

VILLAGE OF HOMEWOOD  
BOARD OF TRUSTEES PUBLIC HEARING  
WIND CREEK IL LLC CASINO PROPOSAL  
MONDAY—OCTOBER 7, 2019  
IRWIN CENTER

CALL TO ORDER: Village President Hofeld called the special hearing to order at 6:30 p.m. and took comments on a proposal from Wind Creek IL LLC to develop and operate a casino at the intersection of Halsted and I-80. There were approximately 150 members of the public and press representing the Homewood-Flossmoor Chronicle, the Daily Southtown/Tribune WGN-TV and WMAQ-TV.

PRESENT: Those present were Village President Richard Hofeld, Clerk Marilyn Thomas, Trustee Barbara Dawkins, Trustee Lisa Purcell, Trustee Karen Washington, Trustee Lauren Roman, Trustee Jay Heiferman and Trustee Larry Burnson.

Staff members in attendance: Village Manager Jim Marino, Village Attorney Christopher Cummings, Assistant Director of Public Works Patrick McAneney, Police Chief Bill Alcott, Deputy Fire Chief Steve DeJong, Director of Finance Dennis Bubenik, Director of Economic and Community Development Angela Mesaros, Assistant Village Manager Napoleon Haney and Marketing Director Jennifer Quirke.

Representing Wind Creek IL LLC were Arthur Mothershed, VP of Business Development; Brent Pinkston, COO of Wind Creek; Javier Millan of KLOA (traffic consultant); Donna More, attorney.

MEETING: The meeting opened with Wind Creek representatives explaining the current operations of the company owned and operated by the Poarch Band of Creek Indians. The business is established in Alabama and has 10 properties in the U.S. and Caribbean. This would be the first in the Midwest.

The investment in the Homewood/East Hazel Crest site would be a 4-Star property (using AAA standards) and would be developed at a cost of \$450 million over four years. The project will start with the construction of the casino and food service areas, with an expected completion in 12 months. A 252-room 21-story hotel will be added within three years. The facility will include an 11,000-square-foot entertainment area, a spa and parking for 1,600 cars. It is believed the work will require 700 construction jobs and when complete the facility will be staffed with 800 full-time employees.

A PowerPoint presentation gave the audience a look at the layout of the facility on the 24-acre site, and how the rooms and casino are expected to look.

The company is financially secure and recently went to Wall Street to sell \$1.3 billion in loans. The Tribe is a good neighbor and has helped when the Alabama area was hit by tornados and has agreements with the University of Alabama and other local schools for financial support.

Members of the audience raised numerous issues on the proposal:

- Crime will increase, although Chief Alcott said he doesn't anticipate Homewood will see a need for any additional police. The casino is a self-contained operation with its own security staff.

- A casino is not part of Homewood's appeal. Speakers said Homewood is a family community and a casino would change the atmosphere of the town. President Hofeld said the development is far removed from any of Homewood's neighborhoods and he doesn't believe it will have a negative affect on Homewood or its residents.
- A casino instigates gambling problems. Members of Wind Creek said the company has been responsible for services for compulsive gamblers and they regularly monitor players to spot problems.
- A casino will reduce property values and won't bring in the anticipated revenue. Wind Creek representatives said they have been good neighbors and none of the communities they are in has seen a negative affect from the casino. They estimate earning \$155 million over 7 years. State law says 5 percent (estimated at \$7 million) of that goes to South Suburban communities, and 40 percent of that 5 percent (estimated at \$3 million) is designated to Homewood/East Hazel Crest.
- Traffic is bad on Halsted Street. This will make it worse. A traffic study has been done. Yes, there will be increased traffic, but there are improvements being made at the east-bound off-ramp and a new turn lane (to the site) is being added, with a traffic signal. It is estimated 70-75 percent of casino guests will go on/off there and not travel through Homewood.

There were calls for a postponement on the Board's voting for the proposal. President Hofeld said a casino project has been discussed since 2011. There were also concerns that the casino will be a burden on the town and its businesses.

There also were several people who spoke in favor of the casino saying the South Suburbs need jobs and that they

trusted Homewood's elected officials to make sound decisions in approving the proposal.

The hearing adjourned at 8:30 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Marilyn Thomas  
Village Clerk