

July 11, 2011

We have all received fliers at our homes and have all seen full page ads in our local newspapers advocating the development of a casino at Belmont Park. The Shinnecock Nation is identified on each advertisement. We have read reports in *Newsday* from our County Executive, our State Senators and other elected representatives, our neighbors in Elmont and the Nassau County Chambers of Commerce; all in seemingly generous support of the many perceived benefits from the casino proposal. What is missing? With all this reporting there has not been discussions of any magnitude with the residents of Floral Park.

We always welcome residents' comments on Village matters, but I am especially grateful to those residents who have shared their insights, concerns and opinions with me regarding locating a casino at Belmont Park via e-mails and letters. Your direct feedback will provide valuable information needed in determining the impact this proposed use may have on your quiet enjoyment of our village. Our successful outcome against the MTA's unwanted and unneeded Third Track was achieved through an effective dialogue among an informed constituency. That transparency in vetting the issues was supported by elected representatives up and down the Main Line, over 150 organizations, the NCVOA, Town of Hempstead representatives, County Legislators, Assemblymen and many State Senators.

Such transparency has yet to happen regarding the casino. There are as many questions as there are opinions; some positive, some negative. We are experiencing a vacuum of information. These unaddressed vacuums are filling with anxiety and suspicion. The Village Board and I recognize and share those feelings. Therefore, let me tell you what we know and have done to date. I have asked Deputy Mayor Jim Rhatigan to reconstitute the Belmont Task Force and it has met. Trustee Rhatigan and I have had substantive conversations with some of our elected representatives, NYRA executives, and our neighbors in Elmont. We have provided our Statement of Principles from 2007 regarding VLT gaming operations at Belmont Park to each of those parties and with the Shinnecock Nation. The Belmont Task Force is gathering information, meeting with elected representatives to gain some insight and understanding on their knowledge of the casino proposal, possible level and depth of discussions and with whom these discussions have occurred. Our being excluded in this pivotal process prior to now is moot. We plan to continue meeting with any elected or appointed representative who may have pertinent information. To date, we have been told by elected representatives that there are many hurdles to be overcome by the Shinnecock Nation and that it may be many years off. NYRA's stated interest, as it relates to Belmont Park, is to expand and improve Belmont Park as a premier, world class thoroughbred racing venue. NYRA is anxious to open the nearly completed Resorts World New York, the VLT Racino at Aqueduct, as that revenue will shore up its balance sheet and provide investment dollars for needed improvements at Belmont Park.

The key component of a measured and reasoned response is information. Any issue so important that this Village has engaged its resources, residents and elected representatives has been founded upon informed, reasoned and intelligent argument. Our motivation is never one of isolation but rather the cautious nurturing of the dynamic and stable community that is Floral

Park. While each challenge is unique, the one constant among us is our collective ability to examine the facts, the vigilance to do what is best for our Village and the determination to grow and evolve while maintaining the benefits of living in one of the greatest villages on Long Island.