

A Statement on Casino Gambling in Schenectady

Why No Public Hearing?

Background: The 4 new casinos that are being permitted in New York State has led to 22 companies paying \$1,000,000 a piece in application fees, in hopes of being chosen to operate one of the casinos. Clearly, each of those companies assumes that they can make money on running casinos. The former Alco plant site off of Erie Boulevard in the City of Schenectady is in consideration. Governing bodies of applicant communities need to provide a resolution or legislation either approving or disapproving of what is proposed. The Schenectady County Legislature held a public hearing on June 2, which was announced on May 30. Presumably, they will act at their next session if appropriate. However, the proposed site is fully in the City of Schenectady. The Schenectady City Council has indicated as of 6/2/2014 that they plan to act on a resolution at the 6/9/2014 regular Council meeting without a public hearing. The Daily Gazette in their editorial of 6/5/14 argued: "Let the people be heard on the casino plan."

The following is a statement supported and endorsed by various religious and community leaders reflecting diverse community and faith traditions

Our first concern is for the critical need for public and democratic input and conversation on what is critical and long term possibility for our community.

Therefore, we the undersigned, with concern for the well-being of Schenectady, respectfully ask that the City Council not act to change our current laws on gambling and casinos until they have taken the time for a public forum to receive public input at the city level.

Frankly we are appalled as religious and community leaders by what is clearly a "rush to judgment" with minimal community input. We believe fully in the democratic process. We call upon the City Council to table the resolution coming up on June 9 and instead call for a public hearing to be held at the following Council meeting (June 23) with action by the Council at a special session after June 23 (it could be June 30 since there are 5 Mondays in June).

We ask that the Council give careful consideration of the economic, social, and human impacts to the community as a whole and provide such a report to the community prior to action on any resolution.

An * means that organizations are listed for affiliation purposes only

List in formation, currently including:

Rev. Sara E Baron, Pastor, First United Methodist Church, Schenectady,

Roy Neville, First United Methodist Church, Schenectady

Rev. Valerie Ackerman, *Co-director, Center for Empowering Communities

Ms. Shirley Readdean, Albany District, United Methodist Church and President
*Schenectady Inner City Ministry

Rev. Phillip N Grigsby, *Schenectady Inner City Ministry, and Moderator,
*Emmanuel Friedens Church

Rev. Daniel Hahn, *Grace Lutheran Church

Ms. Patricia Obrecht, *Bellevue Reformed Church

Frank Thomas, M. D., Community Volunteer

Joe Doolittle, Community Volunteer

Rev James McDonald, *Stephen's Episcopal Church

Rev. Kent Busman, *Executive Director, Fowler Camp and Retreat Center

Rev. Peter J B Carman, Pastor, *Emmanuel Friedens Church

Rev Horace Sanders, Jr., Senior Pastor, *Mt. Olivet Missionary Baptist Church

Rev. Priscilla Richter, Pastor, *Unitarian Universalist Society of Schenectady

Ms. Carolyn Micklas, First United Methodist Church, Schenectady

Rev David and Mrs. Barbara Heise, retired United Methodist Church

Rev Marian Shearer, Associate Conference Minister, *NY Conference, United Church
of Christ

Rev Kathleen Gorman-Coombs, *Trinity Presbyterian Church

Rev. Jim Murphy, *Capital Region Ecumenical Organizations

Rev. Victoria Brooks, *Director, Office of Religious and Spiritual Life, and Campus
Protestant Minister, Union College

Rev. Stacey Midge, *First Reformed Church

Randolph McGough, *St. Kateri Tekakwitha Parish

