

July 25, 2011

Last week I presented the first of our Belmont Task Force 2007 Statement of Principles relating them to an Indian Nation Casino at Belmont Park rather than a State sponsored VLT Racino. Again, my hope is you will see the fundamental issues of fairness contained in each principle. Kindly allow me to present our second principle:

PRESERVE AND PROTECT RACING AND OUR COMMUNITIES ALIKE

II. The neighboring communities support the preservation and fostering of the world class premier thoroughbred racing facilities within their neighborhood. The communities encourage the protection and incorporation of all buildings and landscaped features of historic, architectural or cultural significance into the local communities visioning, economic or historic planning.

It was the intention of the Task Force to have principles which could be applied and embraced by all three NYRA facilities; Belmont Park, Aqueduct and Saratoga. The Saratoga community had previously demanded that such an inventory be done, and the references to historical planning are in recognition of that sentiment. We also wanted representatives of NYRA to support the concepts outlined in the Statement of Principles. At Floral Park's Public Hearing which NYRA President Charles Hayward attended and spoke, he expressed NYRA's support of the Statement of Principles without any reservations.

Belmont Park is, and must remain, a premier thoroughbred racing facility. It has always been and must always remain a thoroughbred racing facility where legalized gambling takes place, rather than a legalized gambling facility where thoroughbred racing takes place. We must never allow gaming interests to command the activity of this State property. The Shinnecock, a sovereign Indian Nation, cannot be provided management oversight of the operations at Belmont Park. Were that to happen then the gaming cart would surely be put before the horse!

We have specifically acknowledged and want to incorporate the visioning and economic planning which the Elmont community has worked so diligently to develop over the years. We are mindful, however, that the unchecked development at Belmont Park could result in the decline of the surrounding neighboring business areas, rather than the expansion and improvement of those neighboring business areas. For example, having a supermarket just a few blocks away from the entrance to a 24 hours a day, 365 days a year gambling facility could lead to an adverse impact on the local area and cause potential customers to seek much less congested shopping area alternatives. There may also be direct competition for the entertainment dollars of the surrounding community. Will local residents still pay to see the Broad Hollow Theatre productions at the Elmont Library when they could go enjoy world class entertainment at Belmont Park for free? Will local businesses; restaurants, clothing and jewelry stores, realize dwindling receipts as customers are enticed to spend entertainment dollars at the gaming tables and slots lured by inexpensive casino subsidized dining options and no State sales tax on goods purchased within the boundaries of the sovereign Indian Nation? This is an unfair advantage and far from a level playing field. For generations, Belmont Park and thoroughbred racing has been an economic engine that defines and unites our communities. We cannot allow that historic legacy to be usurped.

July 17, 2011

Presently, our concerns regarding an Indian Nation casino at Belmont Park are based solely upon conjecture and innuendo. In 2007, the Village established the Belmont Task Force to examine the proposal for a VLT Racino at Belmont Park. The product of their comprehensive study was summarized and memorialized into a ten point document officially titled, "Inc. Village of Floral Park Task Force for Belmont's Preservation and Improvement: Statement of Principles." The Statement of Principles was not a declaration of opposition to the proposed State sponsored VLT plan but rather a proclamation of fairness. These Principles enunciated reciprocal and equitable recommendations outlining how neighboring residential communities could coexist with the then proposed VLT operations at Belmont Park. The proposal today is not a State-operated VLT Racino but rather a sovereign Indian Nation casino. Yet, the virtues contained within our Statement of Principles still hold true. Therefore, in an effort to provide reasoned discussion to the debate, over the next several weeks, I will address the casino issue using the 2007 Statement of Principles as my guide. My hope is you will see the fundamental issues of fairness contained in each principle. Consideration must be addressed by any proposed use at Belmont Park.

1. The neighboring communities that shoulder the greatest burdens are to be guaranteed the greatest benefit.

Foxwoods Resort had its humble beginnings as a bingo hall in 1986. Today, it is one of the largest gaming facilities in the world. In 2010 Foxwoods reported \$921,610,000 in gaming revenue and \$267,267,000 in non-gaming revenue. Over 14,000,000 visitors have attended Foxwoods for each of the last four years ($14,000,000 / 365 = 38,356$ visits per day). With a proposed sovereign Indian Nation casino at Belmont Park we need to factor an additional 5,500 daily employees, 2,000 daily Belmont Park employees: $38,356 + 5,500 + 2,000 = 45,856$. Add racing fans averaging 5,000/day for the three month season and you have over 51,000 visits per day. That's more than a sold out Yankee game every day! One need not be Nostradamus to know the impact this will have on our Village, especially our Police. This year's Belmont Stakes alone had an attendance of 55,779. That day, the FPPD worked a double staffed shift with additional overlapping shifts to cover traffic and other public safety issues due to the large number of visitors and the nature of the day. That equates to approximately 8 officers and 3 supervisors, simply to handle that day. Many have commented that on these heavy impact days, effective enforcement of other quality of life issues- public intoxication, underage drinking, etc. fall significantly short of what we have become accustomed to and expect.

With over 50,000 visitors at our doorstep every day the impact on our police is, at this point, incalculable. Once again, using Foxwoods as the model, \$4,100,000 is its contribution to the local police. Foxwoods, in forested Ledyard, CT, will never be confused with the indescribable congestion that is Western Nassau County! What would the contribution need to be on the edge of the largest metropolis in the world? What is the compensation for the wear and tear on our roads, our infrastructure, etc.; all burdens need to be honestly assessed. This is not simply a cost-ratio analysis- this is our home, our Village. The Indian Nation casino proposal may provide necessary beneficial fiscal relief to government agencies beyond Floral Park; however, our Statement of Principles must be recognized and addressed by all those who stand to benefit at our expense.

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.