examined.

The vote is essentially a final stamp of approval for the casino proposal. It means the conditions that were set out in 2012 when the council of the day indicated it would be a willing host to a gaming facility have been accepted, as well as approval of a standard revenue-sharing agreement between the city and OLG.

The city’s original resolution six years approving a casino was subject to a number of caveats including negotiations, confirmation and acceptance of the would-be private-sector operator, revenue sharing, site location and derived community benefit.

Gateway, however, has yet to publicly confirm the location, nor has it appeared before council or hosted any meetings of its own to lay out its plans to the community.

Most of the information that’s been made public about the proposal so far has been gleaned from third-party sources, including recent documents filed with the U.S. Securities and Exchange Commission.

Those documents suggest Gateway plans to open a casino in North Bay in the first quarter of 2020, spending about \$31.3 million on the project, which includes a 37,000-square-foot building called Cascades Casino with approximately 14,100 square feet of gaming space, 300 slot machines, 10 table games, a MATCH Eatery & Public House and a restaurant called The Buffet.

Asked after the meeting about the lack of a public presentation by Gateway of its proposal, Mayor Al McDonald said the casino issue has been discussed for the past six years. And,

the mayor said he was comfortable enough to make a decision based on the amount of information that's known about the planned casino.

4) Communiqué issued by DNSSAB on Casino revenue sharing

The District of Nipissing Social Service Administration Board is formally requesting a revenue sharing agreement with Ontario Lottery and Gaming to address the social impacts of a casino operating in the City of North Bay. "We are asking for formal matching of revenue sharing with OLG, similar to the agreement with the City of North Bay," says DNSSAB chair, Mark King.

"We are proposing the funds could then be used for homelessness prevention, mental health and addictions services and employment supports for the marginalized and vulnerable in the district."

The impact of a casino was studied by the DNSSAB in 2012 when a casino for North Bay was first proposed. The report estimates that approximately five per cent of the adult population in the district, or between 2,000 and 3,000 citizens, could become problem gamblers.

"The only mechanism to offset the social costs is through the municipal levy. This would be extremely unfair to regional municipalities as they are receiving no funding from the casino, but are expected to participate financially in the levy for support services through the DNSSAB," King said.

Historically the OLG has used funds received through gaming to support targeted purposes that enhance communities. "This request to OLG will help to benefit the most marginalized in the region with better supports and help minimize the cost of the social impact of a casino on the region," said King.

A special meeting of council takes place tomorrow night to discuss the casino development. Two recommendations are on the agenda, including acceptance of the conditions that were set out in 2012 when the city indicated it would be a willing host to a gaming facility, as well

as approval of a standard revenue-sharing agreement between the city and the Ontario Lottery and Gaming (OLG) Corp

5) Previous article pertaining to Town of Callander position

Callander or other local municipalities should have the chance to benefit from a casino planned to open in North Bay in 2020, according to Callander Mayor Hec Lavigne.

Lavigne said Monday he hopes his municipality and North Bay can talk about a revenue-sharing agreement for the “regional facility. “North Bay council by resolution approved construction of the casino within North Bay on the basis that if they didn’t do that, there was interest elsewhere in the region,” Lavigne says.

If another municipality had agreed to host the casino, he says, North Bay’s argument was that the city would get “all the negatives, none of the benefit of the revenues.”

Although Gateway Casinos and Entertainment Limited has confirmed its plan to open a casino in the first quarter of 2020 in North Bay, its location has not been confirmed. The 37,000-square-foot Cascades Casino is rumoured to be built on Pinewood Park Drive. It will feature 14,100 square feet of gaming space, including 300 slot machines and 10 table games. It also is planning to build a MATCH Eatery & Public House, as well as The Buffet restaurant.

The combined project is expected to cost about \$31.3 million.

The plan is subject to OLG and necessary government approvals, Gateway Casinos notes.

In September, company spokesman Rob Mitchell confirmed two parcels of property off Highway 17 owned by the Orsi family were no longer being considered for the casino. The city has rezoned a property off Pinewood Park Drive for a casino, however Gateway Casinos stated in previous interviews it wasn’t a preferred location.

If the rumoured Pinewood Park Drive location, across the highway from the city’s land, is chosen, Lavigne says it would be “right in Callander’s back yard, which would subject Callander to the potential negatives. “We are throwing it back at them from that perspective. It is supposed to be a regional facility. We believe we should share those revenues.”

Lavigne says he has been in contact with various officials, including Nipissing MPP Vic Fedeli and the Ontario Lottery and Gaming Corp., and has been told “in no uncertain terms that North Bay is getting a casino.”

Part of the concern is the increased traffic on Pinewood Park Drive and on streets and roads in Callander. “Traffic on Pinewood Park is busy enough now. What will it be like if there is a casino there? “We just put a couple of million (dollars) repaving Callander Bay Drive,” which would be one of the major routes leading to a casino on Pinewood Park Drive, Lavigne says, and he is concerned about additional traffic on that roadway. “The question is, how long will it last given the extra traffic” if a casino is built in that area.

Lavigne stresses he is “absolutely 100 per cent not against the casino.”

He admits that if it is built elsewhere in the city, “we will have less of an argument.

“But it is a regional facility,” and benefits should be shared across the region.

Lavigne has not yet talked to members of North Bay council about the issue, but says he welcomes the opportunity to get together with the new council, which was sworn in Saturday.