

Interstate casino supported by DCIC

Written by Administrator
Monday, 28 January 2013 22:06 -

The Davenport Community Improvement Corp. showed its growing pains Monday at a meeting of the recently expanded board, narrowly supporting a casino proposal that is the City's Council's apparent favorite.

Along with its support of the casino proposal from Ingenus Management and Consulting and District Financial Properties, the board also wrangled with an operating agreement with the Riverboat Development Authority and how to go about finding a casino operator.

The Davenport Community Improvement Corp. would oversee the operation of a land-based casino. The city is in the process of acquiring the Rhythm City from Isle of Capri for \$46 million. The city will lease the casino to the corporation.

Davenport resident Doris Unterzuber was critical of what she witnessed at Monday's meeting, saying the board appeared divided.

"I think you need to get your act together," she told the board. "If the board is going to run a casino, I would like to see this group become a group that works together."

Corporation Chairwoman Kelli Grubbs said the board is feeling its way with some decisions looming as new members John Roche and Randy Rathje were seated Wednesday.

"I think we are coming down to crunch time," Grubbs said. "There is nothing like a deadline to get things going."

Davenport Police Chief Frank Donchez, a board member, agreed.

"When a group is in its infancy, it has its struggles," he said.

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The nine-member board voted 4-3 with two abstentions to show its support for a casino proposal submitted by Ingenus Management and Consulting and Financial District Properties. Grubbs, Roche and Mary Ellen Chamberlin voted against it.

Donchez, Rathje, Christine Frederick and Rory Washburn voted for the Ingenus proposal.

Davenport Alderman Jeff Justin, 6th Ward, and City Administrator Craig Malin abstained from the vote because of the council's consideration of whether to go into negotiations with Financial District Properties.

Grubbs said she couldn't support the proposal without seeing more revenue projections, while Chamberlin and Roche voted against it because they said they didn't want to limit the city's negotiating options.

Along with the Ingenus proposal, the city also has considered a downtown casino proposal from Restoration St. Louis, which restored the Hotel Blackhawk downtown along with other properties. The city received a proposal from Atrium Holdings for a casino in the downtown Radisson Quad-City Plaza, but it has been eliminated.

Davenport aldermen meet Wednesday in a special meeting to move for negotiating with Financial District Properties on a development and for the Davenport Community Improvement Corp. to negotiate on a casino operator.

"It is a starting point," Donchez said. "We need to start moving forward somehow, some way."

The corporation's board also voted to hire an attorney to review the operating agreement between it and the Riverboat Development Authority. The corporation will consider the agreement at a meeting Wednesday morning ahead of a lunch meeting of the RDA board.

Before voting, the RDA board would like to know how the corporation board will vote, Malin

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said.

“The RDA would take comfort in the DCIC approving this before they vote for it,” he said.

The corporation is voting on an agreement that will govern it that was negotiated by the city and RDA, so an independent attorney’s review is proper, board members Roche and Rathje said.

“I want to make sure we have our DCIC hat firmly in place,” Rathje said.

The board spent considerable time in its hour-long meeting discussing options for a casino operator. Although Ingenus is part of the proposal, it may or may not be the operator, or an operator could be hired for the short-term to run the casino boat until the land-based casino opens.

The management team that currently runs the Rhythm City could be an option, Malin told the board.

Chamberlin added that the city is likely to operate the riverboat for about two years until a land-based casino is built.

EARLIER STORY

A primarily interstate casino proposal received narrow support today from the Davenport Community Improvement Corp., as the Davenport City Council considers negotiating with the developer later this week.

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Grubbs couldn't support the proposal without seeing more revenue projections, while Chamberlin and Roche voted against it because they didn't want to limit the city's negotiating options. Along with the Ingenus proposal, the city also has considered a downtown casino proposal from Restoration St. Louis. The city received a proposal from Atrium Holdings for a casino in the downtown Radisson Quad-City Plaza, but it has been eliminated.

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